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**THE *COMPENDIUM COMPERTORUM* AND
THE MAKING OF THE SUPPRESSION ACT
OF 1536**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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My family have remained a constant strength and it is to them that this work is dedicated.

DECLARATION

The original idea for this thesis stemmed from the work undertaken in my M. A.¹ In a few instances, therefore, I have extracted and updated information from the M. A. for use in this work. Some of the results of my M. A. have been published² since the commencement of my Ph. D. and are referred to in this thesis. However, other than references to my previous findings to ensure the reader is cognisant of my earlier research, I confirm the material used in this Ph. D. has not been used before.

I also confirm this Ph. D. is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

A. Shaw

A.N. Shaw

April 2003

¹ A. N. Shaw, 'The *Compendium Compertorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation: A Comparison between the Norwich Diocese Visitation and the York Province and Coventry and Lichfield Diocese Visitation, in the Period November 1535 to February 1536' (University of Warwick, Unpublished M. A. dissertation, 1998), copies in the PRO Library, Kew, London; Downside abbey monastic library, Bath; St Benet's Hall library, Oxford; St Louis monastic library, Missouri U. S. A.; but not held in University of Warwick library.

² A. N. Shaw, 'The Northern Visitation of 1535/6: Some New Observations', *Downside Review*, vol. 116, No. 405 (October 1998).

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the relationship between the Royal Visitation of 1535 – 1536, the *Compendium Compertorum* and the Suppression Act of 1536. Through the extensive examination of new and corrected manuscript evidence and by the updating of previous analysis, the Royal Visitation has been identified as more extensive, geographically and conceptually, than has hitherto been recognised.

This work identifies for the first time all the Commissioners and their regions of responsibility in England and Wales. This discovery has enabled a thorough review of their visiting itineraries to be made and has allowed their actions to be examined relative to a central, emerging policy. The Royal Commissioners understood they had a reforming responsibility at the institutions they visited. This has not been previously recognised by historians who have seen the Royal Visitation as purely a means of collecting damaging evidence of monastic corruption. This work makes clear that the principal purpose of the Visitation, however, was to gain the wide acceptance of the Royal Supremacy among a range of ecclesiastical institutions, including religious houses.

It will be shown that although Thomas Cromwell co-ordinated the Commissioners, he can occasionally be identified bending to the royal will. The emergence of the core Injunctions in August 1535, for example, was a result of King Henry's intervention. The Commissioners had occasional direct contact with the king to discuss the progress of the Visitation. This work identifies that the decision to widen the definition of sexual crime in the Visitation was made in September 1535, when the court was at Winchester. Thereafter, Cromwell can be seen considering various policies for possible monastic reform.

On the eve of the passing of the Suppression Act Cromwell's chosen monastic reform policy was overruled. The Suppression Act in its final form was the preferred choice of King Henry. The data obtained on monastic crime was edited and manipulated from the Visitors' Act Book into the *Compendium Compertorum* to assist the passing of the Act. The Royal Visitation information was also used to evaluate the likely effects of the Act's implementation.

This work outlines why the Crown invested seven months in undertaking the Royal Visitation. It helps explain the first assault in the 1530s, by the government, on the English and Welsh monasteries. The widely held view that the Suppression Act was formulated by Cromwell must be revised. Cromwell certainly supervised the Royal Visitation but the king defined the final monastic suppression policy.

ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library, London
Bodl	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CCA	Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Kent
CCCC	Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
CCCO	Corpus Christi College, Oxford
<u>Concilia</u>	D. Wilkins, <u>Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae AD 446 - 1718</u> , 4 vols. (London, 1737)
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent
CS	<i>Camden Series</i>
CUL	Cambridge University Library
CYS	Canterbury and York Series
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
<u>DR</u>	<u>The Downside Review</u>
DRO	Devon Record Office, Exeter
DUL - PGS	Durham University Library, Palace Green Section, Durham
DUL - ASC	Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, 5 The College, Durham
EETS	Early English Text Society
<u>EHR</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
Exeter Cath	Exeter Cathedral Archive
GRO	Gloucestershire Record Office, Gloucester
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission, London
HOL	House of Lords, Record Office, London
HRO	Hampshire Record Office, Winchester
<u>IHR</u>	<u>Institute of Historical Research Bulletin</u>
<u>HOC</u>	S. T. Bindoff (ed.), <u>The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558</u> , 3 vols. (London, 1982)
Lich. RO	Lichfield Record Office, of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, Lichfield

<u>FOR</u>	D. S. Chambers, <u>Faculty Office Registers, 1534 - 1549</u> (Oxford, 1966)
Linc. A	Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln
<u>Lisle</u>	M. St. Clare Byrne, <u>The Lisle Letters</u> (London, 1981)
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
<u>LP</u>	J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, R. H. Brodie (ed.), <u>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</u> (1862 - 1932)
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew, London
RHS	Royal Historical Society
<u>ROE-III</u>	D. Knowles, <u>Religious Orders in England, vol. III</u> (Cambridge 1961)
SRRC	Shropshire Records and Research Centre, Shrewsbury
<u>SSP</u>	P. de Gayanges (ed.), <u>Calendar of Letters, Dispatches and State Papers Relating to the Negotiations Between England and Spain</u> , vol. 5 (London 1880)
SRO	Somerset Record Office
<u>SRS</u>	<u>Somerset Record Society</u>
SS	Surtees Society
<u>TRHS</u>	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u>
<u>VE</u>	<u>Valor Ecclesiasticus</u>
<u>VCH</u>	<u>Victoria County History</u>
WC	Chapter of Winchester, Winchester Cathedral
Wells Cath	Wells Cathedral Library and Archive, Wells, Somerset
Wilts. and Swin.	Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
Worc. D & C	The Dean and Chapter of Worcester
Worc. RO	Worcestershire Record Office, County Hall, Worcester
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office, Chichester
<u>YAJ</u>	<u>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal</u>
YARS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series

PREFACE

This Ph. D. is heavily dependent on manuscript material. For the ease of the reader, the spelling in most quotations has been modernised. Dating is in the *new style* years, that is, January to December.

British Library Cottonian and Harleian manuscript references have been made using the *new* pagination. However, it should be noted this is not compatible with the *old* style pagination used in older reference works.

Where I have translated Latin, unless self evident, a footnote details the original words.

To aid the reader and make sense of the location in England and Wales of the large number of abbeys, priories and nunneries referred to in the text, a series of maps is included. The map code references for these maps are included in Appendices 1 to 10.

1. The Current Understanding of the Royal Visitation and the *Compendium Compertorum*

Historians of the English reformation are currently dismissive of the *Compendium Compertorum*, denying that it can provide any worthwhile insight into the moral state of religious houses in the early sixteenth century, and claiming that it had little input to the Suppression Act of 1536, which it immediately preceded. Cunich noted that the Royal Visitation provided 'a lurid collection of evidence' to assist the passing of the Act.³ Hoyle saw the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536 as a means to collect 'damaging evidence of monastic corruption'. He described the Royal Commissioners as corrupt and 'their *comperta* worthless', quoting Knowles' 'careful examination of the evidence to support this opinion'.⁴ Haigh, in a 1993 bibliographical survey, was equally deferential to Knowles' work on the dissolution. Haigh suggested that the recent lack of attention to monasteries is possibly because Knowles seemed to have 'solved all the problems' and 'monasteries were not a great scandal'.⁵

It is important to understand why Knowles so dominates study of the dissolution of the monasteries and what 'precepts' he so commandingly codified. Knowles brought an even-handed, professional mind to the study of evidence which had been fought over, in an extraordinary polemic battle, during the previous eighty years. Froude, Gasquet and Coulton, among others, had engaged in various interpretations of

³ P. Cunich, 'The Dissolution' in D. Rees (ed.), *Monks of England - The Benedictines in England from Augustine to the Present Day* (London, 1997), p. 156.

⁴ R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

the moral state of English monasteries on the eve of the dissolution, with their analysis directly related to their extent of pro or anti 'Romanism'. Thus, to Froude, the Visitors 'were young, impetuous men, likely to execute their work rather thoroughly than delicately',⁶ while Gasquet saw them as despicable, servile, bullying, untrustworthy people⁷ and Coulton saw nothing in the Visitors' writings that compared with the 'ribald obscenity' exhibited by 'St Thomas More'.⁸ The nature of the interpretations, of which this diversity of opinion is just an example, reflected Abbot Gasquet's attempts, as a Catholic revivalist, to portray a revised view of the reformation, including (then) recently identified evidence. In opposition to this, Froude and Coulton sought to maintain Protestant folklore. Baskerville's attempt at mediating in this historical argument in the 1930s failed, through neglecting to use original manuscripts⁹ and the use of 'innuendo rather than proof'.¹⁰ The field was left open for Knowles in the 1950s to re-gather and impartially examine the evidence in the third volume of his The Religious Orders in England, published in 1959.

While Knowles was an ordained Catholic monk, his examination of a width of material reflects a balanced outlook. In The Religious Orders in England, Knowles solidified a number of views which are directly important to understanding current scholarship regarding the *Compendium Compertorum* and the Suppression Act.

First of all, he argued that the Royal Visitors were dishonourable and untrustworthy. For example, Knowles stated of the principal Visitor, Dr Richard

⁵ C. Haigh, English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors (Oxford, 1993), p. 337.

⁶ J. A. Froude, The Reign of Henry VIII, vol. ii (London, 1908), p. 116.

⁷ F. A. Gasquet, Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (London, 1906), pp. 78-94.

⁸ G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), p. 760.

⁹ G. Baskerville, English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries (London, 1937).

Layton, that he would ‘hesitate to give full credence to any accusation of his, however plausible or amusing it might be’.¹¹

Secondly, the *Compendium Compertorum* cannot be accepted as reliable evidence in the view of Knowles. The charges of sexual immorality he saw as unproven and supposed the term ‘sodomy’ to be widely misapplied.¹²

Thirdly, Knowles judged that the ‘temper of the Visitors and reports led to a crystallisation of policy’ regarding the Visitation itself; the Visitation ‘gradually stiffened’ into a determined attempt at monastic closure. And it is Cromwell who was expeditiously guiding the pace of events, with the motive being mainly financial.¹³

However, these three basic aspects of the Royal Visitation, which have effectively been accepted by Hoyle, seem open to challenge. Youings commented that the actions of the Visitors were ‘not ... a story of unrelieved villainy’.¹⁴ Examples of Visitor correspondence attacking, allegedly dissolute monks at specific monasteries, are interspersed with the occasional positive letter. Bedyll wrote of Ramsey abbey in mid January 1536, after finding it consisting of the ‘best sort’, that ‘I pray God I may find other houses in no worse condition’.¹⁵ Layton told Cromwell at the end of January 1536 that his ‘Injunctions can take no effect in some things’¹⁶ at Durham, because the monks were blameless. Of course, these examples could demonstrate

¹⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 295.

¹¹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 270.

¹² D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 302 - 303.

¹³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 269 - 270, 304.

¹⁴ J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 37.

¹⁵ BL, Cotton Cleopatra (hereafter BL, Cotton Cleo.) E IV, fo. 234 and J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R. H. Brodie (ed.), *Calendar of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London, 1862 - 1932) (hereafter LP), X, 103.

¹⁶ Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), SP 1 / 118, fo. 195v (LP, X, 183).

bribery or the influence of patronage,¹⁷ but if policy was so determinedly to undermine the cause of monasteries by January 1536, why were these two ‘wicked’ Visitors risking the wrath of Cromwell and the king? Even if the Visitors were not aware of emerging policy, they would have known what information they were expected to provide, if indeed they had been given a deliberate, antagonistic brief. The allegedly corrupt nature of the Visitors and their *comperta* are equally difficult to place within the timescale of the Visitation. It seems very strange to spend seven or eight months of valuable time and resources in a Royal Visitation to produce a *Compendium Compertorum* full of lies.¹⁸ But why should the Visitors lie in their *comperta*, knowing that the only people to see their reports would be Cromwell and the king, and well aware that any adjustments could be made in London to a pattern determined by the policy makers? Is it realistic to assume that the Visitors exaggerated or lied to their sovereign or to Cromwell, their principal patron? These issues have not been addressed by Knowles or any other modern historian.

A major objection to Knowles’ treatment of the *Compendium* is a result of the social framework and environment of mid 1950s England, within which he wrote. The apparent extent of the crime of sodomy detailed in the *Compendium* was liable to shock his readers, and Knowles was aware of this risk.¹⁹ Indeed, it is the very material of the *Compendium Compertorum* – the sodomies, priors using whores, nuns with children – that shocked nineteenth and twentieth century historians, with many censoring its details. Froude warned his readers, ‘If I were to tell the truth, I should

¹⁷ C. Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator* (London, 1938), p. 256. Layton was nephew to Cuthbert Tunstal, titular abbot of Durham.

¹⁸ Also A. G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* (London, 1959), p. 129: ‘Visitors were aware their purpose was to give parliament and public an unfavourable picture of monastic life’.

have first to warn all modest eyes to close the book and read no further'.²⁰ The prudery of the Victorian age continued into the last century, with Clay stating that the *comperta* were exaggerated and 'not entirely fit for publication'. He reproduced only the items in the Northern Visitation that had been sifted of sexual crime.²¹ Sheils, more recently, maintained this sensitivity by detailing a few examples of the *Compendium* that had been extracted from Clay's own abbreviated listing.²² However, it appears that Knowles fell into a trap of being so wary of the crimes that the *Compendium* contains that he used for his analysis the Calendar of Letters and Papers²³ and not the original documents.²⁴ The result is that his analysis of the *Compendium* is, therefore, open to question and is not the 'careful examination of the evidence' which Hoyle believed.²⁵ By not looking at the original documents, Knowles lost an opportunity to subject the information to detailed and contextualised analysis.

With the honesty of the Visitors and the accuracy of the *Compendium* undermined, most historians have felt that the only function of the Royal Visitors was to provide propaganda material to convince parliament of the urgent need for a Suppression Act. Hughes reflects this in suggesting the *comperta* were used in a 'war of nerves' in parliament.²⁶ Hoyle agreed, as he deduced that the Reformation

¹⁹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 296. Knowles notes 181 instances are so defined in the Northern Visitation alone.

²⁰ J. A. Froude, The Reign of Henry VIII, vol. ii (London, 1908), p. 120.

²¹ J. W. Clay (ed.), Yorkshire Monastic Suppression Papers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, vol. xlviii (1912).

²² W. J. Sheils, The English Reformation 1530 - 1570 (London, 1989), p. 86.

²³ LP.

²⁴ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 294 refers to LP, X, 364 and his analysis on pp. 297/298 of crimes is plainly only from this incomplete summary.

²⁵ R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', The Historical Journal, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

²⁶ P. Hughes, The Reformation in England, vol. I, The King's Proceedings (London, 1956), p. 286.

Parliament certainly were not ‘lap dogs’ to the Crown.²⁷ Both Woodward and Knowles identified the Visitation as gathering information.²⁸ As they denied the information obtained by the Royal Visitation had any relation to the Suppression Act, these historians believed the *Compendium* was used purely for propaganda purposes. The five Headings of the Northern Visitation *Compendium* and their relationship to draft proposals and Bills,²⁹ however, suggest greater interaction between the Visitation and policy formation than has been accepted hitherto. If the view is accepted that the Visitation and the *comperta* are worthless, it is not surprising that a connection between the Visitors’ activities and the development of policy has not been explored. In addition, historians of the English reformation have undermined the connection of the Royal Visitation with the Suppression Act, by stating that the *Compendium Compertorum* does not reflect the preamble: that the smaller houses are ‘to the slander of good religion’ and the larger ones are ‘honourable’.³⁰

Knowles certainly saw Cromwell as the leading player in steering the visitation, but noted that the preamble to the Suppression Act was more careless ‘than was Cromwell’s wont’.³¹ At the time of writing, Knowles was not aware of The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire, edited by Loades. In this work, the anonymous chronicler, possibly writing in the early 1600s, recorded that Audley and Rich ‘devised’ the Suppression Act. The Chronicler also noted a disagreement between Cromwell and

²⁷ R. W. Hoyle, ‘The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries’, The Historical Journal, 38, 2 (1995), p. 301.

²⁸ G. W. O. Woodward, ‘The Benedictines and Cistercians in Yorkshire in the Sixteenth Century’ (Trinity College, Dublin, Unpublished Ph. D., 1955), p. 115; D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 288

²⁹ e.g. PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 248 (LP, X, 242): Common Law Opinion Re Abbey Founders; PRO, SP 6 / 1, fos. 123r - 127r (LP, X, 246 (16)): Draft Act Against Pilgrimage and Superstitious Worship; PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 5v (LP, X, 254(i)): Cromwell Remembrances.

³⁰ J. Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 155, extract from HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28).

³¹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 269,304.

the Council as to the method of suppression.³² Chapuys, Charles V's ambassador in England, also commented on a disagreement at the time between Cromwell and the king on this issue.³³ Stone has noted the two varying policy directions of the king and Cromwell in attacking church wealth: the gradual approach of Cromwell, as opposed to the more direct action of the king, which are interestingly reawakened by Loades' find.³⁴ Perhaps this tension in policy, if it existed, between the king, Cromwell and the Council was showing itself, earlier, in the Visitation itself. For example, the defining of founders for each house in the Northern Visitation *Compendium* and the Common Law Opinion regarding the value of escheated king's foundation monasteries³⁵ suggests a widely different approach to monastic suppression than that actually pursued. Perhaps equally important is the letter from Dr Bedyll to Cromwell, immediately before the Northern Visitation, telling him that Bedyll and Layton were off to an audience with the king. Was Layton being given a final briefing by the king before setting out on the final stage of the Visitation?³⁶ If so, to what extent was Cromwell really steering the course of the Visitation?

Since Knowles' important work, little new examination has been undertaken of the Royal Visitation of 1535 – 1536. Woodward is the only recent historian to closely examine the *Compendium Compertorum* and that was with specific reference to the Benedictines and Cistercians in Yorkshire.³⁷ Other historians have reviewed the

³² D. M. Loades (ed.), *The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire, Camden Fourth Series*, vol. 5 (Royal Historical Society, London, 1968), p. 159.

³³ Pascall de Gayanges (ed.), *Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain* (hereafter *SSP*) vol. 5 parts 1 and 2 (London, 1880), pp. 83/84 and *LP*, X, 601.

³⁴ L. Stone, 'The Political Programme of Thomas Cromwell', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 24 (1951), p. 8.

³⁵ *LP*, X, 242.

³⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130v (*LP*, IX, 986).

³⁷ G. W. O. Woodward, 'The Benedictines and Cistercians in Yorkshire in the Sixteenth Century' (Trinity College, Dublin Ph. D., 1955), partially developed in G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of*

Royal Visitation but as part of wider examinations.³⁸ However, Logan has investigated closely and dated important manuscripts which relate to the preparation for the Visitation.³⁹ Logan has also dissected the Royal Visitation of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, demonstrating the imposition of the Royal Supremacy and the dramatic effect the Visitors had on the curriculum.⁴⁰

Logan has more recently examined the departure of the religious from the monasteries during the Royal Visitation, noting the dismissal of religious by the use of the monastic Injunctions and the role of the vicegerent court in granting licences to those others who wished to depart.⁴¹

To summarise this historiographical section, while Knowles' work remains a triumph as a review of English monastic history, his analysis of the Royal Visitation would benefit from being checked against original documents. His dismissal of the Visitation, by undermining its Visitors and their *Compendium Compertorum* laid aside an important body of evidence relating to the suppression of the monasteries. Instead of seeing the Visitation as possibly a central point in developing and testing monastic reform policy before the Suppression Act, it has been marginalised, seen, at best, as useful only for parliamentary propaganda. The nature of the sexual

the Monasteries (London, 1966). Knowles referred to Woodward's thesis in The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1950 - 1961).

³⁸ e.g. Joyce Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971); P. Cunich, 'The Dissolution' in D. Rees (ed.), Monks of England - The Benedictines in England from Augustine to the Present Day (London, 1997) and R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', The Historical Journal, 38, 2 (1995), pp. 275-305.

³⁹ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), pp. 658-669.

⁴⁰ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), pp. 861-888.

⁴¹ F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536' in J. G. Clark (ed.), The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2002), pp. 213-226 and F. D. Logan, Runaway Religious in Medieval England c. 1240 - 1540 (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 160-172.

allegations themselves has formed a fog which historians have shown themselves diffident in trying to explore, perhaps accounting for a nervousness in handling the original material. Possibly, a closer examination of the Royal Visitation and its results can gain a clearer view of whether Cromwell was the Eltonian superman, or whether the king, in reality, was more involved with directing the Visitation than was previously supposed. Finally, despite Hoyle's attempts at utilising draft Acts and other evidence to identify the origins of monastic dissolution, the best manner of testing whether the first dissolution was motivated by reform or greed is by closely examining the seven months of the Royal Visitation.

2. The Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536

2.1 Historical Background

This thesis is concerned with the activity of the Royal Visitation of 1535 – 1536 and its relationship with the Suppression Act of 1536.

By the early 1530s, the responsibility and method of visiting religious houses of monks, canons and nuns had become well established. Certain male religious orders, particularly the Cistercian and Praemonstratensian, maintained their own internal system of Visitation controlled by their provincial chapter; these houses were, therefore, exempt from investigation by the diocesan bishop. Most Visitations, however, were conducted by the diocesan bishop either personally or through his appointed commissar. The majority of Benedictine houses and almost all nunneries in England were in this category and termed ‘non-exempt’. The procedure of Visitation was determined by canon law. A questionnaire was used to examine the individual monk, canon or nun and Injunctions were later issued so that the identified faults could be reformed and, if necessary, punished.⁴²

The increasing control Henry VIII assumed over church affairs, resulting from his break with Rome, had an effect on the Visitation process. The Act in Restraint of Appeals of April 1533 made it impossible for the exempt orders to have future

⁴² D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1950 - 1961), pp. 78-84 and G. G. Coulton, 'Interpretation of Visitation Documents', *English History Review* 29 (January 1914), pp. 16-40; C. R. Cheney, *Episcopal Visitation of Monasteries in the XIII Century* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 54 - 103.

Visitations under the control of their foreign chapter.⁴³ The dilemma of who should visit such monasteries was remedied in the parliamentary session of January to March 1534, when the Crown obtained authority to undertake Visitations of monasteries and other ecclesiastical institutions which had previously been exempt from the bishops' jurisdiction.⁴⁴ The Succession Act defined Anne Boleyn as queen and pronounced the king's children from this marriage as the lawful heirs to the throne.⁴⁵ This Act required an unspecified oath to be taken. However, the form of the oath to be taken by monastic communities was specific and required the acceptance of the king as Supreme Head of the Church and the rejection of the papal title and papal laws.⁴⁶ Archbishop Cranmer's metropolitan Visitation of the Canterbury province in 1534-1535 was the principal means of imposing this oath upon the regular clergy.⁴⁷

In November 1534 the Supremacy Act was passed, enshrining the king's ecclesiastical powers in statute law.⁴⁸ From this Act the king's title Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England was later specified and the king had the power to correct errors in the church, including the ability to undertake ecclesiastical Visitations. This session of parliament also specified the oath missing from the Succession Act and passed a Treason Act to support the Supremacy legislation. The law annexing ecclesiastical first fruits and tenths to the king necessitated 'Commissioners of the Tenth' being appointed throughout the country to establish all church wealth in England and Wales. This survey, undertaken in the spring and

⁴³ 24 Henry VIII, c. 12.

⁴⁴ 25 Henry VIII, c. 21: The Dispensations Act.

⁴⁵ 25 Henry VIII, c. 22.

⁴⁶ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 178.

⁴⁷ P. Ayris (ed.), 'Thomas Cranmer and the metropolitan visitation of Canterbury province 1533 - 1535' in Stephen Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 16. Houses of friars had their own Visitation, p. 15.

⁴⁸ 26 Henry VIII, c. 2.

summer of 1535, resulted in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* records, used as a basis for clerical taxation.

In January 1535 the king's secretary, Thomas Cromwell, was appointed vicar general or vicegerent. His power included the ability to undertake the Visitation of all ecclesiastical establishments. He had already during 1534 been formulating plans for conducting the visitation of religious houses and other ecclesiastical institutions.⁴⁹ It was not, however, until the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey had been almost completed and Sir Thomas More executed that the Royal Visitation commenced, in late July 1535.⁵⁰ The Royal Visitation in the period July 1535 to February 1536 represented the first occasion when a secular authority was responsible, in law, for investigating the spiritual, moral and temporal state of ecclesiastical institutions. However, from the outset it is evident the Royal Visitation focussed mainly on endowed religious houses. The Royal Commissioners, who were mainly laymen, not priests, are supposed to have had a large list of Articles of Enquiry used to examine the religious, and to have issued standard Injunctions. The Visitors obtained *comperta* or, as they regularly termed them, *compertes*, from the many religious houses which identified alleged crimes by individual monks, canons or nuns. The *Compendium Compertorum* represented the grouping of these *compertes*. The extant extracts of the *Compendium* are for Chertsey abbey, thirty-two houses in the Norwich diocese Visitation and 122 religious houses and secular colleges in the Northern Visitation.

In July 1535 there were approximately 620 religious houses in England and Wales and approximately 9,000 monks, canons and nuns. Limited monastic

⁴⁹ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), p. 658.

suppression had taken place in the 1520s when, as a result of Cardinal Wolsey's actions, thirty houses were closed, principally to endow Cardinal College, Oxford. The Suppression Act of March 1536 targeted houses of a *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income value equal to or less than £200 per annum;⁵¹ some 300 religious houses came within the terms of this Act. This session of parliament also passed the Act establishing the court of augmentations which provided the mechanism for the implementation of the dissolution of the smaller monasteries.⁵²

⁵⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 241-243, 268-269.

⁵¹ 27 Henry VIII, c. 28.

⁵² 27 Henry VIII, c. 27.

2.2 *The Revision of the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536*

The thoroughness of the Royal Visitation has been questioned by historians. Dixon, one of the first to analyse the full extent of the surviving *Compendium Comptorum*, argued that the Commissioners ‘could not have visited all nor half of the monasteries in England’. He also stated that there was ‘much difficulty in determining the extent and order of this momentous Visitation’.⁵³ Woodward doubted whether ‘Layton and Legh really have done all that they claimed to have done in the time available to them’.⁵⁴ Knowles questioned the completeness of the Visitation: ‘Thus Lincolnshire, particularly rich in religious houses, was apparently not covered, many of the monasteries of Leicestershire, Warwickshire, North Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire seem to have escaped; and there are other isolated pockets of land which the Visitors did not touch.’⁵⁵

This very suggestion of incompleteness in the visiting of monastic houses helps promote the current view of the worthlessness of the Royal Visitation and the falseness of its findings. Dixon derided the apparent poor coverage of the Visitors by adding ‘yet they are said to have been able to present such a report to parliament of the abominable state of the monasteries in general, as led to the downfall of all the smaller houses throughout the realm’.⁵⁶

⁵³ R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England Henry VIII 1529 - 1537*, vol. 1 (London, 1878), p. 325.

⁵⁴ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 32.

⁵⁵ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

⁵⁶ R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England Henry VIII 1529 - 1537*, vol. 1 (London, 1878), p. 325.

In addition, no-one has been clear who the Commissioners were who undertook the Royal Visitation. The involvement of Richard Layton and Thomas Legh has long been understood, but others, such as John London, Richard Cromwell, Richard Southwell and William Petre have also been included.⁵⁷ Knowles honed the list of known Commissioners to Layton, Legh, John ap Rice, John Tregonwell and Thomas Bedyll, noting, ‘others were employed, such as John Vaughan and Ellis Price in Wales, of whom little trace remains in the Cromwell papers’.⁵⁸ Knowles stated that Dr London was not employed in the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536, but, more recently, Bowker has “corrected” Knowles and stated that London was involved in the monastic Visitation.⁵⁹

In seeking to identify the itinerary of the Commissioners, Knowles specified only Layton, Legh, ap Rice and Tregonwell and clearly used the dating specified in LP to identify the sequence of events.⁶⁰ Knowles’ itinerary has since become the bench mark for information on the route of these four Commissioners, and their role as Commissioners has been accepted. The content of the Knowles itinerary has also reinforced the notion that only a minority of religious houses were visited. It is clear, however, that the issue of who the Royal Visitors were and where they visited has not been thoroughly researched; indeed, Coulton noted that any detailed itinerary of the Visitors’ movements would be conjecture. My research has revealed information which both undermines much of Knowles’ narrative of events and establishes the itinerary for the real Commissioners in the Royal Visitation.

⁵⁷ e. g. G. Burnett, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 1 (London, 1880), p. 137.

⁵⁸ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 273.

⁵⁹ M. Bowker, The Supremacy and the Episcopate: the Struggle for Control, 1534 - 1540, The Historical Journal, xviii, 2 (1975), p. 238.

⁶⁰ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), appendix VI, p. 476.

My identification of a new source, in the Parker library in Cambridge, reveals a wider list of visited houses than has previously been recognised, and is strong evidence that almost all endowed religious houses in England and Wales were visited in 1535 – 1536.

The importance of Corpus Christi College Cambridge Manuscript 111⁶¹ has not previously been recognised and so it is important to examine its authenticity and analyse its contribution to understanding the scope of the Royal Visitation.⁶² CCCC MS 111 principally contains copies of Charters for a number of religious houses. It also includes material relating to the Royal Visitation and the consequences of the Suppression Act of 1536. Detailed within the material are the circuits, by diocese, of each of the Royal Commissioners:⁶³ thus, for example, the title ‘*Comperta coram Magro. Johanem Tregonwell Comiss. in dioceas. Exon*’ heads a list of ten religious houses, clearly indicating that John Tregonwell has collected the compertes at these houses in the diocese of Exeter.⁶⁴ The title ‘*Comperta mro. Tho Leghe in pntia Jo. Rhescou*’ above a large listing of houses denotes the progress of Thomas Legh in the presence of John ap Rice.⁶⁵ Similarly, the circuits of Master Cave (in the presence of Thomas Shaldwell),⁶⁶ Thomas Bedyll,⁶⁷ the joint Commissioners Richard Layton and Thomas Legh (in the presence of William Blytheman, notary public)⁶⁸ and the joint

⁶¹ Hereafter CCCC MS 111. My thanks to the librarian of the Parker Library for allowing me access and especially to the assistant librarian Ms Gill Cannell for her valuable help.

⁶² T. Tanner’s *Notitia Monastica* (London, 1744) uses a CCCC manuscript to identify the complement at some religious houses, evidently he used MS 111 although he does not note this.

⁶³ CCCC MS 111, fos. 339-349.

⁶⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 339.

⁶⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

⁶⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343.

⁶⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

⁶⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 346.

Commissioners Adam Becansaw and John Vaughan⁶⁹ are specified. At one stroke, the true Commissioners in the Visitation, except for one diocese,⁷⁰ are revealed.

This section of the manuscript⁷¹ appears to be a copy, undertaken on behalf of Archbishop Matthew Parker, of an original document.⁷² Other sections of the manuscript deal with monastic charters and are denoted as being ‘gathered by the Visitors sent forth by King Henry VIII the 27 year of his reign, anno 1535 and so registered in one book so named Regestrum and now ~~by me John Stowe~~ extracted into this book anno 1566 in the month of September’.⁷³ The comment, ‘by me John Stowe’ has been crossed out, the scribe evidently having been slavishly copying from Stowe’s original document, which can be found in the Bodleian library.⁷⁴ The Parker library copy is, therefore, evidently after 1566 and before Parker’s death in 1575.

Elsewhere in the manuscript book, details of the foundation documents of Ely cathedral are noted by the copyist ‘facta diligenta et exacta collaoe concordat cum originalibus. J. R. Regestor 1536’;⁷⁵ John ap Rice, the king’s Registrar in ecclesiastical causes from 1534, wrote his notarial signature, J. R. (Johannes Rheseus).⁷⁶ Parker’s copyists used either original documents or very early transcriptions of original material from the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536. Therefore, there seems good reason to believe that the list of houses visited by the Commissioners is copied from a valid and trustworthy document.

⁶⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 349.

⁷⁰ Bangor diocese.

⁷¹ Fos. 339 - 349.

⁷² It is not in Parker’s hand, nor his principal secretary Jocelyn’s.

⁷³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 202.

⁷⁴ Bodleian library, Oxford (hereafter Bodl), Tanner MS 343, fo. 165v.

⁷⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 240.

⁷⁶ see PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 1114v.

Looking more closely at the list identifies it has been tabulated into four columns identifying the Name, Order, Number and Founder of each specified religious house. John ap Rice wrote to King Henry later in the 1530s, reminding him that ‘he wrote to the king’s Highness the abridgements of the compertes of his graces late Visitation throughout the realm in diverse forms’.⁷⁷ Ap Rice had also written to Thomas Cromwell reminding him that ‘he made a brief docket to the kings majesty out of all his highness late Visitation, compendiously touching the name, the order, the state, the number and the *detects* of every religious house within this realm’.⁷⁸ It is thus reasonable to conclude that the listing of houses noted in CCCC MS 111 is a copy of a document originally written by the king’s registrar, John ap Rice.

Analysing the document further reveals it contains 293 religious houses, including some cells and hospitals of which all but four have a *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income of less than £200.⁷⁹ The manuscript can, therefore, be identified as a copy of a working document linked to the planning of the Suppression Act of March 1536; it is a list of those houses which come within the terms of the Act and summarised material (but not crimes) identified by the Royal Visitors. The list of houses is not complete as it contains no information on houses in Lancashire and Cheshire or in the Diocese of Bangor; it can, however, be deduced that the original document was complete as the grand total number of canons, monks and nuns at the end of the document⁸⁰ is greater by almost 200 than the component parts of the manuscript. Parker’s copyist, therefore, either did not have access to the missing pages or accidentally missed them out. The papermarks of Parker’s copy identify that the

⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 141, fo. 1130r (LP, XIII (2), 1225).

⁷⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 157, fo. 1258r (LP, XV - 280(2)).

⁷⁹ The four apparent exceptions are Titchfield, Robertsbridge, Thurgarton and Kirkham.

⁸⁰ CCCC MS 111, fo. 349: Total 2,663.

pagination of his manuscript is complete and, therefore, it is unlikely that a page of the copy has been lost.⁸¹ It is fortunate that from extant correspondence the Visitors for the missing diocese of Bangor are known. Dr Ellis Price and Dr William Glynn had this Commission.⁸²

This material is important because it reveals many religious houses being visited where historians had no previous record of their Visitation. The ordering of this newly discovered material, by diocese, also demonstrates the itinerary of the Royal Visitors. The names of religious houses are not listed randomly, but broadly show the logical progress within each diocese, of each Visitor.

As has been noted, the greater houses, defined as those with more than £200 net income per annum, were not included in this list. Because of their importance, however, in many instances, the Visitation of the larger houses featured in the correspondence of both the Commissioners and the monastic heads. The extracts from the *Compendium Compertorum* also include large religious houses in parts of the Norwich diocese, York province, Chester archdeaconry as well as Chertsey abbey. Thus, merging the CCCC MS 111 data on smaller houses with other information on smaller and larger houses, it is possible to date the itineraries as well, to compile a list of the locations visited. Further, it is possible to deduce who was the Commissioner and when the visit would have taken place of religious houses, large and small, which are not named in any document. Thus, for example, it is sensible to presume that Francis Cave (and his notary Thomas Shaldwell) would have visited Shrewsbury

⁸¹ The missing material in Lancashire and Cheshire and Bangor diocese would, on the original document, have fitted between the last entry of Layton and Legh's Visitation of the north on fo. 348 and the Welsh material contained, with the grand total, on the following page; the summary total on fo. 346 is correct, emphasising that the missing material occurs thereafter.

abbey (VE income £532) in Shropshire after having visited Haughmond abbey (VE income £259), Buildwas abbey (VE income £110) and Wombridge abbey (VE income £65) - all three being within five and fifteen miles of Shrewsbury, but only the latter two houses are mentioned in CCCC MS 111.⁸³

In a few other instances, it seems fair to presume a visit to a particular house but not to be certain who visited it. This can be seen in the case of Peterborough abbey (VE income £1679) where there is no record that this huge house was visited; it was, however, near the circuit of two separately acting Visitors. Thomas Legh could have visited Peterborough after having been to Sawtry abbey (VE income £141), ten miles away.⁸⁴ Alternatively, Thomas Bedyll could have tackled Peterborough after having visited Ramsey abbey (VE income £1761) and before Crowland abbey (VE income £1093), each ten to twelve miles away from Peterborough.⁸⁵

From this analysed data it is, therefore, possible for the first time to detail a full scope and responsibility of the Royal Commissioners' programme of visits in 1535 - 1536. These are outlined in Appendices 2 to 10. These appendices demonstrate that the Visitors did visit eighty-five per cent or more of religious houses and so the basis of an accurate general report on the state of monasteries rather than some fraudulent creation (by King Henry or Cromwell) is possible to consider.

⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607) and PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 79v (LP, IX, 866).

⁸³ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 51r (LP, X, 259(I)): Roland Lee tells Cromwell Shrewsbury has been visited; also PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 163 (LP, X, 165): Thomas Madoks accuses the abbot of contravening the Visitors' Injunctions. The broad route of these Visitors can be seen in CCCC MS 111, fo. 344. VE income indicates the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net annual income of particular houses.

⁸⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103): Legh was at Sawtry at 'Christmastide' 1535.

⁸⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234 (LP, X, 103): Bedyll at Ramsey (15/1/1536). PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 192 (LP, X, 181): Bedyll reports from Spalding abbey (26/1/1536) 'I have spied a young fool at Crowland'.

In summary, the Royal Commissioners are revealed as Richard Layton, Thomas Legh, John Tregonwell, Thomas Bedyll, Adam Becansaw, John Vaughan, Ellis Price, William Glynn and Francis Cave. John ap Rice, as the king's registrar in ecclesiastical causes and a kinsman of Thomas Cromwell, held a senior position in the Visitation, but he was not a Commissioner.⁸⁶ For the first time Dr Francis Cave is revealed as a Commissioner, covering the Midlands area which Knowles noted as having no known Visitor.⁸⁷

In addition to this new evidence, my research has identified the incorrect dating of a number of LP letters, the mistranscribing of some material and other important evidence from national and regional archives. These major changes to the understanding of the Royal Visitation thus have a direct effect on the narrative of events during the period July 1535 to February 1536.

It is important to reconstruct the Royal Visitation of the monasteries if the activities of the Commissioners and the instructions they obtained from Cromwell and the king are to be understood. In contrasting the actions of the Visitors over the seven months of the Visitation, it is possible to judge whether the brief of the Visitors was to provide Cromwell 'with the ammunition he needed to damn the monasteries, not to reform them'.⁸⁸ The dating of Visitation events now enables the evolution of monastic policy to be seen, rather than viewing the process as a series of unpremeditated decisions by Cromwell.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Despite what has been held to be the case since Knowles.

⁸⁷ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

⁸⁸ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 383/384.

⁸⁹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961).

To accomplish this revision, each of the Commissioners' Visitation itineraries will be analysed to identify the substance of their commissions and how they were enacting their responsibilities. This reconstruction of the Royal Visitation is necessary to understand the lengthy seven month process as being more than a device to collect a damning catalogue of monastic crime. Closely examining the Commissioners' circuits, correcting dating errors and identifying further evidence, enables the development of policy in the Visitation to be deduced. It is only in understanding the activity of the Visitors that it can be judged whether 'their methods were corrupt, their *comperta* worthless'.⁹⁰ In analysing the Royal Visitors' activity, the relationship between the *Compendium Compertorum* and the Suppression Act of 1536 can be better judged.

⁹⁰ R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

2.3 The Visitation Itineraries

2.3.1 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton

Dr Richard Layton, throughout the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536, was the leading Commissioner under Cromwell. Layton can be seen formulating ideas for the Visitation as early as mid 1534. In 1534, he developed a set of Articles of Enquiry and, a month or two before the Visitation commenced, was outlining to Cromwell why the monastic Visitation was necessary and how it could be accomplished.⁹¹ As will be seen, the initial monastic Injunctions were developed by Layton, and some of his ideas influenced the way in which the Visitation progressed.

Despite this, it is evident that, at the end of 1534, Layton had not been considered for a monastic Commissioner position.⁹² Only a couple of months before the Visitation, Layton demonstrated that he was not even a well tried agent of Cromwell: 'you shall never know what I can do neither what my serviceable mind is towards you till you have had some experiment thereof.'⁹³ It was probably his sudden rise to seniority that led to much of the early friction in the Visitation between Layton and fellow Commissioner Thomas Legh.

Layton was the only priest acting as Commissioner in the Visitation of the English monasteries. Layton was admitted BCL at Oxford in 1522 and was DCL by 1531. It is probable he was in Wolsey's service.⁹⁴ Layton was not noticeably

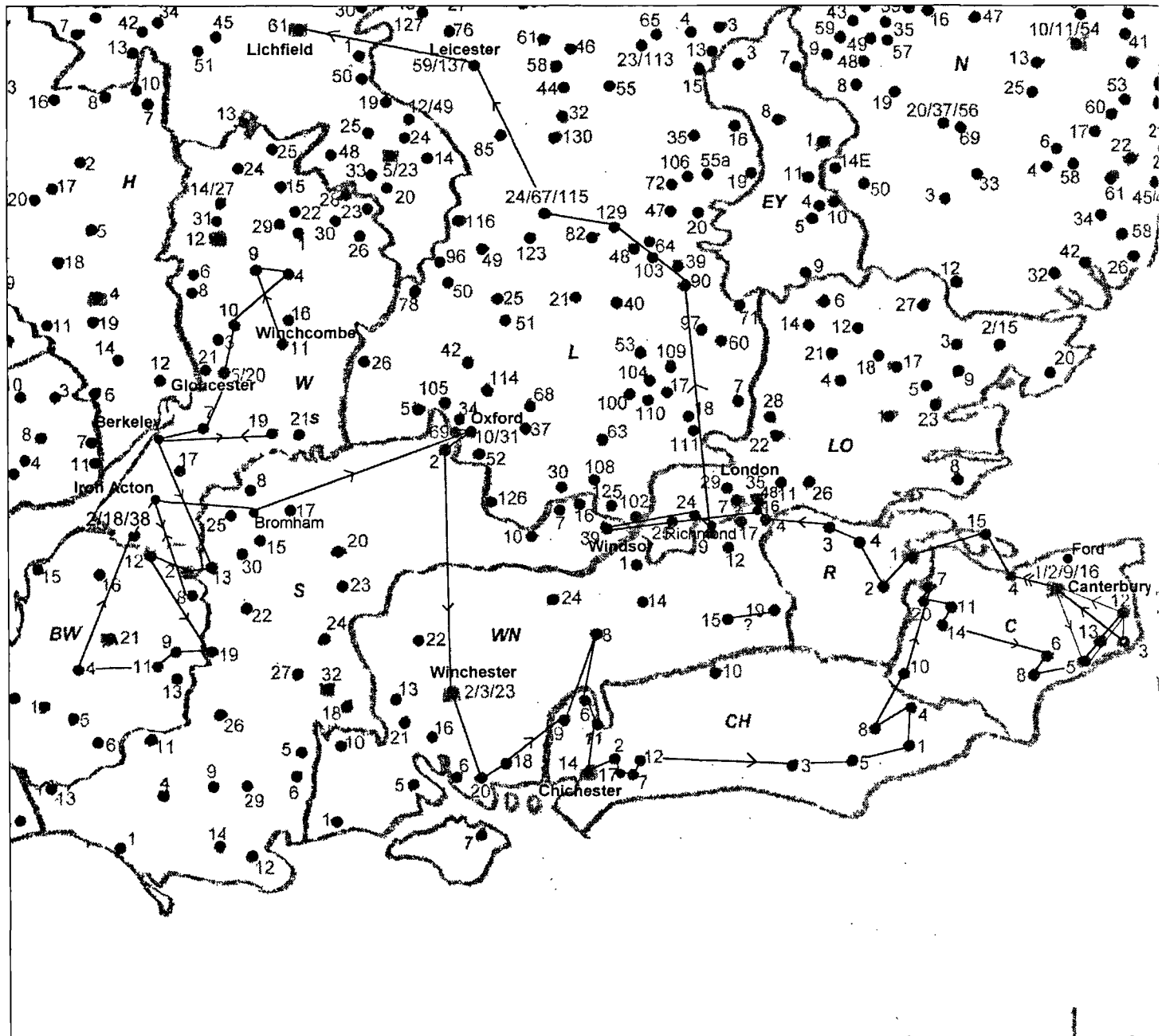
⁹¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13r/v (LP, VIII, 822).

⁹² But Tregonwell and Bedyll had, see PRO, SP 2 / R / 3 - 5 (LP, VIII, 73) and F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), p. 659.

⁹³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 56v (LP, VIII, 955).

⁹⁴ LP, IV, 6368 and 6377.

MAP 1 Dr Richard Layton's Visitation Circuit



involved in the affairs of the king's 'great matter'. He amassed ecclesiastical appointments including, in October 1534, becoming archdeacon of Buckingham. In 1531 he was admitted to the college of Advocates⁹⁵ and in 1534 became a clerk of the privy council.⁹⁶ At the time of the Royal Visitation, Layton was forty-three or forty-four years old⁹⁷ and given the mileage travelled during the Visitation, much of it during the winter months, Layton must have been fitter than the 'bulky man' popularly portrayed.⁹⁸

Layton appears to have been in London on 18 July 1535.⁹⁹ It, therefore, seems likely that he travelled to the court with Cromwell, who left London on 21 July and was definitely at Winchcombe on 23 July.¹⁰⁰ There is a possibility that Layton undertook the Visitation of Winchcombe abbey at that time.¹⁰¹ Map 1 identifies the route Layton took in his period of Visitation from July to December 1535, with Appendix 2 noting his itinerary.

Layton is first clearly identified at Evesham abbey on 1 August.¹⁰² That day he intended to travel to Tewkesbury abbey and then to Gloucester on 2 August to be with Cromwell. At Tewkesbury his work seems solely administrative, without any sign of personal examination of the religious: 'and there survey peruse and see the inventory,

⁹⁵ F. Hargreaves, *Sketches of the Lives of Eminent English Civilians* (London, 1804), p. 27.

⁹⁶ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (forthcoming), entry for Layton by P. Cunich. My thanks to Professor Cunich for sight of his draft.

⁹⁷ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 75r.

⁹⁸ H. F. M. Prescott, *The Man on a Donkey* (London, 1953), p. 343.

⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 104 (LP, VIII, 1059): Indenture relating to lands of the prebend Catlyne court (probably Cantlers) in St Paul's.

¹⁰⁰ LP, VIII, 1078; LP, VIII, 1111 and Worc. RO, 705, 24/5 (viii).

¹⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 723) where monk of Winchcombe John Horwode (alias John Placett) tells Cromwell of Layton: 'There is nothing to be compared to a trusty friend and a loving true servant is better than your treasure'; however, this could solely refer to meeting Layton at Bishops Waltham in September. See also G. Haigh, *The History of Winchcombe Abbey* (London, 1947), p. 174.

¹⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 4 (LP, IX, 3).

appropriations and the muniments of the house'.¹⁰³ Of course, he could possibly have completed the compertes a few days earlier, before visiting Evesham, and perhaps Pershore, returning to court via Tewkesbury and then viewing the muniments.

This first letter of Layton's is in the hand of Thomas Bartlett,¹⁰⁴ a servant of Cromwell's since March 1535 and previously in the service of Thomas Cranmer.¹⁰⁵ This identifies Bartlett as Layton's scribe from the outset of the Visitation; he is noted in this capacity three months later at St Augustine's, Canterbury.¹⁰⁶ With this one exception, Layton's extant letters to Cromwell during the Visitation were always in his own hand.

Layton appears to have remained at court with Cromwell at Gloucester from 2 August, travelling to Leonard Stanley priory, a cell of Gloucester abbey on 7 August and arriving at Berkeley on Sunday 8 August.¹⁰⁷ On 10 August, Layton left 'forthwith from Berkeley' to continue the Visitation, arriving at Cirencester abbey that day.¹⁰⁸ Here he received Cromwell's reprimand 'touching my removing from the court' without apparent permission. Layton responded that he left court 'after I knew your will and pleasure touching the Visitation of other places' and 'thinking that it had been your resolute and full mind that I should then depart'. He claimed he was encouraged to leave because 'my horse were all that day in an old barn without meat and litter and I not then assured of any lodging in the town, neither could be by the

¹⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 4 (LP, IX, 3).

¹⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 4 (LP, IX, 3).

¹⁰⁵ M. L. Robertson, 'Thomas Cromwell's Servants: The Ministerial Household in early Tudor Government and Society' (University of California, Los Angeles, Unpublished Ph. D., 1975), p. 443.

¹⁰⁶ J. G. Nichols (ed.), *Narratives of the Days of Reformation*, Camden Society, lxxvii (1859), p. 282.

¹⁰⁷ GRO, G B R B 2 / 1, fo. 117v - 119r.

¹⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225 (LP, VIII, 1127): This important letter is incorrectly dated by Gairdner to 28 July. It should be 11 August.

provision of any [of] the harbingers'.¹⁰⁹ At this early stage of the Visitation, Layton's remarks suggest a certain amount of chaos in its organisation. This is compounded by Cromwell's criticism of the quality of the Injunctions Layton had been giving to religious houses. The king had also been critical of the Injunctions and Layton clearly felt under pressure as, responding at midnight, he wrote 'that rather I may be buried quick than to be the occasion why the king's highness should diminish any part of the affiance, confidence or the expectation of your [Cromwell's] assured and proved mind towards his grace.'¹¹⁰ Layton returned to Cromwell and the court at Berkeley the following morning, Thursday 12 August,¹¹¹ and there appears to have contributed to the revision of the Injunctions.¹¹²

The next phase of Layton's commission was the Visitation of religious houses in the eastern part of Bath and Wells diocese, with some straying over into the margin of Salisbury diocese.

Throughout Layton's Visitation circuit, recourse will be made to extracts of the Visitation referred to in John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S.¹¹³ These extracts which Bale alleged came from the register of the king's Visitation, note the name and sexual crime of monks, canons and priests at twelve institutions. They have been noted by historians,¹¹⁴ but generally discounted as evidence, because of the

¹⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225r (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225v (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225v (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹¹² For the evolution of the monastic Injunctions, see Section 3.2.

¹¹³ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574), no page numbers: Bale noted the Visitation being undertaken in 1538. However, as Monkton Farleigh was suppressed under the 1536 Act, it is evident his 'breviary of things found out in abbeys' is from the 1535 - 1536 Royal Visitation.

¹¹⁴ e. g. F. A. Gasquet, Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (London, 1906), pp. 114, 117.

character of Bale himself.¹¹⁵ In reviewing Layton's circuit, Bale's evidence will be compared with Layton's correspondence to attempt to rehabilitate Bale's extracts as a useful source for the recording of crime in the first few months of the Royal Visitation.

By the Sunday 15 August, Layton had visited Monkton Farleigh priory, a cell of Lewes. Here he reported 'the prior had but 8 whores and the rest of the monks some 4, 3, 2 as they might get them. Their wills was good. The truth is a very stews and much buggery in both these and at Lewes'.¹¹⁶ John Bale's extract, at Monkton Farleigh, 'Loys [Lewes] the prior with 9 harlots and all the convent well of advantage', seemingly reflected Layton's Visitation, albeit Bale's figure is not the same. Layton relates that 'by the confession of a fair young monk, a priest', lately seconded from Lewes priory in Sussex, the mother house of Monkton Farleigh had similar crimes. This same informant also divulges some doubt about the prior of Lewes, which Layton later in the Visitation identified as treason. It would appear that Layton's attention was drawn to the relics, as the prior handed over 'Mary Magdalen's girdle ... sent also with great reverence to women travailing, which girdle Matilda the empress, founder of Farleigh, gave unto them.'¹¹⁷

On Monday 16 August, Layton reported to Cromwell from Bath, at the conclusion of his Visitation of the priory. Here he found 'the prior a right virtuous man and, I suppose, as better of his coat, a man simple and not of the greatest wit. His monks worse than any I have found yet both in buggery and adultery, some one of

¹¹⁵ Old Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885), describes Bale as a 'coarse and bitter controversialist'.

¹¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42). Incorrectly dated by LP to 9 August. It should be 16 August.

¹¹⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380v (LP, IX, 168).

them having 10 women, some 8 and the rest, so fewer'.¹¹⁸ John Bale, from his records, notes that 'among others Richard Lyncombe had 7 harlots (4 single and 3 married)' and also 'sodomite; William Bewshon had also 11 harlots, to the number of 1100 virgins, several other buggeries'.¹¹⁹ While presumably somewhat of an exaggeration, Bale's figures can be seen to have some basis in Layton's claims.

Layton also reported to Cromwell on the good physical state of the Bath priory building, but he noted that it was £400 in debt. The main thrust of his letter is to ridicule the relics, which he did at length, reflecting the new policy introduced a few days before.¹²⁰

Layton's next call was Keynsham priory, expecting to 'make an end' by Tuesday night, 17 August. At this point Layton was uncertain whether he should rejoin Cromwell, then at Thornbury, fifteen miles north of Keynsham,¹²¹ or 'return towards Maiden Bradley within 2 miles whereof is a Charterhouse called Witham and Bruton abbey 7 miles from that and Glastonbury [an]other 7 miles'.¹²² Here Layton demonstrated a good understanding of local topography.

It would appear that Cromwell's 'pleasure' was that Layton should continue the Visitation for, a week later, on Tuesday 24 August, he had 'despatched' the four houses previously named. At Maiden Bradley he found 'a holy father prior and hath but 6 children and but 1 daughter married yet of the goods of the monastery, trusting

¹¹⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380r (LP, IX, 168).

¹¹⁹ Richard Lyncomb and William Bewshyrn acknowledged the Supremacy on 22 September 1534. See *Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II* (London, 1846), p. 280.

¹²⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44r (LP, IX, 42). See Section 3.2 examining the Injunction on relics and pilgrimages.

shortly to marry the rest'. John Bale reflects this claim in his extract from the alleged Visitation register, 'Richard the prior ... had 5 harlots and 6 bastards'.¹²³ Layton relates that the prior 'never meddles with married women but all with maidens' and claimed to Cromwell that the prior was allowed his immorality by a papal licence sealed 'sub plumbo'.¹²⁴ Layton contemptuously sent Cromwell 'a bag of relics' owned by Maiden Bradley including 'God's coat', 'Our Lady's smock' and 'part of God's supper'. When in Bristol, a few days later, Layton expected the prior to deliver more relics to him.¹²⁵

At his Visitation at Witham, Layton reported that they 'hath professed and done all things according as I shall declare you'. It is clear, with the continuing rejection of the Royal Supremacy by the London Carthusians, that Layton was relieved the Carthusian monks of Witham were not equally as stubborn.

From Witham, Layton moved to Bruton¹²⁶ where 'nothing notable' was found, although Layton did discover a relic, 'Our Lady's Girdle of Bruton, red silk, which is a solemn relic sent to women travailing, which shall not miscarry in birth'.¹²⁷ Thomas Legh wrote to Cromwell, accusing Layton of showing no commission to the abbot 'and speedily finished his business as your mastership may perceive at his coming to

¹²¹ LP, IX, 124. See Appendix 12 for location of the court.

¹²² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42).

¹²³ John Bale, *The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S.* (London, 1574).

¹²⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 380r (LP, IX, 168): 'plumbo', possibly a pun meaning either lead or worthless.

¹²⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 380r (LP, IX, 168).

¹²⁶ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 476: says (without reference) Layton was at Bruton abbey on 20 August. As we shall see in Section 2.3.2, Legh and ap Rice arrived there on 23 August.

¹²⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380 (LP, IX, 168).

you if you call for the compertes and professions taken by him'.¹²⁸ Legh further accused Layton of not implementing the monastic Injunctions correctly, by neither restraining the abbot from leaving the monastery nor releasing those 'such as be under the age of 24 years from their religion'.¹²⁹ Effectively, Legh was accusing Layton of a superficial or soft approach to the Visitation of Bruton.¹³⁰

Layton then moved to Glastonbury where, like Bruton, he found no notable problems. He suggested the rule of the abbot was so strict that the monks dared not offend, although they would have liked to.¹³¹ From Glastonbury, Layton obtained 'two flowers wrapped in white and black sarcenet that on Christmas even' at the hour Christ Himself had been born 'will spring and burgeon and bear blossoms'. The prior of Maiden Bradley had already confirmed this occurrence to Layton.¹³²

On Sunday 22 August, Layton left Glastonbury and arrived at St Augustine's, Bristol, late at night. The next day, at 4 am, he wrote to tell Cromwell that 'we begin this morning intending this day to despatch both this house, here being but 14 canons and also the Gawntes whereat be 4 or 5'.¹³³ Bale reported that the abbot of Bristol, Williams, had four harlots (three single and one married).¹³⁴ In writing to Cromwell, probably earlier that day, the abbot showed no sign of this accusation; he was

¹²⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

¹²⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

¹³⁰ Cromwell was at Redlynch, the house of Chief Justice Fitzjames, near Bruton abbey, fifteen miles south of Hinton on 27 August 1535. See Exeter Cath, MS 3498, No. 73 or PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 202r (LP, IX, 191, incorrectly ascribed to Fitzjames).

¹³¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380v; F. A. Gasquet, The Last Abbot of Glastonbury and His Companions (London, 1895), p. 65 notes (without reference) that Layton arrived at Glastonbury on Saturday 21 August.

¹³² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380 (LP, IX, 168).

¹³³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380 (LP, IX, 168). Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II (London, 1846) p. 281, Complements in September 1534 respectively eighteen canons and four brothers plus the master.

¹³⁴ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

responding to ‘the kings most honourable letters’ requiring him to pull down his weirs and is seeking to demonstrate his attention in doing this.¹³⁵ Equally, in writing a few days later the abbot wrote of Layton, ‘he left at his gentle departing with me and my brethren certain Injunctions ...’;¹³⁶ he does not seem even to have enclosed a small token to assist his cause. Perhaps the claims made against the abbot and noted in Bale’s account were not known by the abbot or were related to a much earlier time. After visiting the Gawntes hospital and leaving the monastic Injunctions, on Tuesday morning 24 August,¹³⁷ Layton returned to Cromwell, who was then probably at nearby Iron Acton.

In Cromwell’s *Remembrances*¹³⁸ written at this time, is noted ‘Item. Of the Charterhouse of Hinton’. This record is located between ‘Item. of the Visitation and how much it grieveth the heads to be kept within their monasteries’ and ‘Item. Of the relics in diverse places’.¹³⁹ From a letter, now correctly dated for the first time, it is clear that Layton visited Hinton, before 1 September, to place pressure on the monastery ‘concerning the subscribing and sealing of a certain profession in writing’ which the prior subsequently sent directly to the king.¹⁴⁰ As at Witham, it would appear extra emphasis was placed on ensuring complete acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy at Carthusian houses.

¹³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 175 (LP, IX, 169).

¹³⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 32 (LP, IX, 215), my underlining.

¹³⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380v (LP, IX, 168).

¹³⁸ Cromwell’s *Remembrances* are memoranda of outstanding issues regularly listed among Cromwell’s correspondence. Often they represent agenda for discussion with the king.

¹³⁹ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 33 (LP, IX, 498 (1)): Note: in LP, ‘relyques’ is incorrectly transcribed as ‘religious’.

¹⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 85, fo. 158 (LP, VII, 1127), calendared as 1534.

For the first week of September, Knowles considers Layton ‘lost to sight’, presumably continuing his Visitation.¹⁴¹ The new evidence presented here¹⁴² shows that he was not directly involved in visiting monasteries, and probably remained with Cromwell¹⁴³ or the court, preparing for the Visitation of Oxford University. At this time, Layton spoke to the king, giving an update of his progress, in which he ‘greatly’ praised the abbot of Glastonbury.¹⁴⁴ Clearly, at this stage, the king had no problem with hearing good reports of a monastery.

Layton is next observed at the Visitation of the University of Oxford on 9 September, although he may have been there earlier. Thomas Legh’s letter, dated 3 September, asked Cromwell ‘that you will consider whom you send to the University of Oxford and Cambridge’, which suggests that Layton had not been confirmed in the role until very late in the day.¹⁴⁵ Legh’s earlier letter, of 20 August, noted Cromwell’s intention, at that time, to undertake the Oxford Visitation personally.¹⁴⁶

Layton’s Visitation of Oxford, accompanied by John Tregonwell, has already been thoroughly researched.¹⁴⁷ Logan made it clear that total control of this Visitation, and that at Cambridge, was in the hands of Thomas Cromwell.¹⁴⁸ The focus of this Visitation was not to identify crimes or immoral living, but to reinforce the Royal Supremacy within the institution and to make major reforms of the syllabus.

¹⁴¹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 280.

¹⁴² CCCC MS 111, fo. 344.

¹⁴³ Cromwell was briefly away from the court at the end of August, at Redlynch.

¹⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 153, fo. 135 (LP, XIV(ii), 185).

¹⁴⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69v (LP, IX, 265).

¹⁴⁶ BL, Harleian Manuscript (hereafter BL, Harley) 604, fo. 65r (LP, IX, 138).

¹⁴⁷ F. D. Logan, ‘The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535’, English Historical Review, 106 (1991), pp. 861 - 888.

Logan considered that the Commissioners' tasks at the universities were 'diversions or detours ... from the main work at hand' - the Visitation of religious houses.¹⁴⁹ As will be seen, however, the main emphasis throughout the monastic Visitation was the rigorous imposition of the Royal Supremacy; even the monastic Injunctions included, from an early stage, specifications of the sort of learning the government felt suitable in monastic houses.¹⁵⁰ Certainly, the first of the Injunctions specified to Oxford on 6 September was similar to the monastic Injunction requiring each member to sign an oath to observe the royal succession, the Royal Supremacy and the removal of papal power.¹⁵¹ This oath was similar to that prescribed to the university a year earlier, but, of course, the royal claims were now more tightly specified by the November 1534 parliamentary Act. A letter, now correctly dated for the first time to 14 September 1535, from the University of Oxford, said the king had sent 'two excellent persons' to visit the colleges and halls. The letter confirmed papal authority had been renounced 'though they have done this already, they do it again'.¹⁵² Clearly the university thought the renewed acknowledgement of Supremacy was over-kill, but their comment underlines the governmental concerns and fears on this issue, so much so, it had to continue the pressure.

Within a few days, the professions regarding the oath were made without any objection.¹⁵³ The Visitors were then free to institute changes in the curriculum,

¹⁴⁸ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 865.

¹⁴⁹ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 867.

¹⁵⁰ See discussion on Injunctions in Section 3.2.

¹⁵¹ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), pp. 865, 871.

¹⁵² PRO, SP 1 / 85, fo. 179r (LP, VII, 1148(1)). Translations from LP, incorrectly calendared as 14 September, 1534.

¹⁵³ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 872 notes Corpus Christi and Magdalen assented on 9 September.

including the provision of Latin and Greek lectures at the larger colleges, the amendment of the theological syllabus to ensure greater scriptural emphasis, the closure of the canon law school and the provision of an approved list of humanist authors for the arts faculty.¹⁵⁴ Layton's letter of 12 September, at the closing of the Visitation of the university, relates their enormous workload and the impact he and Tregonwell had made.¹⁵⁵ He details the additional Latin and Greek lectures instituted and the penalties for non-attendance. Layton was aware that he was an instrument of far reaching reform, not just in the development of humanist learning, but in the destruction of the canon law school. His comment, 'we have set Duncie in Bocardo and have utterly banished him Oxford forever' expressed triumph in the end of a theological tradition.¹⁵⁶ Layton's closing words in his letter to Cromwell, 'we find here all men applying and glad to accomplish all things',¹⁵⁷ reflected the ease in which the Visitors accomplished their enormous task, in such a short time, and the power they possessed to fearlessly impose such dramatic change.

At 7 am on Monday 13 September, Layton intended to be in the Chapter House at Abingdon abbey 'and I trust to bring you the truth of every thing for that house'.¹⁵⁸ Layton had been commanded to visit Abingdon by Cromwell's letters.¹⁵⁹ Bale's extracts of Layton's Visitation summary suggest Layton also found out, 'Thomas the abbot besides his own natural sister, of whom he begat 2 children, had 3 other

¹⁵⁴ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), pp. 865 - 869.

¹⁵⁵ BL, Cotton Faustina C VII, fos. 210, 211 (LP, IX, 350); F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), p. 877.

¹⁵⁶ BL, Cotton Faustina C VII, fo. 210r; F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), p. 866.

¹⁵⁷ BL, Cotton Faustina C VII, fos. 210v, 211r.

¹⁵⁸ BL, Cotton Faustina C VII, fo. 210v (LP, IX, 350).

¹⁵⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351).

harlots and known the father of many sodomites'.¹⁶⁰ Abbot Thomas's letter to Cromwell, two weeks later, made no reference to any such accusations of himself or his convent; he confirmed Layton had given him some Injunctions and he was now seeking licence to modify them.¹⁶¹

By Wednesday evening, 15 September, 'at uttermost' Layton expected to be with Cromwell and the court at Winchester, bringing with him the signed professions accepting the Supremacy from Oxford University.¹⁶² He remained at Winchester, discussing the next stage of the Visitation with Cromwell and Legh and probably the king.¹⁶³ The commission he was now given is clear. He was responsible for the Visitation of religious houses and secular colleges in the three dioceses of Chichester, Canterbury and Rochester.¹⁶⁴ It also emerges that he was required to examine the bishops of each diocese regarding their 'duty towards God and my prince'.¹⁶⁵ Here we see another reference to the Royal Supremacy issue.

After leaving Winchester, Layton journeyed south, visiting Titchfield Priory¹⁶⁶ on, probably, Tuesday 21 September before arriving at Southwick priory the next day.¹⁶⁷ Layton and Legh were at the time acting separately, but co-ordinating their activity to broadly complete the Visitation of the Winchester diocese. Layton sent

¹⁶⁰ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

¹⁶¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 34 (LP, IX, 455).

¹⁶² PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351).

¹⁶³ See Section 3.3 on decision making at Winchester.

¹⁶⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 444).

¹⁶⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 82v (LP, IX, 693).

¹⁶⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 344.

¹⁶⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 128 (LP, X, 138), LP incorrectly transcribe Southwick as Southwark, hence the error in D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 280, 476.

Cromwell a list of ‘the names of the abbeys of Winchester diocese which Doctor Legh and I have not meddle with all’.¹⁶⁸

On Friday night, 24 September, Layton entered the Chichester diocese and arrived at Dyrford. He found ‘Dyrford the poorest abbey that I have ever seen – far in debt and great decay’. Layton licensed the abbot to go to Cromwell and seek ‘licence in liberty of himself and other his brethren’ from the Injunctions. Layton noted that he could not ‘meddle’ with appeals regarding these Injunctions. Layton seems to have taken a liking to the abbot: ‘this young man for his time hath done right well’.¹⁶⁹

Layton had hoped to visit Shulbred priory and Easebourne nunnery on the Saturday. However, he must have set out from Dyrford too late in the day, as he found both ‘of their poverty not able to lodge us’. His nearest accommodation was Waverley abbey, in Winchester diocese, a detour of ten miles north of Shulbred, and while there he instituted its monastic Visitation.¹⁷⁰

As in the case of Dyrford, Layton allowed the abbot of Waverley licence to go to Cromwell and seek ‘liberty to survey his husbandry whereupon consists the wealth of his monastery’.¹⁷¹ Layton considered the abbot honest but lacking authority over his monks and ‘amongst his monks and servants I found corruption of the worst sort,

¹⁶⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444), this lost list would have included Breamore and Mottisfont, which Dr Tregonwell was deputed to visit a few weeks later, and perhaps Beaulieu, which Legh visited in March 1536.

¹⁶⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

¹⁷⁰ CCCC MS 111, fo. 344. Some inconsistency occurs in the manuscript’s ordering of the five smaller houses of the Winchester diocese Layton visited. It is difficult to reconcile his Visitation of Tandridge and Reigate, in the far eastern part of the diocese at this stage. It seems more likely that they were reported on later, perhaps when Layton was at Malling or Maidstone.

¹⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 29 (LP, IX, 452), delivering Layton’s letter at the same time.

because they dwell in the forest from all company'. Layton noted that as a result of the Lord Treasurer (William Paulet of nearby Basing) and others placing their servants in the monastery, the abbot 'dare neither command nor displace' his servants.¹⁷² Early on Sunday morning, Layton was 'in my chamber in examination', with the abbot apparently in attendance. As the servants provided him with no bread, drink or fire, Layton gathered these 'stark knaves' together and randomly altered their jobs, emphasising his authority and their lowliness. Layton advised Cromwell to 'tell the poor fool what he should do' in the management of his abbey.¹⁷³ On his arrival at Winchester, the abbot, not surprisingly, 'was in a sweat' when he met Cromwell. Cromwell appears to have been lenient with the abbot, and promised to assist him in 'such business as you shall have from time to time'.¹⁷⁴

That Layton had some information about religious houses before his Visitation is revealed in comments he made regarding the complement of Shulbred and Easebourne, two days before he arrived for their Visitation.¹⁷⁵ Perhaps he was accompanied by an official of the Chichester diocese who knew of the poverty of these two houses. In the Visitation of the York province, the Visitors were accompanied by a diocesan representative. It seems reasonable to suppose that this was the case more generally.

¹⁷² F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 87, 'the monks were by this time powerless in their own homes'.

¹⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 29 (LP, IX, 452).

¹⁷⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 155 (LP, X, 1097).

¹⁷⁵ albeit inaccurate: Shulbred contained 5 religious, not 3 canons and Easebourne contained 6 religious, not 4 nuns. See CCCC MS 111, fo. 344 and PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

As planned, Layton was at Shulbred priory on Monday 27 September.¹⁷⁶ Here it is clear that Layton had some detailed information about a previous Visitation of Shulbred. He claims that the bishop of Chichester ‘purposed to suppress the house’ ‘about 10 years since and deposed the prior’.¹⁷⁷ This seems hardly information that the current prior of Shulbred would have revealed. The word ‘purposed’ suggests the proposals of the bishop of Chichester were revealed to Layton at Shulbred by one of the bishop’s commissaries. This is supported by the Visitation compertes from the 1520s. The Visitation of Shulbred on 6 July 1524 by John Worthiall, then prebendary of Colworth, appears to show ‘all well’, other than Dom Henry Selnode who was absent in apostasy.¹⁷⁸ At the 3 July 1527 Visitation, there appear to have been no major concerns, with Prior William Burrey still in office¹⁷⁹ since 1521.¹⁸⁰ The prior of Shulbred in 1535 was George Walden. Unfortunately, the date of his election is not known.¹⁸¹ The partial suppression the bishop of Chichester allegedly instituted, along with the replacement of the prior, could not, therefore, have been undertaken more than eight years before Layton’s visit. From Layton’s comments, the founder of Shulbred had been the Earl of Northumberland but, subsequent to the bishop of Chichester’s action, the king had that position.¹⁸²

Layton found the house full of ‘bawdy knav[es]’. Although Layton’s letter is partially destroyed, a contemporary clerk has summarised ‘the wickedness of the

¹⁷⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115 (LP, IX, 533); LP incorrectly dates this letter Monday 4 October.

¹⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115r (LP, IX, 533). This letter is unfortunately heavily damaged on the right hand side of the manuscript.

¹⁷⁸ WSRO, EpI/1/4, fo. 93v.

¹⁷⁹ WSRO, EpI/1/4, fo. 102r/v.

¹⁸⁰ WSRO, EpI/1/4, fo. 93v.

¹⁸¹ Prior William Burrey, denoted ‘late prior of Shulbred’, was at nearby Tortington priory in 1536. See PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 227r (LP, X, 1207).

¹⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115r (LP, IX, 533).

monks',¹⁸³ for the sake of administrative convenience. The prior 'hath for himself but 7' whores, the sub prior also 7 whores, 'two others 5 a piece, and one other 2 whores'. John Bale's Visitation extract again broadly ties up with Layton's letter: 'George Walden, prior with 7 harlots, John Standney 7, Nicholas Duke 5 and Henry Selwode 2, besides other males and females'.¹⁸⁴ The 'bawdy prior' Layton sent to Cromwell, with his letter of rebuke. It, therefore, seems unlikely, given Cromwell's opportunity to test the claim first hand, that Layton is exaggerating regarding the moral failings of the priory. In this damaged letter, Layton, for the first time, seems to be suggesting suppression of a house: 'the king methinketh were b() being almost down and join it t([ogether?]) for they be all, as you see, bawdy knav[es]'.¹⁸⁵ Richard Gwent, had only in July completed the metropolitan Visitation of the Chichester diocese, on behalf of Archbishop Cranmer. In writing to Cromwell on 4 August 1535, Gwent noted 'and houses of religion where be not in some houses 3, 6 or 9 in number are far unable to execute the kings grace commandment in preaching and declaring as they are commanded, much less their duty to God ... and it were better such small house were knit together in one that there might be a convenient number'.¹⁸⁶ Layton's suggestion of 'join it' appears to reflect Gwent's suggestion, less than two months before, of amalgamation as a means of monastic reform.

Layton intended to visit Easebourne Nunnery that same day, and presumably did so.¹⁸⁷ Knowles quoted this example of rapid progress to show the Visitors were demonstrating 'a total lack of principle' in the speed of their Visitation.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115v.

¹⁸⁴ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

¹⁸⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115r (LP, IX, 533) - my underlining; brackets indicate manuscript damage.

¹⁸⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 20r (LP, IX, 25) - my underlining.

¹⁸⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

Layton appears to have commenced his Visitation of the secular clergy at Chichester cathedral on Tuesday 28 September. He found the cathedral ‘applicable to all things, somewhat papistical, with privy susurrations’.¹⁸⁹ From Bale’s extract it is clear that Layton examined both the canons at Chichester and the Vicars Choral. Bale noted the names of eleven individuals, most of whom appear members of the Vicars Choral.¹⁹⁰ The only prebendary on the list is John Champion who, it was noted, ‘had 2 harlots’ and ‘taint of sodomy’. Of the ten Vicars Choral named, John Hylle, noted as having ‘thirteen harlots’, was the worst individual; Roger Barham was noted as defamed with ‘several’ harlots and also sodomy. John Champion was also warden of the hospital of St Mary in Chichester and perhaps this too was visited by Layton.¹⁹¹ Layton felt that, at the cathedral church, not all priests came from an ‘angelic mould’ and ‘you can believe they are scarcely perfect as much as they are obscene’.¹⁹²

On Wednesday 29 September or Thursday 30 September, Layton visited Boxgrove abbey. Again he sent the prior to Cromwell to personally plead for relaxation of the Injunctions. The founder of Boxgrove, Lord Lawarr, was at the house as Layton told Cromwell ‘Lord de Lawarr has instructed me to write unto you for his [the prior’s] liberty and other his affairs which he will declare unto you’.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 287.

¹⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509); susurrations = murmurings.

¹⁹⁰ WSRO, EpI / 1 / 4, fo. 92r/v and fo. 98r where 5 of the 10 names can be identified as members of Chichester Vicars Choral, from the 1524 and 1527 Visitations; John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300 - 1541*, vol. 7, Chichester diocese (IHR, London, 1964), for prebendary, John Champion; John Bale, *The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S.* (London, 1574).

¹⁹¹ WSRO, CAPI / 3 / o, fo. 80v. John Champion died by October 1537. The claims regarding Champion from Bale’s extract do not seem to have affected his position, on 29 May 1536 Champion was amongst the prebendaries who elected Richard Sampson bishop of Chichester: WSRO, CAPI / 3 / o, fo. 78v.

¹⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509) - my translation: ‘ex naturia Angelica ... vix profecto coedas quarta sit spurcicies’.

¹⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509).

Layton wrote, as he had on previous occasions, ‘I would not meddle but referred all to your mastership’.

Layton was extraordinarily casual in his description of the moral climate of the religious at Boxgrove. He told Cromwell, in his opening sentence, ‘the prior of Boxgrove, he has only two women, he is a great husband and keeps great hospitality, of the monks all are of the same flour/quality’.¹⁹⁴ Effectively, Layton undermined monastic life at Boxgrove in a facetious manner by the use of insinuation and puns. However, with the prior travelling to Cromwell there can be little doubt that some basis for the accusations existed. It is unlikely Layton would have linked the prior with ‘two women’ if the claim was without substance, given that Cromwell, within a few days, could test out the claim in an interview with the prior. However, Lawarr sent a letter to Cromwell at this time, supporting the prior. Lawarr said the prior ‘has proved himself a very honest man to the wealth of the said poor house’, clearly unaware of the claims made by Layton. As the founder, and living close at hand, he should have been aware of any dubious activities at Boxgrove.¹⁹⁵ Thus, one is left with the view that a very wide definition of sexual incontinence was being used by Cromwell and Layton. Perhaps, for example, even an admission by the prior to talking regularly with two women at the gatehouse or outside the monastery was seen as enough to defame him by the Royal Visitors. After all, any contact with women

¹⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509): my translation, from Latin underlined: ‘eius monach: omnes sunt eiusdem farine’.

¹⁹⁵ Layton notes the value of Boxgrove’s lands as £100 and this is separately confirmed by Lawarr in his letter to Cromwell. This helps emphasise Lawarr’s closeness to the activities of the priory for which he was ‘founder’.

was specifically forbidden in the Injunctions the Visitors were issuing.¹⁹⁶ Of course, such historical contact with women may have seemed innocuous to Lawarr.¹⁹⁷

On the morning of Friday 1 October, Layton ‘examined’ Bishop Sherborne at his palace in Aldingborne. From Layton’s comments it appears that Cromwell had already told him Sherborne was ‘our man’.¹⁹⁸

Later that morning, Layton left for Arundel College, probably visiting Tortington priory on the way.¹⁹⁹ By noon on the Saturday he expected ‘God willing’ to be at Lewes abbey.

He already expected the ‘very stews and much buggery’ at Lewes as a result of information from his Visitation at its cell, Monkton Farleigh, six weeks before.²⁰⁰ Layton was now able to report, a few days later, from Maidstone, ‘that at Lewes I found corruption of both the kinds – adulterers and sodomites’.²⁰¹

Of greater importance to Layton was his revelation of treason at Lewes. Already from his Visitation of Monkton Farleigh, he had found information ‘to bring the prior of Lewes into great danger’.²⁰² To obtain evidence of the prior’s guilt, Layton succeeded in pressing the sub prior to confess ‘treason in his preaching’ and

¹⁹⁶ See Section 3.2 on Injunctions.

¹⁹⁷ Lawarr remained loyal to Boxgrove when in a letter to Cromwell a fortnight after the passing of the Suppression Act 1536, he sought help ‘to forbear the suppressing’ of the priory (see BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 280, LP, X, 552). None of the inmates were found ‘incontinent’ by the ‘brief certificate’ of the Commissioners in 1536 (see J. Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 166).

¹⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509).

¹⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509); CCCC MS 111, fo. 344.

²⁰⁰ Noted earlier in Layton’s Visitation.

²⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26r (LP, IX, 632): this letter is wrongly dated in LP. It is before 16 October, probably about 8/10 October.

‘have caused him [the sub prior] to subscribe his name to the same, submitting himself to the king’s mercy and grace’. Layton ‘also made him confess that the prior knew the same and counselled it and the said sub prior subscribed his name to this said confession against the prior’.²⁰³ Layton, from the outset of his visit to Lewes, was seeking to find the prior guilty of, presumably, an offence against the Royal Supremacy Act. Layton then stridently addressed the prior, accusing him of concealment of treason and, under his powers as a Commissioner, declared his ability to discharge the prior and pronounce him perjured. The prior ‘kneeling upon his knees’ sought intercession. Layton’s blustering behaviour perhaps reflected that the evidence was a bit thin. Layton finally agreed to leave the prior in his position and commanded him to appear with the sub prior before Cromwell, at court, on 1 November. Layton effectively deferred the final decision on the prior’s fate to Cromwell ‘so it shall be in your power to do with him what you list’.²⁰⁴

Continuing along the Sussex coast, visiting Michelham and Warbleton priories,²⁰⁵ Layton arrived at the exempt Benedictine monastery of Battle. Here he continued his correspondence to Cromwell. ‘At Battle I found the abbot and all his convent, saving one or two, great daily sodomites and traitors’.²⁰⁶ As with the prior of Lewes, the abbot of Battle, ‘the veriest hayne beetle and busard and the arants churl that ever I see’, is commanded to be at court. John Bale’s extract from the Visitation records reflects Layton’s comments on the abbey. John, the abbot, and

²⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42).

²⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26r (LP, IX, 632) - my underlining.

²⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26r (LP, IX, 632); on 1 November the king and Cromwell were at Windsor (see LP, IX, 823), probably Layton had also arrived there as his intention was to report to Cromwell as soon as his Visitation was over (see LP, IX, 668). Prior Robert remained until Lewes’ surrender 16 November 1537, which G. W. O. Woodward, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1966), p. 107 believes was as a result of the Visitation evidence.

²⁰⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 344.

²⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26r (LP, IX, 632).

fourteen other named monks were noted as guilty of sodomy; in addition Thomas Lynet was marked 'one married woman and one harlot' and Thomas Cranbroke 'with the same and others beside'.²⁰⁷ Whatever the strengths of Layton's claims, Bale's Visitation evidence shows that those he named were assessed as guilty.

Here Layton told Cromwell of the general wickedness of Benedictine monks, 'in all other places, whereat I come, especially the black sort of devilish monks I am sorry to know as I do. Surely I think they be past amendment and think God has utterly withdrawn his grace from them'.²⁰⁸ This is an extraordinary statement to make, at that time, to suggest the closure of the greatest religious order in the realm. To make such a comment to the vicar general about the Benedictines, with their might in terms of income and House of Lords seats, would appear naïve, unless it reflected Cromwell's own negative views on Benedictine monks.

Within a few days of leaving Battle, and with the Visitation of Robertsbridge, Layton had completed his inspection of the diocese of Chichester. He then entered Canterbury diocese, visiting the eastern part of the diocese, including Leeds priory.²⁰⁹

By about 8 to 10 October, Layton was at the secular college of Maidstone. From here he wrote to Cromwell, because 'this day at dinner I received a letter from Stoke College in Essex [sic] that the master there in "extremis languet et in articulo mortis"'. Over half of this letter, which berated the monks of Lewes and Battle, was filled with Layton's plea to Cromwell to gain a benefice promised him by the bishop

²⁰⁷ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

²⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26r (LP, IX, 632).

²⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 114 (LP, IX, 713).

of Durham and currently in the possession of the dying Dr Robert Shorton.²¹⁰ It is a grasping, ambitious letter that reflects badly on the character of Layton. He was scared that the king would grant the benefice to one of his chaplains and asked Cromwell to ensure his servant, Ralph Sadler, who had remained at court, would influence the king favourably. Even the lengthy footnote is concerned with the tactics of gaining this benefice; Layton, by the second half of this letter, had mentally left the Visitation far behind.²¹¹

In the week commencing 10 October, Layton toured the south east part of Canterbury diocese, visiting Monks Horton, Bilsington, Folkestone, St Radegund's, Langdon and Dover.²¹² Folkestone priory contained only the prior and a sick monk.²¹³ Layton demonstrated that he asked detailed questions on the foundation of the priory, commenting that 'my lord Clinton pretend to be founder' and that 'the king is surely founder'. He related aspects of its history and the value of its lands. Layton noted 'the house is in utter decay' and 'no house meet for a monk or two'. The Visitor told Cromwell the monk was a great sodomite and the 'prior himself was an apostate and came thither as a renegade'. Layton, in his letter, was effectively

²¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26v (LP, IX, 632).

²¹¹ On 22 November 1535, Richard Layton was collated to the rectory of Sedgefield, vacant upon the death of Mr Robert Shorton. See DUL - PGS, DSR I.2, fo. 22v. Layton's letter gives an interesting insight into Cromwell's support of Cuthbert Tunstal when the bishop was under intensive examination by the king in May 1534. The benefice Layton sought was 'within the bishopric of Durham which my Lord the Bishop of Durham promised to me at his great business that you quit him of, whereas you stuck unto him, all his other friends forsaking him'.

²¹² CCCC MS 111, fos. 344/5; Layton's letters here, as in many other occasions, have been incorrectly dated in LP, undermining the narratives given to the sequence of events at this time, e. g. see F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), pp. 126-8. LP, IX, 669 should be dated Sunday 17 October (and not Saturday 23 October) - the incident of the fire at Canterbury on Saturday night is recorded in the 'Chronicles of St Augustine's, Canterbury' as 'the 16 day of October at midnight' (see J. G. Nichols (ed.), *Narratives of the Days of Reformation*, Camden Society, lxxvii (1859), p. 283). Also, Layton notes 'the Bishop of Winchester lay the day before I came' (i. e. Friday) at Christchurch, on his way with the bishop of Hereford on embassy abroad. The bishops were both at Calais on Thursday 21 October (see LP, IX, 878), thus undermining their being at Canterbury on Friday 22 October.

²¹³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 63r (LP, IX, 669); confirming the complement noted in CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

building up evidence to close down the priory, given that the king was patron, and maintain the church as a 'good parsonage with a vicar'. Of course, Layton asked to be the vicar. He suggested that the monk be sent to Canterbury, where he allegedly came from, and the prior be sent back to where he was professed. However, Layton took no action, requesting Cromwell's pleasure.²¹⁴ Evidently, Cromwell agreed to the closure of Folkestone, for a week later Layton 'rode back with speed to take an inventory of Folkestone'.²¹⁵

At Dover priory, Layton described the prior and his monks 'be even as other be', but the prior the worst: 'Sodomites there is none for they need not [as] they have no lack of women'.²¹⁶

At Langdon abbey Layton described how the abbot 'passes all that ever I knew in profound bawdy, the drunkenest knave living'. The canons were claimed to have 'not one spark of virtue amongst them, arrant bawdy knaves every man'. Layton related that the abbot made the chaplain sleep with his own whore, 'to rehearse you the whole story it were too long and too abominable to hear'. As with Folkestone, Layton described to Cromwell the abbey's 'utter decay' and he apparently recommended suppression of the house. While Layton pronounced the abbot perjured, reserving judgement to Cromwell and noting that the priory would shortly fall down, he suggested deposing the prior, 'sequestering the fruits' and taking an inventory of the

²¹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 63r (LP, IX, 669).

²¹⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 154 (LP, IX, 668).

²¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 63v (LP, IX, 669). The house contained eleven religious (CCCC MS 111, fo. 345).

goods. This was a big step to take at a house of eight religious²¹⁷ with no suggestion as to what should happen to the displaced monks.

On Friday 22 October, having ridden from Canterbury to Folkestone, Layton again rode to Langdon. Unlike at Folkestone, Layton did not seem to have a commission from Cromwell for this second visit, saying, 'I suppose God himself put it in my mind thus suddenly to make a search'. Gaining no reply on arrival, Layton smashed a door down and, shortly after, the abbot's alleged whore, 'alias his gentlewoman', was captured by Thomas Bartlett. After a search of the house, 'at last I found her apparel in the abbot's coffer'. He sent the woman to Dover prison for eight days and the abbot he had imprisoned at Christchurch priory, Canterbury. Whatever the truth in the story, Layton saw this incident as an important piece of propaganda to justify the severity of the Visitation: 'Now it shall appear to the gentlemen of this country, and other the commons, that you shall not deprive or visit but upon substantial grounds'.²¹⁸

There had certainly been some disquiet at this time regarding the manner in which the Royal Visitation was being conducted.²¹⁹ It is, therefore, as if Layton was providing Cromwell with material to justify the tactics of the Royal Visitation. Gasquet and others noted the abbot of Langdon later received a pension which, if the allegation of immorality were true, was unnecessary, as he could have been removed

²¹⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

²¹⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 154 (LP, IX, 668).

²¹⁹ see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fos. 17 - 18 (LP, IX, 621) and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fos. 19 - 20 (LP, IX, 622) both dated 16 October from Legh and ap Rice, defending themselves from criticism by Cromwell, and probably the king, of their conduct in the Visitation. See Section 2.3.2 on Legh's and ap Rice's Visitation circuit.

without expense.²²⁰ The purpose of Layton's letter was to provide material for Cromwell to prove to the king and others that the Royal Visitation needed to be vigorously pursued; after all, the abbot was in prison. The absence of requests from Layton for personal advancement, which featured in his two previous letters, perhaps suggests he thought the letter would be shown to others. The witnesses, Bartlett and Anthony, were both Cromwell's servants and would, no doubt, support Layton's claims. Layton was also not reserved in telling his readers that 'your servant John Anthony [and] his men marvelled what fellow I was and so did the rest of the abbey'.²²¹

On Saturday evening, 16 October, Layton arrived at Christchurch, Canterbury. At 1 am he was awoken by one of his servants. The great dining chamber, in the king's lodging, 'was suddenly fired by some firebrands or snuff of some candle'.²²² Interestingly, he did not explore the possibility of his own assassination. Layton embraced the opportunity of organising the quenching of the flames, overseeing the protection of St Thomas's shrine by four monks (with mastiffs) and guarding the jewels in the vestry. He prepared for the removal of the shrine and the jewels to St Augustine's abbey, but the fire was controlled.

On Sunday, Layton heard Cranmer preach in the cathedral on the 'false and unjust usurpation' of the bishop of Rome.²²³ It was, therefore, probably at that time that Layton examined the monks of Christchurch. The extract from Bale's record of the compertes at Canterbury cathedral identified nine named individuals guilty of

²²⁰ F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 128.

²²¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 154r (LP, IX, 668).

²²² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 62v (LP, IX, 669).

²²³ BL, Cotton Cleo. EVI, fo. 234r (LP, IX, 361).

sodomy, of which two are also noted as incontinent – Christopher James with three married women and Nicholas Clement with one single woman. The list of individuals appears extensive, but a year beforehand the house contained seventy religious.²²⁴

At Canterbury, Layton also visited the Augustinian priory of St Gregory and the Benedictine nunnery of St Sepulchre.²²⁵ On Wednesday 20 October, ‘Dr Layton, being a professor in the laws and the chiefest [Visitor] did visit ... [St Augustine’s, Canterbury] ..., Mr Bartlett being his scribe and of council with him’; ‘In this Visitation, all men utterly renounced the name of the pope, his privileges and exempt places, etc’.²²⁶ John Bale identified thirteen named individuals guilty of moral crimes; ten, including the abbot, of sexual incontinence with one woman, and two monks with two women; Thomas Barham was accused of sodomy. From a house of some thirty-one religious, Layton accused over a third of sexual offences.²²⁷

On Friday 22 October, Layton, as already described, went again to Folkestone and Langdon, returning to Christchurch, Canterbury that night.²²⁸ This represented a trip of forty miles with major activities at each of the two houses, an extraordinary achievement. The next day, Layton travelled the short distance to Archbishop Cranmer’s manor at Ford to ‘visit him now when I have visited his see’. It was, in fact, only with the Visitation of Faversham abbey (where he intended to arrive on the

²²⁴ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574). Of the nine names, seven can be readily identified from their acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy on 12 December 1534. The other two names are probably obscured by aliases. See Annual Report Of The Deputy Keeper Of The Public Records, 7th Report (London, 1846), p. 282.

²²⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

²²⁶ J. G. Nichols (ed.), Narratives of the Days of Reformation, Camden Society, lxxvii (1859), p. 282.

²²⁷ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574). Again, all but two of the names can be directly recognised from the surrender document dated 30 July 1538. See Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public records, 8th Report (London, 1846), p. 15.

Saturday evening²²⁹) and Minster-in-Sheppey²³⁰ (which he probably visited by Monday 25 October), that Layton truly completed the Visitation of religious houses in Canterbury diocese.

On entry into the Rochester diocese, Layton visited the cathedral priory.²³¹ He wrote to Bishop Hilsey, then staying at Cobham, telling the bishop he was hindering the king's Visitation and was to come immediately to Rochester.²³² Hilsey replied that as he had not yet been installed as bishop at Rochester and did not have 'there any provision to receive him' he could not comply. Layton thereupon 'licensed' Bishop Hilsey 'to tarry his coming to Cobham'. Hilsey claimed that Layton placed pressure on the prior of Rochester to give the Visitor 'the advowson of a benefice in Rochester called Saint Margaret's'. The prior had already given this advowson to Hilsey, but Layton is said to have demanded it: 'and who for ever said nay he would have it'. Hilsey claimed that to obtain the benefice, Layton had put the bishop out of favour with Cromwell, claiming that 'your mastership has certified me that you have information that I should be unadvisedly visiting colleges and abbeys in my diocese to the hindrance of the kings highnesses Visitation'.²³³

Evidently during this Visitation the tough stance on the religious being contained within their houses was continuing. Lord Cobham's letter to Cromwell,

²²⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 154 (LP, IX, 668).

²²⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 154 (LP, IX, 668).

²³⁰ CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

²³¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 81 (LP, IX, 691) From the date of this letter, Layton could only have been at Rochester on Monday 25, Tuesday 26 October.

²³² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 82v (LP, IX, 693).

²³³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 82r. The inhibition of the bishops' diocesan powers will be discussed in Section 3.3.

seeking the position of receiver for the priory for his uncle, demonstrated the resulting need for laymen to undertake the financial business of the cathedral priory.²³⁴

At Cobham College, bishop Hilsey was examined by Layton 'of my duty towards God and my prince'.²³⁵ The secular college itself was also examined on its acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy and on Wednesday 27 October, the master and four others signed their acceptance.²³⁶

Hilsey claimed that Layton licensed him to go to Malling to confirm children of that area 'I never came in abbey in my diocese till that your Visitors were gone, a Wednesday last, what day I was in Malling'.²³⁷ It is unclear from this whether Layton was also at Malling on Wednesday 27 October, visiting the Benedictine nunnery. It is likely that Layton then continued to the Dominican nuns at Dartford before leaving Rochester diocese.

There is some evidence, related to the Royal Visitation of London houses, of Cromwell's forward planning at the end of July, when the process of Visitation commenced. Sir William Fitzwilliam had, on the 8 August, told Cromwell 'that I have given order with the rest of the justices of the peace this shire [Surrey] according to your letter for the assessing of the small houses of religion within the said shire and have left for you to visit St Mary Overy's, Bermondsey, Merton abbey and St Thomas Spital in Southwark'.²³⁸ It seems more than coincidence that, having completed the

²³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 181 (LP, IX, 691).

²³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 82v (LP, IX, 693).

²³⁶ PRO, E 25 / 32 (LP, IX, 692).

²³⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 82r (LP, IX, 693).

²³⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fos. 52 - 53 (LP, IX, 50) - my underlining. Fitzwilliam was the Treasurer of the king's household and a 'Commissioner of the Tenth' for Surrey, along with Cromwell and others.

Visitation of Kent and entered London, Layton promised Cromwell on 26 September ‘the last that I will visit shall be the exempt monasteries of St Saviours at Bermondsey, St Mary Overy [at Southwark] and the bawdy hospital of St Thomas in Southwark ... and so repair unto you with great speed, where so ever you be’.²³⁹ These are three of the four houses mentioned by Fitzwilliam. Fitzwilliam appears to have presumed Cromwell’s interest in these houses to be purely to do with the ‘Commission of the Tenth’ survey. Indeed, in his earlier letter to Cromwell, dated 1 August, he noted that two of Cromwell’s servants had told him ‘that you had appointed two auditors of your own’,²⁴⁰ suggesting that he understood Cromwell’s interest in these particular houses was their financial assessment.²⁴¹ It is, therefore, possible that Layton was deputed in his Visitation commission to provide the financial material necessary for the three houses, on which the ‘tenth’ could then be estimated. However, it is more likely that Fitzwilliam had confused the two separate Visitations and that Cromwell was warning off the assessors of the ‘Tenth’ from interfering with the future Royal Visitation of these monasteries. Of Layton’s entry to London, the only information extant is from Bale’s extract from the Visitation. Bale recorded that Prior John of Bermondsey abbey had twenty harlots.²⁴²

It appears likely that Layton then rode to Windsor ‘with speed’ to report to Cromwell, who was then with the king.²⁴³ This is substantiated by the fact that of the twelve extracts from John Bale’s ‘breviary of things found out in abbeys’, eleven of

²³⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

²⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 4).

²⁴¹ It is likely that Fitzwilliam on 1 August was responding to Cromwell and Audley’s joint letters of 20 July, sent out to those responsible for assessing all Ecclesiastical income. See Worc. RO, 705, 24 / 5(viii) and PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 168r (LP, IX, 161).

²⁴² John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

the locations have, as has been seen, identified to Richard Layton's Visitation. The only location Bale mentions which cannot be positively identified with a particular Visitor is the college of St George's at Windsor. It seems fair to deduce that Bale had obtained a copy of the 'breviary' for Layton's circuit of Visitation and, from that, he chose to 'show but one or other example, to an unsavoury taste thereof'.²⁴⁴ Thus Windsor would have been visited by Layton, logically at the beginning of November 1535, when he would have reported to Cromwell.

Bale's extract, for the college of priests at Windsor castle, again named individuals, ten in all, with diverse numbers of 'harlots' attributed to them. Robert Davyson, for example, had six harlots, and three others five harlots each. Sodomy is not mentioned in this sorry list, but a Laytonesque flavour is added at the end 'and the others also had others [harlots]'

Layton then disappears from view in November, but reappears in December at Syon.²⁴⁵ At the Bridgettine abbey of Syon, Layton was clearly working for the king and Cromwell. Thomas Bedyll noted that he and Layton were at Syon, attempting to enforce 'the king's title and also in the king's graces matter of his succession and marriage'.²⁴⁶

Bedyll told Cromwell, in a letter from Syon dated 17 December, that he and Layton 'purpose this afternoon or else tomorrow morning to await on the kings grace

²⁴³ On three separate occasions Layton told Cromwell he expected to join him. See PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444), PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 26v/r (LP, IX, 632) and BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 154 (LP, IX, 668).

²⁴⁴ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574).

²⁴⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 152 (LP, IX, 954).

to know his pleasure in everything',²⁴⁷ which clearly demonstrates the king's involvement in their activities. Bedyll continued in his letter, telling Cromwell 'Master Layton has written certain compertes unto you and therefore I forbear to speak anything thereof'. Evidently Layton was continuing his monastic Visitation at Syon as well as participating in the extensive attempts to make the community conform to the Royal Supremacy.²⁴⁸

The manner in which Layton obtained his compertes becomes clearer in his letter to Cromwell from Syon.²⁴⁹ Layton related that he 'learned many enormous things' against one of the Syon priests 'in the examination of the lay brethren'. Layton then listed a large number of accusations including a detailed claim that the priest behaved improperly in confession with one of the nuns, meeting her secretly by night parted only by a grated window. If this was considered sexual incontinence in the compertes, there was evidently a wide definition of incontinence. It is apparent that far from knowing of the alleged liaison from the nun involved, Layton had the accusation from a third party 'it were too long to declare all things of him that I have heard which I suppose is true'.²⁵⁰ However, while Layton recorded this hearsay evidence 'which I suppose is true', for the benefit of Cromwell, he continued, 'I intend to make further search both of some of the brethren and some also of the sisters for such like matters. If I find anything apparent to be true I shall, God willing, thereof certify your mastership tomorrow by 7 in the morning'.²⁵¹ Hence, having regaled Cromwell with salacious stories, he appreciated this was not enough without

²⁴⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130r (LP, IX, 986).

²⁴⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130v.

²⁴⁸ see A. M. Hutchinson, Syon Abbey: Dissolution, No Decline, Birgittiana, 2 (Naples, 1996), pp. 249 - 252.

²⁴⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 152 (LP, IX, 954).

²⁵⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 152r/v - my underlining.

finding evidence 'apparent to be true'. Bedyll reported, a few days later, that Layton had sent the compertes of Syon to Cromwell. However, these details no longer exist and we are unable to judge if Layton modified his initial claims of sexual incontinence in the light of his personal examination.

Within a day or two of visiting the king²⁵² Layton had embarked 'northwardly from London ... towards Lichfield whereat I appointed to meet with Dr Legh'²⁵³ to undertake the Visitation of the York province. The dating of Layton's journey to Lichfield has been subject to uncertainty by historians. His letter informing Cromwell of his arrival at Lichfield is dated 'crastino Divi Thome'.²⁵⁴ This has been taken by LP and most subsequent historians to be the day after the feast of St Thomas the Apostle, i.e. 22 December. However, the date has been argued to be the day after the feast of St Thomas of Canterbury, i.e. 30 December. It will now be demonstrated that the correct date of 'crastino Divi Thome' is 22 December.²⁵⁵

In the letter, Layton referred to his visit to Harrold priory in Bedfordshire a day or two before (i.e. either 20 or 28 December). He described Harrold as having four or five nuns with the prioress, 'one of them had two fair children, another one [child] and no more'. He also related the activity of Lord Mordant and his son in forcing the nuns to grant a lease under convent seal. Layton also noted that Harrold was of the king's foundation.

²⁵¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 152v - my underlining.

²⁵² BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 130v (LP, IX, 986).

²⁵³ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 162r (LP, IX, 1005).

²⁵⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 163r (LP, IX, 1005).

²⁵⁵ G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 764-767; see also D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286 footnote.

It is clear that Legh also visited Harrold and that there were only three nuns present.²⁵⁶ Legh was at Hinchingsbrooke, twenty miles away from Harrold, on 23 December.²⁵⁷ Since Layton, in his lengthy description of Harrold, did not mention that Legh had already been there, it appears safe to presume that Legh was at Harrold a day or two after Layton. It seems fair to deduce, therefore, that ‘crastino Divi Thome’ refers to 22 December. Legh found only three nuns at Harrold, rather than the four or five mentioned by Layton, perhaps because Layton had dismissed some on age grounds. This would not have been the first time Legh had found Layton had already visited a monastery.²⁵⁸

After Harrold, Layton arrived at the Cluniac priory of St Andrew in Northampton. Here he berated the previous prior for bringing the house into debt, claiming that they had let out the farms and received the full rent for up to twenty years in advance. The current prior was complimented as ‘a bachelor of divinity, a great husband and a good clerk’. Layton noted the priory was of the king’s foundation and he felt that the only way the king could recover sold lands was to promote the prior and take the house ‘into his hands’. Layton suggested that at the end of the Northern Visitation he would return and attempt to obtain the resignation of the prior. Clearly, Layton was showing purely financial motives in ‘reforming’ this house. It was because the house was wasting its financial assets, which could be of use to the king, that the prior’s resignation was suggested; there was no suggestion that the divine office was not being satisfactorily undertaken.

²⁵⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 342.

²⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 150 (LP, IX, 1009).

²⁵⁸ At Bruton abbey, see PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

Layton must have been at Northampton on the night of 20 December, leaving the following morning for Leicester. Here he visited the secular college of Newark and found it and its hospital ‘well kept and honest men therein’.²⁵⁹ The college had ‘£300 in their treasury house’, conveying a sense of good financial management, in contrast with St Andrew’s Northampton. Again, no record was made directly regarding the moral values of the house, the term ‘honest men’ most likely relating to their acknowledgement of the Supremacy.

Layton stayed overnight on 21 December at Leicester abbey. He considered the abbot an ‘honest man’, but the canons ‘most obstinate and factious’. Before examining the canons, he considered they had confederated to say nothing. To overcome this, Layton famously told Cromwell, ‘I will object against diverse of them buggery and adultery and so specifically descend, which I have learnt of others but not of any of them’.²⁶⁰ That is, he would start by accusing them of serious crimes in the hope they would confess to something more minor.

Layton also took the opportunity to identify that, earlier in the year, the archbishop of Canterbury’s metropolitan Visitation was undermined, at Leicester, by the bishop of Lincoln’s own Visitation. In an extraordinary remark, Layton ridiculed Cranmer: ‘if he will suffer his power to be contemned, it is [a] pity he should have his mitre’.²⁶¹ The confidence with which Layton asserted this to Cromwell demonstrates a general appreciation of the weakness of Cranmer and, in turn, the importance of the Royal Visitation.

²⁵⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 162r/v (LP, IX, 1005).

²⁶⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 162v (LP, IX, 1005) underlined, ‘et sic specialiter descendere’. See also D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 289.

²⁶¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 163r (LP, IX, 1005), ‘contemned’ means scornfully disregarded.

By the evening of 22 December, Layton was at Lichfield, ready to meet Thomas Legh and embark on the Northern Visitation.

2.3.2 The Visitation of Dr Thomas Legh and his notary, John ap Rice

While Richard Layton was the most senior Commissioner in the Visitation, Dr Thomas Legh was the most hardworking, being involved as Visitor with approximately forty per cent of all religious houses. In 1535, Legh was only about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, and it may be because of his youth that friction occurred in the early stages of the Visitation with Dr Layton, John ap Rice and a number of monastic heads.

His introduction to Cromwell's service came through his 'cousin', Rowland Lee, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, probably in 1532. While he possessed this important connection, he must have had ability as well. He obtained his DCL at Cambridge in 1531 and was admitted to the college of Advocates in the court of arches later that year. At the end of 1532, he was appointed by the king as ambassador to Denmark, and in 1533 he was sent to Catherine of Aragon to command her appearance at Dunstable for the final stage of the divorce proceedings. In 1533, he was involved in a number of monastic assignments on Cromwell's behalf, including the replacement of the abbot of Rievaulx. During 1534, he was again sent on embassy to Lubeck and Hamburg to treat on articles of faith. Immediately prior to the Visitation, he was involved in interrogations associated with Bishop Fisher.²⁶²

From Layton's two petitions of May/June 1535, to Cromwell for involvement in the Visitation, he automatically assumed Legh would take part. Perhaps Layton, at

²⁶² Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (forthcoming), entry on Legh by A. N. Shaw.

that stage, felt his best hope of greater involvement in Cromwell's service was linking himself with Legh.

For the period July to December 1535, John ap Rice served as a notary and registrar for Legh's Visitation. In no documentation is ap Rice described as a Commissioner; throughout his period of direct involvement in the Royal Visitation, ap Rice served Legh.²⁶³ At the time of the Visitation, ap Rice was thirty-three years old, having a year previously married Cromwell's niece.²⁶⁴

After gaining a BCL at Oxford, ap Rice is identified in the court of Admiralty, working as a notary, in 1528 and 1529; there he came in contact with Dr John Tregonwell.²⁶⁵ By 1530 he was in the employ of Thomas Cromwell, but it was only in 1534 that ap Rice was identified in the important task of raiding Bishop Tunstal's Durham palaces for pro-papal material.²⁶⁶ In September 1534, ap Rice was appointed as Registrar for Ecclesiastical Causes,²⁶⁷ the title he quoted throughout the Visitation,²⁶⁸ and which gave him authority beyond any other notary involved in the Visitation. In the period April to June 1535, ap Rice attended as notary and scribe, the main Supremacy examinations, including Bishop John Fisher and Sir Thomas More.²⁶⁹ Ap Rice, it will be shown, was involved in a variety of Royal Visitation tasks: he accompanied Thomas Legh up until December, he then oversaw the

²⁶³ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 272 states incorrectly he was a Visitor.

²⁶⁴ N. R. Ker, Books, Collections and Libraries: Studies in Medieval Heritage (London, 1985), p. 472, and Balliol College, Oxford, ms 353, fo. 124r.

²⁶⁵ PRO, DEL 4/1.

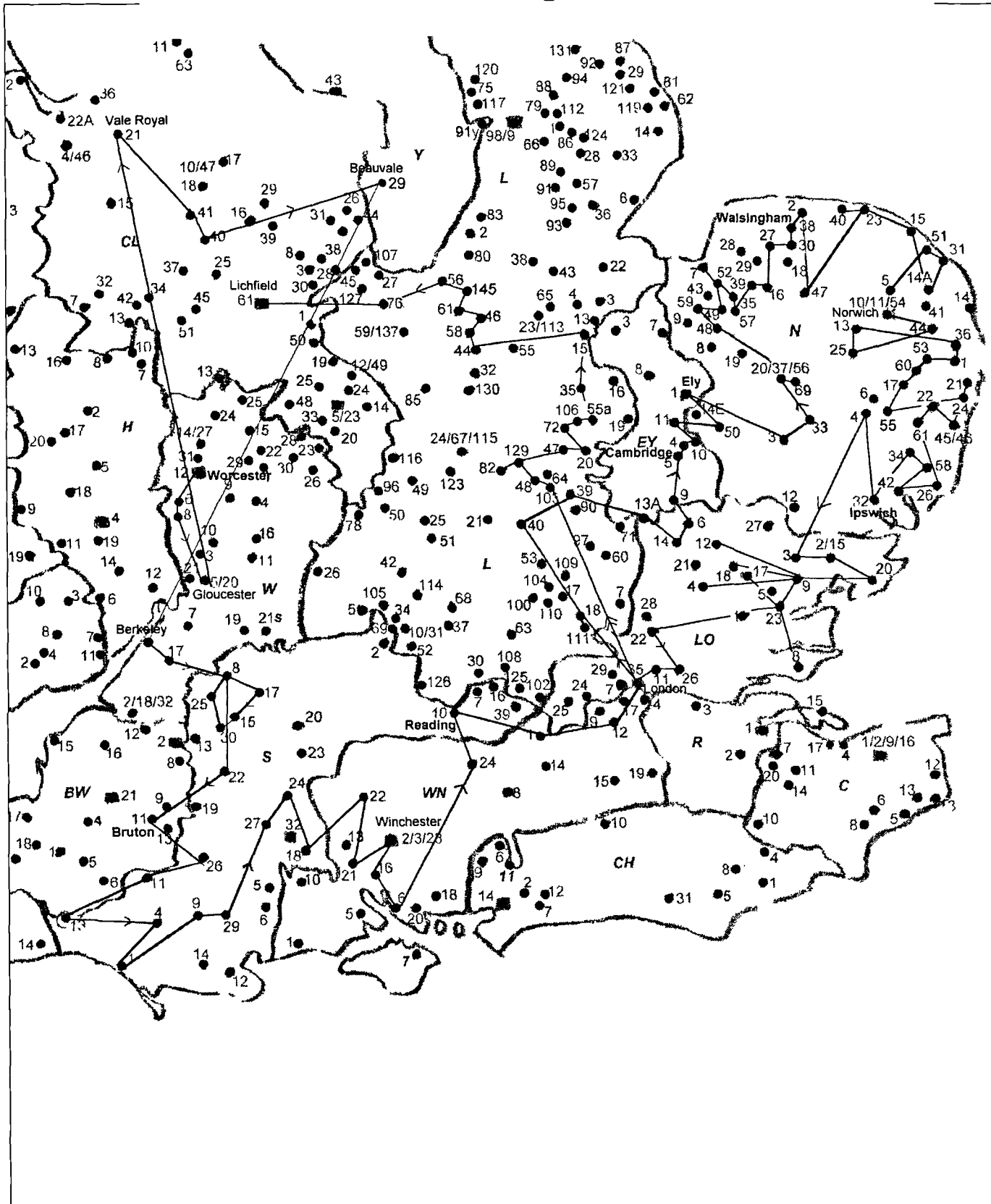
²⁶⁶ S. T. Bindoff, The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558, vol. 3 (London, 1982), p. 154.

²⁶⁷ LP, VII, 1217 (Grant No. 2): "clerk and assistant to the commissioners ... for the Visitation of religious places and principal registrar and clerk to any other commissioners who are or shall be appointed in matters touching the spirituality and their laws, as Visitations, elections and delegations".

²⁶⁸ eg BL, Additional Charter 12, 827 (LP, IX, 666), 'ad causas ecclesiasticas Regestor principalis'.

²⁶⁹ LP, VIII, 856, 867.

MAP 2 Dr Thomas Legh's Visitation Circuit



registration of the various foundation documents sent to Cromwell, and, in early and late March, was sifting Visitation data, preparing for and implementing the Suppression Act.

The first point at which Thomas Legh and John ap Rice can be clearly identified as involved in the Royal Visitation was at Worcester Priory. Map 2 shows this starting point and the rest of their route.²⁷⁰ William More, the prior, reported to Cromwell that Dr Legh had left Worcester on Saturday 31 July, having been ‘with us this week’.²⁷¹ It appears from the wealth of references to Legh’s visit, that his visit was extensive and not particularly hurried. However, the timing of the visit seemed more to do with a reaction to alleged treason claims than a planned, pre-determined Visitation. This is because Cromwell, almost as soon as he arrived at court to join the king’s summer giest at Winchcombe on 23 July, received a letter from a discontented monk of Worcester, John Musard.²⁷² This letter accused a fellow monk, Richard Clyve ‘for railing against the king and Queen Anne, and upholding Queen Catherine and the authority of the pope’.²⁷³ It would appear Cromwell reacted rapidly to this letter, with Legh and ap Rice arriving at Worcester priory within a few days.

At Worcester, Legh and ap Rice did not appear to believe Musard’s claims of treason and instead, somewhat surprisingly, meted out retribution to the accuser. Musard claimed that the Visitors told him that he was accused by others in the monastery and that Cromwell should ‘not accept their conspired and false

²⁷⁰ See Appendix 3 for details of their itinerary.

²⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 5).

²⁷² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 54r (LP, IX, 51).

²⁷³ PRO, SP 5 / 4, fos. 54 - 58 (LP, IX, 52 (2(i), (ii))).

accusements in this time of Visitation'.²⁷⁴ Musard, in writing to the king, related that the prior caused 'certain brethren to conspire against me in your grace's Visitation'.²⁷⁵ With Musard being imprisoned at Worcester shortly after the Visitation, his accusations may well have been seen by Legh as spiteful revenge. After all, John Russell, MP for Worcestershire and Justice of the peace, noted three weeks after Legh's Visitation that in Lent last, 'one monk had accused another of buggery' and 'that monk so accused afterwards charged the other monk, his accuser, with certain words against the king's highness or the Queen's grace'.²⁷⁶

Clearly, Legh and ap Rice were formally visiting the priory. From the individual interviews being held with religious, compertes were being noted and a 'book of supreme Visitation' was being compiled.²⁷⁷ Musard claimed that 'Master Doctor Legh and Mr Price say I am comperted on by my evil-willers'²⁷⁸ which reflected the method used in obtaining evidence from others to confront the individual concerned. Another monk, William Fordham, told Cromwell at the conclusion of the Visitation, 'your Visitors ... have handled their matters full discretely and benignly with great pains taken both early and late for your discharge, as you shall it find by the books of your Visitation'.²⁷⁹ This suggests Legh and ap Rice laboured long and fairly in their examination, 'for in case they could have found the contrary it would have been declared into your books'.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 54r (LP, IX, 51).

²⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 55r (LP, IX, 52(1)).

²⁷⁶ John Musard was imprisoned by the Chancellor of Worcester cathedral at some time between 3 and 8 August 1535. See LP, IX, 51, LP, IX, 108 and LP, IX, 236 (4 and 12).

²⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 204).

²⁷⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 54r (LP, IX, 51).

²⁷⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 9 (LP, IX, 6).

²⁸⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 9 (LP, IX, 6).

However, Musard claimed the ‘false accusations’ of him were obtained through the influence of the prior over the monastic community.²⁸¹ He also accused the Visitors of accepting bribes as a few in the monastery it ‘is supposed ... hath redeemed their penance of Master Doctor [Legh] and Master Price’.²⁸²

There appears to have been some knowledge, by the religious, of the accusations Legh and ap Rice were including in their register. Fordham told Cromwell that details of the alleged treason of ‘3 monks and a secular man ... more plainly appeared in the book of supreme Visitation’.²⁸³ Musard also related that ‘master doctor Legh showed [the monk Thomas Blockley] openly that he was compered on by many of our convent for his incontinence and one of the chief seditious schemers’.²⁸⁴ While at Worcester, Legh appears also to have identified the cellarer, Thomas Sudbury, as a ‘dilapidator’ of the monastery.²⁸⁵

At the conclusion of the Visitation, Legh told prior More to report to Cromwell at Gloucester ‘and to bring with me 3 of our brethren concerning several causes in this Visitation.’²⁸⁶ The letter from the prior to Cromwell confirming this attendance is matter of fact, containing no trace of sycophancy or apology regarding his conduct. This is somewhat surprising given the accusation of treason at the priory, which was later to result in More’s enforced resignation. The three monks who accompanied the prior to Gloucester were Thomas Blockley, Richard Clyve and John Musard.²⁸⁷ Blockley had been identified during Archbishop Cranmer’s Visitation a year before as

²⁸¹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 54r (LP, IX, 51).

²⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 91 (LP, IX, 497).

²⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 204).

²⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 91 (LP, IX, 497).

²⁸⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 51 (LP, IX, 653); PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 227 (LP, IX, 764).

²⁸⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 5).

having been ostracised by fellow monks for his past incontinence.²⁸⁸ Evidently Cranmer found Blockley innocent of accusations of re-offending. Musard claimed that Blockley stole ‘the letter of treason out of my cell’ and it seems likely that the appearance of the prior and three monks at Gloucester was primarily to establish the extent of the alleged treason.²⁸⁹

Knowles stated that Legh and ap Rice ‘in their inexperience’ agreed with the prior’s poor opinion of Musard.²⁹⁰ This is not the case as it appears that Legh, after investigation, left the decision on what should be done about this important accusation of treason to Cromwell and the king when they were at Gloucester. Even then, Musard was imprisoned, as he relates, only on returning to Worcester, when Thomas Bagard, the chancellor of the soon to become Bishop Latimer ‘command[ed] me to avoid and within the space of an hour after to prison’.²⁹¹ Thus it would seem that the principal suspects from Legh’s Visitation were, as the prior noted, told to come to court for further investigation.²⁹² The prior noted that he expected both Legh and ap Rice to be in attendance with Cromwell at court, emphasising their role in directly informing Cromwell of ‘certain causes in this Visitation’.²⁹³

It would appear, at this initial stage of the Royal Visitation, that Legh was not dismissing religious from their monastic vows, if indeed he then had power to do so.

²⁸⁷ For Thomas Blockley, see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 227 (LP, IX, 497). For Richard Clyve, see PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 55 (LP, IX, 52(1)). For John Musard, see PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 54 (LP, IX, 51).

²⁸⁸ Worc. D & C, Add Mss 455 (Professor J. Greatorex, *Reflections on Worcester cathedral priory on the eve of the dissolution* (1998), p. 2).

²⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 91 (LP, IX, 697).

²⁹⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 342. Note that here the ordering of events is inaccurate: Musard had communicated with Cromwell before the Visitation, not afterwards as Knowles states.

²⁹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 91 (LP, IX, 497). Musard would have been imprisoned after 3 August and on or before 8 August. See dating of LP, IX, 236 (4 and 12) and LP, IX, 51).

²⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 5).

Comparison of the forty-one names who signed the ‘Acknowledgement of Supremacy’ in August 1534 with those who attended the election of the next prior of Worcester in March 1536, as well as other sources, reveals only two not accounted for.²⁹⁴ Bartholomew Stoke may well have been studying at Oxford,²⁹⁵ leaving only John Blackwell untraced.²⁹⁶ Having completed the intensive Visitation of Worcester priory, Legh and ap Rice departed for Great Malvern abbey on Saturday 31 July.²⁹⁷ They then visited Little Malvern abbey before returning to Cromwell and the court (then at Gloucester) on Monday 2 August. At Gloucester, the Worcester prior and his three monks cited by Legh were examined before the king.²⁹⁸

The initial pragmatic aspect to the organisation of the Royal Visitation is demonstrated by Legh and ap Rice then being sent to Vale Royal, in Cheshire, to elect a new abbot. Ap Rice related, a couple of months later, that Legh ‘took ... for the election ... at Vale Royal, £15 besides his costs £6 and his reward unknown to me’ which clearly identifies their presence at Vale Royal.²⁹⁹ Anne Boleyn had written from the court at Langley on 18 July seeking Cromwell’s assistance in a preferment to the vacancy. The post had certainly been filled by 28 August when the Earl of Shrewsbury wrote to Cromwell ‘that the monastery of Hulton is now destitute of a head and a governor by reason the late abbot there is elect[ed] to be abbot of the monastery of Vale Royal.’³⁰⁰

²⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 5).

²⁹⁴ Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II (London, 1846) p. 305; Worc. D & C, reg A6(iii), fo. 1r; PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 51 (LP, IX, 653) and PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 36 (LP, IX, 807).

²⁹⁵ Worc. D & C, Add Mss 455, p. 3.

²⁹⁶ Even Blackwell might be accounted for, as the departing prior, More, in February 1536 ‘took one of our residents to be his chaplain’. See PRO, SP 1 / 102 fo. 43 (LP, X, 311).

²⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 8 (LP, IX, 5).

²⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 55 (LP, IX, 52(1)).

²⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

³⁰⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 85, fo. 149r (LP, VII - 1094).

Interestingly, Adam Becansaw, soon to be active in the Royal Visitation of Wales wrote to Richard Cromwell from Whatcroft (four miles east of Vale Royal) on 6 August concluding with the footnote, 'Sir I pray you to be good unto the abbot of Hulton'.³⁰¹ This would appear to be a recommendation for the abbot of Hulton to fill the vacancy at Vale Royal. Thus, Legh and ap Rice must have been at Vale Royal abbey after 6 August.

During this previously unrecognised diversion, they may also have organised the election of a new prior at Beauvale Charterhouse in Nottinghamshire.³⁰² Ap Rice told Cromwell on 16 October 'for the election lately at Beauvale' Legh received £20 beside his costs £6.³⁰³

That Legh and ap Rice undertook the monastic Visitation of Vale Royal and Beauvale at this time is further supported by the otherwise odd entry in the CCCC MS 111 noting their Visitation of Trentham priory.³⁰⁴ Trentham was twenty-five miles south east of Vale Royal and, other than the explanation of the detour at the beginning of August, fell completely out of the logical circuit which Legh and ap Rice took.³⁰⁵ This detour also then makes sense of the prior of Stone's letter of 19 February 1536, written to Dr Legh, referring to 'my great works which you know now I have in hand'.³⁰⁶ Dr Legh knew of these 'great works' because he visited Stone in the previous August, Stone priory being five miles south east of Trentham.³⁰⁷

³⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 36 (LP, IX, 34(2)).

³⁰² The previous prior having been executed on 4 May 1535.

³⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622) - my underlining.

³⁰⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340. Also CCCC MS 111, fo. 329 notes a complement of 19 for Beauvale, suggesting it was visited.

³⁰⁵ See Map 2.

³⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 54 (LP, X, 324) - my underlining.

³⁰⁷ However, CCCC MS 111 does not mention Stone, although its *Valor Ecclesiasticus* income was much less than the £200 maximum which typically was necessary for inclusion in the manuscript.

After their brief diversion to Vale Royal and the north Midlands, Legh and ap Rice returned to Cromwell around 11 August, when the court was at Berkeley, Gloucestershire, to discuss future arrangements for the Royal Visitation.³⁰⁸ Clearly, at this stage, neither the king nor Cromwell appeared in a rush to complete the monastic Visitation.

By the 20 August, they were engaged in the Visitation of Salisbury Diocese, having visited Malmesbury, Bradenstock, Stanley and Lacock monasteries.³⁰⁹ Ap Rice reported of Bradenstock priory, ‘after exact and diligent inquisition, we could not prove any crime against the prior but 2 or 3 of the convent were found convict of incontinence’. At Stanley abbey ap Rice noted, ‘the abbot confessed incontinence with 4 or 5 women’ but he qualified this by clearly stating, ‘before he was abbot’. However, there was no moderation for the monks where, ‘6 or 7 of the convent have confessed incontinence’.³¹⁰

At Lacock nunnery, which Legh and ap Rice visited on 20 August, they ‘found no notable compertes’. Ap Rice told Cromwell that the house was clean, in good repair and well organised. He was impressed with the nuns’ understanding of their rule, written, as he noted, in Norman French, and ‘are very perfect in the same’.³¹¹

At Kingston St Michael, visited probably on 21 or 22 August, they found only three nuns, of whom two were guilty of incontinence. One of the guilty nuns, ‘because she was under age of 24 and not very desirous to continue in religion’, Legh

³⁰⁸ See Section 3.2 on Injunctions.

³⁰⁹ BL, Harley 604, fo. 65 (LP, IX, 138); PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 139 (LP, IX, 139).

³¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 139 (LP, IX, 139).

³¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160).

discharged.³¹² This action reflects inconsistency at that time regarding the implementation of the Injunction to dismiss those who had been professed before their twenty-fourth year.³¹³ This is confirmed by Legh's letter of 20 August in which he asks Cromwell 'to command Dr Layton to give the same Injunctions where he goes ... that I have given'.³¹⁴

For an unknown reason, ap Rice (and perhaps Legh) returned to Malmesbury abbey on 21 or 22 August, where they passed on the compertes of Malmesbury, Bradenstoke and Stanley to be conveyed to Cromwell.³¹⁵ These compertes and other letters were 'directed to Master Ralph Sadler', Cromwell's secretary, probably because the Visitors knew that Cromwell was, at that time, absent from court.

On 23 August, Legh and ap Rice were at the Bonhommes monastery of Edington.³¹⁶ Later that day they travelled thirty-five miles to Bruton priory. The next day, still at Bruton, Legh complained again about Layton's implementation of the Injunctions and his method of Visitation. Legh told Cromwell, 'I had Bruton in my commission' and he could not understand why Layton had already visited the Augustinian priory. Perhaps an error had occurred in Legh's commission as Bruton was clearly in the Bath and Wells diocese, while Legh's programme suggests he had been deputed to visit Salisbury diocese religious houses.³¹⁷

³¹² PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160).

³¹³ See Section 3.2 on Injunctions, where this is developed.

³¹⁴ BL, Harley 604, fo. 65.

³¹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160).

³¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160); F. D. Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England c. 1240 - 1540* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 161 suggests here that ap Rice was acting independently of Legh. This is incorrect.

³¹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

Legh's complaint to Cromwell regarding Layton's activity is in the hand writing of Robert Warmington and marks the earliest occasion when the scribe of the *Compendium Compertorum* is noted in the Royal Visitation.³¹⁸

Ap Rice's record of the *Acta* in the chapter house at Bruton are partially extant.³¹⁹ The distinction between Legh's role as Commissioner and ap Rice's as notary public and registrar is clearly defined in the *Acta*; it is Legh who is in charge of proceedings. The method of Visitation is also clear, with the exhibiting to the abbot of 'royal letters of commission', which Layton, it seems, did not bother to show in his own Visitation of Bruton.³²⁰

Ap Rice, shortly afterwards, recalled that the abbot of Bruton (and also the heads of Stanley and Edington) 'had no warning of his [Legh's] coming'.³²¹ This demonstrates the 'shock tactics' used by the Royal Visitors. The normal bishop's Visitation was preceded by a mandate and citation for all of the convent to appear at a specific date.³²² While, at this stage of the Royal Visitation, Legh gave no warning of his arrival, he did expect the ceremonial reception a Visitor was normally accorded: 'he handles the fathers where he comes very roughly and many times for small causes as the abbots of Bruton ... for not meeting him at the door'.³²³

³¹⁸ The scribe of the *Compendium Compertorum* has previously been incorrectly noted as John ap Rice, see *LP*, X, 364(i), p. 143.

³¹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 165r (*LP*, IX, 159) - the document is dated 23 September, a clear error, which *LP* recognises as 23 August. The dating context is confirmed from the manuscript where Legh tells the abbot and convent he has the right to visit them before 3 September.

³²⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (*LP*, IX, 167).

³²¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (*LP*, IX, 622).

³²² D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1950), p. 81.

³²³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (*LP*, IX, 622).

In the *Acta* Legh commands the abbot of Bruton to show him the compertes of Layton's Visitation, which suggests that it was the Royal Visitors' practice to leave a copy of the compertes at each house.³²⁴ Thus, the accused would apparently have been aware of the allegations made against them. It is significant that no recorded complaints of false compertes from religious houses visited are extant. Indeed, the opposite is the case with the clergy of Bangor accepting their guilt.³²⁵

It is obvious the abbot of Bruton resisted Legh's Visitation. Legh himself tells Cromwell, 'the abbot little regarding the authority committed to me, with sharp and quick answers said that if I would of now visit them it should be but a very undoing of all abbots and monasteries and otherwise showed himself very haughty and obstinate'.³²⁶ The existence of the *Acta* among Cromwell's papers suggests the refusal of the abbot to submit to Legh's Visitation: Legh required the abbot to put in writing why he should not be visited.³²⁷

Legh suggested that Cromwell go to Bruton 'to look yourself or else to suffer me to execute my commission towards him'.³²⁸ There is the distinct possibility that Cromwell did subsequently visit Bruton abbey. A letter, just three days later, on 27 August, identifies Cromwell at the house of Sir John Fitzjames at Redlynch, only a mile from the abbey.³²⁹ It is probable Legh was aware Cromwell was staying at the

³²⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 165r (LP, IX, 159). It would appear the abbot refused to show the compertes to Legh. Legh's letter PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167) notes that Layton had copies of the compertes of Bruton. In the 'Acta', the abbot was commanded to exhibit the compertes before 3 September.

³²⁵ See Section 2.3.5 Becansaw and Vaughan's Visitation.

³²⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

³²⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 165 (LP, IX, 159).

³²⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

³²⁹ Exeter Cath, 3498 / 73 and PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 202r (LP, IX, 191). LP ascribes this letter incorrectly. It is from Cromwell. See also LP, V, 1304, where Fitzjames tells Cromwell, 'the abbey of Bruton is within a mile of my house'.

Chief Justice's house, hence his suggestion 'to look yourself'. Whether Cromwell did in fact visit Bruton cannot be definitely stated. However, ap Rice, later describing to Cromwell Legh's behaviour in the Visitation, noted, 'I saw how little the complaints of other as of the abbot of Bruton, where he [Legh] used himself, me thought, very insolently did succeed at your hands'.³³⁰ Evidently the abbot had complained directly to Cromwell and ap Rice was in the vicinity to note the outcome. Perhaps Cromwell, therefore, came to Bruton when Legh and ap Rice were still present.

Legh's next definite appearance is at Wilton nunnery on 3 September.³³¹ However, before this he had been active in the south west part of the Salisbury diocese. Legh probably commanded Wolsey's daughter to leave Shaftesbury nunnery for being professed before the age of twenty-four years at the end of August,³³² and the abbot of Forde abbey³³³ appealed against the monastic Injunctions on 11 October 1535.³³⁴

Legh must have visited Cerne before 2 September because Richard Phelips wrote that day appealing for dispensation from certain Injunctions given to the abbot 'at the late being of your right discrete official'.³³⁵ The time and location also fit for Legh visiting Sherborne abbey. Phelips requests Cromwell to give the abbot of Cerne dispensation 'in like case as you have dispensed with the father abbot of Sherborne'.³³⁶ Given that Sherborne is only twelve miles south of Bruton, the speed in which Sherborne received its dispensation is no doubt due to Cromwell's either

³³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

³³¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69r (LP, IX, 265); see also PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 87 (LP, IX, 280).

³³² PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 228).

³³³ in a peculiar of Exeter diocese, bordering Salisbury and Bath and Wells dioceses.

³³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 159 (LP, IX, 590). It is possible that John Tregonwell, not Legh, visited Forde, a few days before this letter.

being in the locality or actually being personally engaged in the Visitation, enabling an instant licence to be given.³³⁷

The possibility of Cromwell's taking part in the monastic Visitation has, largely, been ignored and it is only Chapuys who directly refers to the vicar general's own participation. In writing to Charles V from London on 25 September, Chapuys related 'wherever the king goes, Cromwell, who accompanies him, goes about visiting the abbeys [and convents] in the neighbourhood, taking inventories of their lands and revenues, amply instructing the people in this new sect, and discovering from the said abbeys, convents or nunneries all those men or women who had professed before reaching the age of 25, the rest being at liberty to quit or remain as they please'.³³⁸

In no instance have we direct proof that Cromwell took part physically in the Visitation process at religious houses.³³⁹ Therefore, up till now, Chapuys' comment appeared isolated from the apparent evidence that it was only the Commissioners – Legh, Layton, etc – who actually visited the monasteries. However, the identification of Cromwell as briefly away from court at the end of August at the Lord Chief Justice's house near the Somerset / Dorset border, and the cluster of evidence of possible visits, make it likely Cromwell was active at a handful of religious houses. Effectively, it seems probable Cromwell visited Bruton and Sherborne at the end of August, before joining the court at Bromham, Wiltshire, by 1 September.³⁴⁰ These

³³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 73 (LP, IX, 256).

³³⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 73 (LP, IX, 256).

³³⁷ Clearly Sherborne must have been visited after Bruton (i. e. 24 August) and some days before Cerne was visited (which must have been a few days before Phelips appealed on 2 September against the monastic Injunctions left by the Visitors at Cerne). With Cromwell at Redlynch, ten and a half miles north of Sherborne, on 27 August, it is not impossible that Cromwell visited Sherborne.

³³⁸ SSP, vol. 5, p. 542.

³³⁹ However, see Section 3.2 on Injunctions and the relics at Hailes abbey.

³⁴⁰ Cromwell was at Bromham on 1 September. See LP, IX, 260 and Appendix 12.

visits would have given Cromwell direct knowledge of the impact the Injunctions were having, hence his *Remembrance* noted at the end of August, ‘Items of the Visitation and how much it grieves the heads to be kept within their monasteries’.³⁴¹ Also it suggests from ap Rice’s letter that Cromwell was aware of the tough behaviour of Legh during the Visitation and ‘nothing said unto him therefore’;³⁴² Legh was effectively reflecting Cromwell’s own views on how the monastic Visitation should be conducted.

Legh also appears to have visited the Benedictine abbey of Abbotsbury at this time. A draft of a commission, in Robert Warmington’s hand, and signed by Legh, sought to install a new abbot and notes ‘in monasterio de Abbotsbury visitator specialiter deputatus’.³⁴³

As Legh was visiting houses in the Salisbury diocese, he would probably have included the large Benedictine abbey of Milton and the Cistercian nunnery of Tarrant before arriving at Wilton nunnery on 3 September. Legh’s letter from Wilton, again in Robert Warmington’s hand, was responding to Cromwell’s permission ‘that at my discretion I may licence the heads for their necessary business and affairs to go forth of their monasteries’.³⁴⁴ Legh was against giving this licence so easily, seeing it an opportunity for Cromwell’s ‘no little commodity’ or an effective opportunity for income. But it was not from a purely financial motive that Legh wished to continue the full application of the Injunctions, as he adds, ‘and also diverse other causes there be, as you shall know by the compertes in this Visitation why it is not expedient as yet

³⁴¹ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 498(1)).

³⁴² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

³⁴³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 77r (LP, IX, 1076) ‘[Thomas Legh] in the monastery of Abbotsbury specifically the deputy Visitor’ - Legh’s candidate was not installed.

that some of them should have such liberty.³⁴⁵ Evidently Legh felt that where crimes had been found, the opportunity to abrogate some of the Injunctions by ‘tokens’ should not be allowed – surely a worthy sentiment. Legh’s comment also identified that the compertes in this early stage of the Visitation were being accumulated and not sent to Cromwell. Perhaps this was because Legh (and Layton), Cromwell and the court, were in close proximity to one another and information could readily be passed by word of mouth to Cromwell. For whatever reason, it does show that, at this initial period of the Visitation, Cromwell was not interested in receiving regular written details of crimes. This contrasts with the six week period from the end of September, where four separate extracts of recent compertes were sent back to Cromwell by Legh. This apparent lack of interest by Cromwell in details of monastic crimes probably reflects an openness in his approach to monastic reform at the beginning of September: the decisions on what to do with monasteries had not been made.

After Wilton, Legh probably visited Amesbury nunnery, north of Salisbury. He then visited Ivychurch priory³⁴⁶ before entering the Winchester diocese and arrived at Wherwell nunnery at 9 am on 11 September.³⁴⁷ With Legh visiting in the Salisbury diocese, it is surprising that he did not inspect the Dean and Chapter and Vicars Choral at Salisbury cathedral. This was later undertaken by Tregonwell in January 1536.³⁴⁸ Perhaps at this stage of the Visitation, the secular cathedrals were not considered part of the remit for deputy Commissioners.

³⁴⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69r (LP, IX, 265).

³⁴⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69r (LP, IX, 265).

³⁴⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

³⁴⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 145 (LP, IX, 344).

³⁴⁸ See 2.3.3 Tregonwell’s Visitation.

On arriving at Wherwell, Legh wrote to Cromwell, then at nearby Winchester, asking for instructions after this house had been visited: 'which done we purpose to tarry until that we may know what your further pleasure is that we should do'.³⁴⁹ Subsequent events demonstrate that Legh's tarrying was not due to absence of instruction, but to some forewarning of action to be taken at Wherwell. In answer to Legh's letter it is clear he was told to obtain the resignation of the abbess, Anne Colt, and the controller of the king's household, Sir William Paulet, was sent to assist.³⁵⁰ From Legh and Paulet's letter to Cromwell, it is plain that the instruction to obtain the resignation of the abbess came from the king: 'according to the king's pleasure we have greatly moved my lady of Wherwell ... declaring unto her the king's gracious goodness'. Such was the king's influence in this matter that the abbess told Legh and Paulet she would 'in no case resign before she has spoken with the king's grace himself'.³⁵¹ The abbess, however, did quickly resign,³⁵² receiving a pension of £20.³⁵³ The king's involvement with this 'resignation' may be related to the unsuccessful attempt to remove the abbess a year earlier when she allegedly had given birth to a child and her relationship with the bishop of London, John Stokesley was suspect.³⁵⁴

Chibi stated that as a result of the Royal Visitation an incontinence charge had been brought against Anne Colt.³⁵⁵ However, the documents he quoted in evidence include a draft commission for 'A and B' to investigate 'diverse and several

³⁴⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 145 (LP, IX, 344).

³⁵⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 83, fo. 157 (LP, VII - 527). Partly written by Warmington and partly by Paulet, with Paulet and Legh's signatures. Warmington had evidently rejoined Legh as scribe/messenger, having accompanied Layton at the Royal Visitation of Oxford University the previous week. Paulet was the chief steward of Wherwell.

³⁵¹ PRO, SP 1 / 83, fo. 157 (LP, VII - 527).

³⁵² Permission was granted for the conge d'élire to elect a new abbess 'vice Anne Colt, last abbess, resigned' on 15 September. See LP, IX, 504 Grant No. 4.

³⁵³ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

³⁵⁴ S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), p. 232. Here Brigden saw the incident as part of a sustained campaign by Cromwell against Stokesley in 1534 (the dating given by LP).

complaints ... made to us and our council upon the disorder and misrule of the abbess of our monastery of Wherwell'.³⁵⁶ Clearly Legh as deputy Commissioner already had sufficient power to investigate, correct and, if necessary, displace the abbess – the documents are, therefore, from an earlier date.

The importance of the removal of the abbess during the Royal Visitation is that it appears to be at the instigation of the king rather than Cromwell. Further, it demonstrates the flexing of Royal Supremacy powers which were not available to the king before December 1534 – the king was settling old scores, reinforcing Brigden's contention that the bishop of London's reticence in accepting the Supremacy was not forgotten.³⁵⁷

The new abbess, Morphita Kingesmyll, was quickly elected. To what extent Legh was involved with her election is unclear. However, eighteen months later, his brother William was exercising his grant, given by Abbess Kingesmyll, of appointing the prebend of Middleton – he appointed Dr Thomas Legh on the death of the previous incumbent.³⁵⁸ That Legh remained active in the affairs of Wherwell is demonstrated by the accidental sending to Legh, a fortnight after his Visitation, of the 'process and commission of Wherwell' and his reminder to Paulet 'to remember our fees'.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ A. A. Chibi, *Henry VIII's Conservative Scholar* (Cerne, 1997), pp. 152, 153.

³⁵⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 85, fo. 105v (LP, VII - 907(1)).

³⁵⁷ I think the two letters, PRO, SP 1 / 83, fos. 158 and 159 (LP, VII, 528 and 529) from Paulet to Cromwell referring to investigation at Wherwell should be dated 1534 (or earlier) and not 1535 as an LP amendment states.

³⁵⁸ HRO, Bp Gardiners Register 21 M 65 A1 / 23, fo. 30r. Thomas Legh resigned the prebend 2 December 1537 (fo. 33r).

³⁵⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 12 (LP, IX, 439).

From Wherwell, Legh rejoined the court at Winchester, visiting Winchester College on Saturday 18 September accompanied by Cromwell.³⁶⁰ The cost to the college of the Visitation was £3 and a present of a repaired silver salt cellar (cost 5/10d) was made to Cromwell.³⁶¹ Legh, his registrar (presumably ap Rice) and his servants remained for lunch after Cromwell had left. This is the first and perhaps only occasion a school is known to have been visited. Perhaps the curriculum was examined and the scholastic works rejected, continuing the reform Layton had undertaken at Oxford a week earlier.

Perhaps Legh attended the consecration of Fox, Latimer and Ridley in Winchester cathedral the next day, Sunday 19 September.³⁶² On 20 September, Legh and ap Rice visited the hospital of St Cross in Winchester. The Injunctions presented to the hospital survive, signed by Legh and notarised by ap Rice.³⁶³ These Injunctions, while including some of the standard formulae regarding the pope, relics, etc, do demonstrate the Visitors had knowledge of the foundation documents. They include that the thirty paupers should have sufficient and convenient food and clothing, the number of priests should not be reduced and the foundation should be observed.³⁶⁴ Evidently Legh was using the latitude allowed in his commission of adding to the Injunctions as necessary. It would appear that on reviewing the Injunctions before sending them formally to the master, Legh deleted the section

³⁶⁰ F. T. Madge & H. Chitty (ed.), *Registrum Thome Wolsey, Cardinalis, Canterbury and York Society*, 32 (Oxford, 1926), p. 22.

³⁶¹ A. F. Leach, *A History of Winchester College* (London, 1899), pp. 244, 245.

³⁶² M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1981), No. 451. The king did not attend. Errors in the consecration dates appear in Fasti.

³⁶³ HRO, III M 94 W C5 / 1. The handwriting is not recognised. These Injunctions appear to have been written after the Visitation and sent to the master of the hospital. The statement at the end of the Injunctions (in the same hand), signed by Legh and ap Rice, suggests a covering letter enclosing the Injunctions 'and we have caused it to be written and have confirmed it by the appendage of our seal and the subscription of our name'. My thanks to Dr John Barry of the University of Cork for this translation.

requiring the library to possess a New and Old Testament, the works of Jerome, Augustine, Theophilus 'and other of that kind of the most important fathers'. Perhaps, on recollection, he was aware they already possessed such works, otherwise why cross it out?³⁶⁵

While in the Winchester and Bishops Waltham area,³⁶⁶ during the middle of September, Legh visited St Denys priory and Netley abbey.³⁶⁷

On Wednesday 22 September, Robert Warmington is identified at Winchester.³⁶⁸ Two days later, he was at Wintney nunnery with Legh and ap Rice.³⁶⁹ Thus Legh and ap Rice appear to have bidden farewell to Cromwell on 23 September and henceforward acted remotely from Cromwell and the court, ap Rice not returning to Cromwell until the end of the year and Legh, other than perhaps a fleeting meeting in mid December, not seeing Cromwell until the beginning of March 1536, five months later.

At Wintney, Legh dismissed seven of the seventeen nuns, a huge proportion of the convent.³⁷⁰ Ap Rice, apparently as a result, wrote to Cromwell requiring 'temperance concerning the young women under 24 ... for they be of maturity before

³⁶⁴ HRO, III M 94 W C5 / 1, p. 3.

³⁶⁵ Legh marks the Section 'vacet'. See analysis in Section 3.2 Injunctions.

³⁶⁶ Bishops Waltham was one of the bishop of Winchester's residences, where the court resided for much of the time it was in Hampshire.

³⁶⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

³⁶⁸ Salisbury cathedral library, Press 3, Box 'Dean': the commission by the king for making Peter Vannes coadjutor to the insane Richard Pace is in Warmington's hand. The commission is as a result of the consecration of Edward Fox as bishop of Hereford and his resignation as coadjutor dean of Salisbury.

³⁶⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262r/v (LP, IX, 424) from ap Rice and Legh; CCCC MS 111, fo. 340; Legh visited; BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 261v (LP, IX, 424ii): in Warmington's hand.

³⁷⁰ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340 and PRO, SC 12 / 33 / 27.

men 2 years by all laws to all acts'.³⁷¹ It appears that, at this stage, monks above twenty-two and below twenty-five had a choice to go or stay.³⁷² However, at Wintney, ap Rice complained that while Legh applied this policy to monks, 'Master Doctor would not suffer me to alter' the conditions for dismissing female religious.³⁷³

Legh and his team were now moving quickly to London, visiting Salisbury and Winchester diocese houses *en route*. On 25 September, they were at Reading.³⁷⁴ By the 28 September they had visited Chertsey priory and Merton priory.³⁷⁵ Shortly before Legh's visit to Chertsey, the king had sent Bishop Gardiner and Sir William Paulet, the Lord Treasurer, 'to see the order there'.³⁷⁶ They allegedly reported 'that all was well'. However, Legh sent Cromwell the '*Compendium Compertorum apud Chertsey*' noting seven monks guilty of incontinence, four guilty of incontinence and sodomy, two who have suffered sodomy and two apostate.³⁷⁷ Clearly Legh was making a point to Cromwell: that the bishops could not be trusted to make a thorough examination and that it would be better completed by the vicar general. Legh's comments could, therefore, be linked to some friction at court regarding the manner in which the Royal Visitation was being conducted.

³⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

³⁷² See PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, X, 622).

³⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423). See discussion on dismissal of religious in Section 3.2 Injunctions.

³⁷⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 12 (LP, IX, 439). In Legh's own hand and not ap Rice's - probably because it contains a personal financial arrangement regarding Wherwell.

³⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 59r/v (LP, IX, 472) - written by Warmington, addressed by ap Rice and signed by Legh. F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 117 states incorrectly that the letter is in the hand of ap Rice. Chertsey was probably visited on 26 and Merton on 27 - ap Rice appears to have been in London by the night of 27 September. See PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 56 (LP, IX, 466).

³⁷⁶ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p.301 dates this to around midsummer.

³⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 60r (LP, IX, 472(2)) in ap Rice's hand.

Some aspects of the style of Legh's Visitation process can be discerned. John Church and Thomas Porter are noted as 'apostate'; however, Church is noted as incontinent with an unmarried woman and Porter as incontinent with two married women. With both absent it is clear that it is from the claims of others that they are adjudged guilty; they have not been able to defend themselves. Thus, it can be presumed that most, if not all, of the guilty claims emanate from the accusations of others. In a normal episcopal Visitation, this sort of material would form the *detecta* which needed to be sifted and checked, often not immediately, before defining the compertes. Some of the claims made in the episcopal *detecta* might, therefore, relate to incontinence before entering religion or crimes which had already been noted and corrected at previous Visitations; the episcopal compertes would typically have eliminated these, defining the relevant compertes on which to base the Injunctions for correction.³⁷⁸

Notwithstanding the manner in which the data was collected, the monks did exist, with eight of the thirteen mentioned in the compertes extract present at the surrender of the abbey in July 1537.³⁷⁹ If outright lies were later discovered, Legh could have been discredited. Furthermore, it is clear that Legh's letter to Cromwell tried to make the point that episcopal Visitations were ineffective compared to the Royal Visitation. Would Legh have dared make a comparison with the bishop of Winchester and Sir William Paulet's Visitation whom 'the king's highness sent to Chertsey abbey' if there had not been good grounds on which to do so?³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ The system of episcopal Visitation is described in D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 78 - 84 or C. R. Cheney, *Episcopal Visitation of Monasteries in the XIII Century* (Manchester, 1983), pp. 54+.

³⁷⁹ See *Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 8th Report, Appendix II* (London, 1846), pp. 15 - 16.

³⁸⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 59r (LP, IX, 472).

It is clear that at the end of two months of visiting monasteries, the key issues concerning the Commissioners in their reports to Cromwell are sexual crimes, apostasy, relics and the assets of the house, with the abbot frequently being accused of alienating property.³⁸¹ The Chertsey compertes tabulated this information in a format which remained very much the same in the later extant extracts from the Visitation.

The title of 'Superstitions' succinctly summarises the Visitors' views on the relics at Chertsey. This maintains the attitude, first identified in Layton's correspondence in August ridiculing the relics he had found. The Visitors distanced themselves from the relics: the properties of the arm bone of St Blasius, to cure illness, is qualified by 'so they say' and the predicting ability of the candle before the image of St Faith by, 'they hold'.³⁸² The views of, at least, Cromwell's circle on such devotion is clear: it is a deceit, it is idolatry, it is hypocrisy.

The Chertsey compertes also identify for the first time that *per voluntarias pollutiones*, or masturbation, is being recorded by the Visitors. Under the heading 'Incontinence and Sodomites', Laurence Hodgson is noted guilty 'with 4 women and *per voluntarias pollutiones*': *per voluntarias pollutiones* was denoted in the Chertsey *Compendium Compertorum* as an act of sodomy.³⁸³

William Ridges is noted as a sodomite with two boys, William Sparrowhawk with three boys and Roger Turner with two boys as well as *per voluntarias pollutiones*. With sodomy being a crime legally punishable by death without benefit

³⁸¹ If examples of treason regarding the acceptance of the Royal Supremacy had been discovered, these would, no doubt, also have been noted. In the *Compendium Compertorum* the only example of this is at Roche abbey. See PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 95v.

³⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 60r (LP, IX, 472(2)) 'ut dicunt' and 'habent'.

of clergy,³⁸⁴ Legh gives no glimpse in the *compertes* or his covering letter of what punishment he envisaged. Of the four monks denoted as sodomite, two or perhaps three, can later be identified as still in religion.³⁸⁵

At Merton priory, Legh ‘dismissed two canons’, presumably for being underage, out of a complement of twenty; ‘and ten others there would have been dismissed but I would not consent thereto before I knew your masterships mind’.³⁸⁶ For the first time Legh can be identified as suggesting there is a pool of religious who wished to leave monasticism. It is a theme he kept returning to during October and November.

Early on the morning of 28 September, ap Rice’s first child, Gregory, was baptised at St Peter le Poor, London. The child’s godfathers were Gregory Cromwell (Thomas Cromwell’s son) and Robert Warmington.³⁸⁷ Perhaps the fact that Warmington, a lawyer, clerk and messenger to the Visitation, was a godfather instead of Thomas Legh, indicates the coldness between ap Rice and Legh which became visible in October.

On 28 and 29 September, Legh’s team were at Halliwell nunnery. From Halliwell, Legh wrote to Cromwell, ‘Now I intend to make a preparation for you at

³⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 60r (LP, IX, 472(2))

³⁸⁴ 25 Henry VIII, c.6.

³⁸⁵ ‘William Sparrowhawk, recently monk of Chertsey’ received dispensation to hold a benefice with change of habit on 10 February 1539. See D. S. Chambers, *Faculty Office Registers 1534 - 1549* [hereafter FOR] (Oxford, 1966), p. 174; Laurence Hodgson moved to Bisham abbey, where Chertsey was refounded, and was dispensed to hold a benefice with change of habit on 4 July 1538 (and perhaps the William Rugisse also denoted receiving a dispensation is the same as William Ridges noted as ‘sodomite’ in the *comperta*). See FOR, p. 141.

³⁸⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 472).

Westminster and at St Paul's'.³⁸⁸ On 1 October Legh was at St Paul's cathedral. Legh identified some irregularities as a result of the madness of the dean, Richard Pace, which the coadjutor, Richard Sampson, was commanded to resolve.³⁸⁹ Possibly Bishop Stokesley was also interviewed by Legh at this time,³⁹⁰ especially as the instruction to inhibit the bishops' ordinary powers was about to be issued, on Cranmer's behalf, by the bishop of London. While at St Paul's, Legh removed a relic of 'Our Lady's Milk'.³⁹¹

Ap Rice later said of Legh, 'I spoke of certain his abuses to diverse in my company nigh about you and called diverse of my fellows, your servants, at London to come with me and see all his proceedings, gestures and manner of going thence at Westminster and at St Paul's'.³⁹² Ap Rice considered Legh's behaviour improper and extreme.

In London, Legh is known to have visited the Savoy hospital³⁹³ and Stratford at Bow nunnery;³⁹⁴ probably he also visited the Franciscan nunnery of the Minories, at this stage dismissing at least five of the twenty-five nuns for being under twenty-four years of age.³⁹⁵ The small Benedictine nunnery of Kilburn was not visited.³⁹⁶

³⁸⁷ Balliol College, Oxford, MS 353, fo. 124r. The godmother was Eleanor Sadler, wife of Ralph Sadler. The baptism explains the letter of ap Rice to Sadler, with the extended reference to his wife. See PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 56 (LP, IX, 466).

³⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 59 (LP, IX, 472). The quotation continues 'what you may end when please you'. The meaning of this is unclear.

³⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 55r/v (LP, IX, 328).

³⁹⁰ Stokesley was at his palace at Fulham on 2 October (see CKS, DRb / Ar1 / 14, fo. 184r).

³⁹¹ C. Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors from A. D. 1485 to 1559*, Camden Society, New Series xi (London, 1875), p. 31.

³⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

³⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56 (LP, IX, 661).

³⁹⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

³⁹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 233 (LP, IX, 1075). All were allowed to continue at the Minories, see LP, XIV(1), 680.

³⁹⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 319: marked 'non visitatio'.

On 30 September, when Legh was already in London, the Lord Chancellor wrote to Cromwell to 'spare the Visitation' of Barking nunnery.³⁹⁷ Audley had evidently recently heard that 'Doctor Legh is substitute by you to visit all the religious houses in the diocese of London' which appears to confirm the decision to visit this diocese had only just been taken, presumably while at Winchester. Audley makes it clear that the required delay in visiting Barking is 'not for any default or suspect that I have in Doctor Legh, for I hear not but that he uses himself right indifferently to the execution of his charge'. This excellent testimonial on Legh's conduct is possibly more to do with his request 'and when you and I have spoken together at your return do as you shall seem best'.³⁹⁸

However, it seems unlikely that Legh did delay his Visitation of Barking as he appears to have spent almost two weeks in London. Legh visited Westminster abbey³⁹⁹ at the beginning of October and took away 'certain relics that the people were wont to worship as Our Ladies girdle ... which women with child were wont to gird with and St Elizabeth's girdle'.⁴⁰⁰ He could well have visited Barking as it lies only about two miles from Stratford at Bow nunnery, which is known to have been visited.

Legh and ap Rice had intended to be at St Albans 'about Monday next', 4 October.⁴⁰¹ However, it appears from a letter, now correctly dated for the first time,

³⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 68r (LP, IX, 487).

³⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 68r (LP, IX, 487).

³⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 59 (LP, IX, 472) and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

⁴⁰⁰ C. Wriothesley, A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors from A. D. 1485 to 1559, Camden Society, New Series xi (London, 1875), p. 31.

⁴⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 56 (LP, IX, 466).

that they were delayed and were visiting St Albans a week later than expected.⁴⁰²

There is a small possibility that this pronounced delay to their plans was to await Cromwell's own arrival in London after he had left the court. Cromwell did not accompany the court from Porchester to Salisbury and appears to have returned to London on 9 October.⁴⁰³ However, subsequent plentiful correspondence does not demonstrate any direct contact with Cromwell since Winchester.

By 11 October, they were at St Albans with Legh assisting William Cavendish: '[Legh] has been in hand with the monks for ensealing of my indentures, which he finds very obstinate, refusing to accomplish the same which they have already granted'.⁴⁰⁴ Ap Rice reported of the St Albans Visitation 'we found little although there were much to be found'.⁴⁰⁵ This was a reference to 'confederations' made between the monks to hide the truth. While at the Visitation few compertes were obtained from the monks, it is evident that the Injunctions caused subsequent discontent. After the Visitation, one of the monks complained about the food, 'which was neither good nor wholesome for their bodies, contrary to the king's statutes'. Whereupon the third prior Dom Ashwell exclaimed what he thought of the Visitor general and his deputies and their Injunctions, 'we piss upon these statutes which be made by a sort of light brained merchants and also heretics, Cromwell being one of the chief of them, with certain other retained unto him'.⁴⁰⁶ An allegation also was made by 'a young man named Dom John Newman' that he was being held in the abbey against his will: 'by the kings authority for all they that be under the age of 22

⁴⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 86, fo. 232 (LP, VII - 1249).

⁴⁰³ SSP, vol. 5, part 1, No. 213 dated 13 October: 'Yesterday, which is the third day after his [Cromwell's] return'.

⁴⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 86, fo. 232 (LP, VII - 1249) Cavendish appears to be referring to the grant dated 9 March 1535 for the lease of the manor of Northaw in Hertfordshire (see LP, VIII, 481 (No. 15)).

⁴⁰⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661).

years should be put forth and I am kept here against the king's commandment and my will'.⁴⁰⁷ This is the first occasion when clearly the original Injunction, issued by the Visitors, had been amended from the original twenty-four years. Just a few days after visiting St Albans, ap Rice wrote to Cromwell regarding 'your instructions ... that you would have all those both men and women that were 22 years old and between that and 24, they should choose whether they will tarry or go abroad'.⁴⁰⁸ Evidently Newman was less than twenty-two years of age and the fact that he remained in the abbey demonstrates it was left to the abbot to implement the Injunction.

The Injunction regarding the dismissal on the grounds of age allegedly enraged the third prior: 'I marvel that you piss upon that commandment which was not heard of this 1000 year afore the king hath done that on his high power'.⁴⁰⁹ This is one of the few instances where an involved party has given a reaction to the work of the Visitors, albeit contained within articles of accusation. The third prior clearly felt the 'old customs and usages of our house' were being destroyed by the Visitation. That a party in the abbey was informing on the third prior itself demonstrates the thoroughness of the Visitation. It was partly 'the oath that we have taken to be true to our prince' that had inspired the informers to act. This 'oath' had only recently been renewed, as the first Injunction administered to the monastery by the Visitors.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ PRO, E 36 / 120, p. 155.

⁴⁰⁷ PRO, E 36 / 120, p. 155.

⁴⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁴⁰⁹ PRO, E 36/120, fo. 155. Dom John Newman's name does not appear at the Suppression (see Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 8th Report, Appendix (London, 1846), p. 39) nor in FOR.

⁴¹⁰ See Section 3.2 Injunctions. No acknowledgement of the Supremacy exists for St Albans. J. G. Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey, 1530 - 1558'; E. H. R., 114 (1999) touches upon this story.

While at St Albans, Legh and ap Rice visited Sopwell nunnery, a cell of St Albans, 'which were a good deed to suppress as you may see by the compertes'.⁴¹¹ Richard a Lee, a servant of Cromwell and friend of ap Rice, was bailiff of Sopwell and accompanied the Visitors, at this stage, probably to protect or enlarge his interests.⁴¹² The Visitors found nine nuns and appear to have dismissed four of them.⁴¹³ It was probably because Legh had cleared out about half of the nuns that ap Rice complained to Cromwell a few days later. Ap Rice had been arguing, since 24 September, regarding the dismissal of nuns, that 'more infamy and slander may grow by one of them miscarried by going out than by 20 men'.⁴¹⁴ Perhaps Cromwell had taken heed of ap Rice's letter from Wintney. When writing on 16 October, ap Rice tells Cromwell, 'And in some things I suppose that he {Legh} follows not your instructions as where I took it that you would have all those, both men and women that were 22 years old and between that and 24 they should choose whether they will tarry or go abroad. And he [Legh] sets but religious men only at this liberty'.⁴¹⁵ This correspondence reflects ap Rice's concern regarding the dismissal of large numbers of nuns and also his junior capacity in the Visitation. Cromwell was communicating his instructions to Legh, and ap Rice was not entirely sure what they were.

Possibly the Visitors next called at Dunstable priory. On about 14 October they were at Woburn abbey where Legh gave the abbot permission to come to Cromwell 'and obtain of you a licence to go abroad'.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661).

⁴¹² S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558*, vol. 2 (London, 1982), p. 511.

⁴¹³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340; PRO, SP 5 / 1, fo. 26v.

⁴¹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

⁴¹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁴¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

On 16 October, they were at Warden abbey when Legh and ap Rice received a letter from Cromwell decrying their conduct in the Visitation.⁴¹⁷ During the next few days, the issues of Legh's behaviour and ap Rice's negligence, in not informing Cromwell of what was happening during the Visitation, clouded their other activities. While historians have noted this dispute, the reason for its happening at this stage has not been discussed. Knowles, by shuffling the Visitation correspondence, makes it appear as though Cromwell's complaints are due to friction between Legh and ap Rice.⁴¹⁸

Analysing the replies to Cromwell from both Legh and ap Rice, it is possible to summarise the main complaints against Legh.

First, Legh is to cease his 'triumphant and sumptuous usage' and 'lordly countenance' which appear to be quotations from Cromwell's own letter.⁴¹⁹ He has been told to stop using 'sumptuous and gay apparel', apparently a fine velvet gown, and to dismiss the entourage of servants he was alleged to possess.⁴²⁰ From ap Rice's letter to Cromwell, it is clear that Cromwell had even deeper concerns about Legh's 'lordly countenance'. Ap Rice was accused of not revealing Legh's 'demeanour, proceedings and manner of going'⁴²¹ within the Visitation. In reply, ap Rice stated that Legh had been giving the monks a tough time during the Visitation and 'handlest the fathers where he comes very roughly'. Ap Rice compared Legh to Cardinal Wolsey's infamous Visitor, 'for surely religious men were never so afeared of Doctor Allen as they be of him'.

⁴¹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 17 (LP, IX, 621).

⁴¹⁸ e. g. D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 282/283.

⁴¹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 17r/v (LP, IX, 621).

⁴²⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 47v, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

The second complaint emerging from Legh's first letter is that of extracting money from the religious houses. Legh touches only lightly upon this by reporting 'private lucre, which I take God to record, I did never use in this matter'.⁴²² From ap Rice's letter to Cromwell, it is clear he had been asked about the level of Legh's rewards: 'As concerning his taking, I think it excessive in many things'. He then detailed a number of examples of 'his taking': 'first for the election of the prior of Coventry he took £15; for the election lately at Beauvale the Charterhouse £20, beside his costs [of] £6; at Vale Royal £15, beside his costs £6 and his reward unknown to me'.⁴²³

The third complaint against Legh is that he did not implement the instructions Cromwell had given him: 'where you will me to follow the Articles and Injunctions prescribed unto me'. In response, Legh argued that 'I have performed your mind without any qualification or alteration'.⁴²⁴ In ap Rice's response to Cromwell he listed a number of areas, specifically in the dismissal of religious, where Legh 'followeth not your instructions'.⁴²⁵ It appears also that Cromwell had asked ap Rice how many 'licences that he [Legh] gave since he came forth last'. These 'licences' were part of the Commissioners' powers to modify certain Injunctions without Cromwell's direct involvement, particularly permission for abbots to travel outside the monastery.

Cromwell's strident and emotional accusations are unexpected. Whatever led to Cromwell's outburst at this time, on these three sets of issues, was much deeper than a

⁴²¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r/v (LP, IX, 622).

⁴²² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 17v (LP, IX, 621).

⁴²³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁴²⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

delayed reaction to ap Rice's speaking of Legh's 'abuses' to some of Cromwell's servants, two weeks previously.⁴²⁶

Legh reminded Cromwell that he had worn his velvet gown 'in London these 2 years and wore when I was last there'.⁴²⁷ As regards his conduct during the Visitation, Legh told Cromwell he had not used 'any rigour or extremity' in his dealings with the religious.⁴²⁸ Ap Rice, however, reminded Cromwell, 'I saw how little the complaints of other as the abbot of Bruton where he [Legh] used himself, me thought, very insolently did succeed at your hands'.⁴²⁹ Ap Rice made it clear that Cromwell was fully aware of Legh's proceedings, as the vicegerent appears to have witnessed them first hand.

As for obtaining 'lucre' from religious houses, ap Rice suggested Cromwell was well aware of Legh's rewards for elections and Visitation: 'And because I knew there by one Fisher that was solicitor in that matter that your pleasure was he [Legh] should have no less for [the election] at Tarrant [nunnery] I thought he [Legh] took the other [rewards] according to your pleasure'.⁴³⁰ It, therefore, seems doubtful Cromwell was being honest about the shock revelation that Legh was taking 'lucre'.

Cromwell's third accusation concerned Legh not applying the Injunctions, but ap Rice had been writing at least since the 20 August, querying Legh's

⁴²⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁴²⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

⁴²⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 17r (LP, IX, 621).

⁴²⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 17v (LP, IX, 621).

⁴²⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

⁴³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622).

implementation of the Injunctions.⁴³¹ Ap Rice's letter of 24 September to Cromwell was more specific regarding Legh not implementing agreed changes to the Injunctions. However, Cromwell's letter of reprimand is almost three weeks after ap Rice's letter, which does not suggest Legh's behaviour caused him much concern at that time.⁴³²

There is little doubt that Legh's behaviour could have often been annoying and deep friction existed between Legh and ap Rice, but to suggest this was the basis of Cromwell's reprimand seems unlikely.⁴³³ It has already been shown that Cromwell knew broadly what Legh and ap Rice were doing in the early months of the Visitation.

It is also difficult to believe Legh's statement that this outburst was stimulated by 'such person or persons, that thus have incensed, backbited and slandered me'.⁴³⁴ Cromwell certainly was reacting because the conduct of his Visitors had been criticised, but the only person who could pressurise him to take such dramatic action is the king.

That the king had been critical of the conduct of the Visitation at this stage appears a logical surmise. During the summer, Cromwell was attendant on the king during his giest from late July through to early October. From Porchester castle, the king and his chief secretary parted company, on or about 7 October.⁴³⁵ The king

⁴³¹ BL, Harley 604, fo. 65r (LP, IX, 138).

⁴³² PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

⁴³³ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 281/282.

⁴³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 47v (LP, IX, 651).

⁴³⁵ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), The Lisle Letters, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1981), No. 454.

directed his giest to Salisbury, where he remained from 8 to 12 October,⁴³⁶ while Cromwell returned to London to, amongst other things, manipulate the City of London mayoral elections.⁴³⁷ Up until 7 October, during the first two months of the Royal Visitation, Cromwell was with the king, and able to react first hand to the king's commands and recommendations.⁴³⁸ While at Salisbury the king, with Cromwell in London, was more open to the criticisms of Cromwell and the progress of the Royal Visitation. It is not surprising that Legh's conduct was in the spotlight, as he was responsible for the Visitation of the Salisbury diocese and so stories of his conduct would be close at hand. Perhaps this explains why three out of four of ap Rice's examples of Legh 'ruffeling' the abbots were at Bradenstoke, Stanley and Ivychurch, all in the Salisbury diocese.⁴³⁹ Ap Rice gave these examples because it was from Salisbury diocese that the complaints had originated, which probably was clear from Cromwell's letter of reprimand to which ap Rice was responding.

Thus, it is realistic to consider that the king wrote a letter to Cromwell on or about 12 October, criticising the Visitation, with Legh and ap Rice receiving Cromwell's own speedy letters of reprimand on 16 October.

At the time when Cromwell was receiving this stiff letter from the king, Richard Layton was visiting abbeys on the Kent coast. In his letter to Cromwell of 17

⁴³⁶ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1981), No. 459 and Salisbury cathedral library, Chapter Act Book 14, fo. 49r.

⁴³⁷ C. Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors from A. D. 1485 to 1559*, Camden Society, New Series xi (London, 1875), p. 31, on 12 October.

⁴³⁸ As in August, when the king demanded the Visitation Injunctions be strengthened. See PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 224v (LP, VIII, 1127).

⁴³⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19r (LP, IX, 622). The other example of 'ruffeling' was at Bruton abbey, in Bath and Wells diocese in Legh's commission. Thus, effectively, ap Rice considered all four houses to be in the Salisbury diocese.

October, Layton related the sorry moral plight of Dover priory,⁴⁴⁰ Langdon abbey and Folkestone priory which he had visited a few days before. Layton, it will be recalled, recommended that Cromwell depose the abbot of Langdon and ‘sequester the fruits’ as he ‘caused his chaplain to take a whore’;⁴⁴¹ at Folkestone he noted ‘the barns be well replenished’ and ‘this prior has much money’ and again he recommended sequestration.⁴⁴² Layton sent his servant to Cromwell to receive prompt instructions as to what to do with these houses.

Cromwell, apparently out of favour with the king in the conduct of the Visitation, possibly saw Layton’s news as an opportunity. Within a few days, Cromwell was taking the first steps in closing down these three houses and seizing the proceeds for the king. On Friday 22 October Layton was, therefore, back at Folkestone, taking an inventory of the priory. He then rode to Langdon abbey to surprise the abbot with his whore, and provide the most detailed and infamous description of Layton’s exploits.⁴⁴³ This letter would have provided an excellent propaganda tool for Cromwell to demonstrate the need for ‘rigorous dealing’ with all abbots and religious. That Layton was aware of the need for such propaganda at such a time is reflected in his closing comments to Cromwell: ‘Now it shall appear to gentlemen of this country and other the commons that you shall not deprive or visit but upon substantial grounds’.⁴⁴⁴

To conclude, it appears that Cromwell’s letters to Legh and ap Rice represented a critical moment in the Visitation. Cromwell was being accused by the king of too

⁴⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fos. 62v, 63r (LP, IX, 669 incorrectly dated to 23 October).

⁴⁴¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 62v.

⁴⁴² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 63r.

⁴⁴³ e. g. see F. A. Gasquet, Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (London, 1906), pp. 126,127.

tough an approach in the Royal Visitation. To counter this, Cromwell grasped the opportunity to appease the king by closing down three religious houses. It is, otherwise, an extraordinary coincidence that these first closures during the Visitation were set in motion at this time.⁴⁴⁵ The net annual income of these three houses was only £266, but the jewels, plate and goods had substantial value,⁴⁴⁶ which would help convince the king of the benefits of an aggressive Visitation.

The middle of October was apparently a critical time for the Visitation, with Legh fearful he would lose his job.⁴⁴⁷ By the end of October, however, the storm had died down and Legh's correspondence showed no further signs of a rift with Cromwell. Cromwell evidently trusted him to continue the Visitation even though ap Rice, his niece's husband, felt he 'might take perchance irrecoverable harm by' Legh or his servants if the content of his correspondence should become known.⁴⁴⁸

They were, therefore, at Warden abbey on 16 October, replying to Cromwell's complaints at the same time as they conducted the Visitation of this Cistercian house. The imposition, by the Visitors, of 'certain Injunctions' caused great friction within the house, suggesting an apparent laxity of behaviour on the part of the monks. The reaction to the Injunctions by the 'brethren' was a contributory cause of the abbot's seeking to resign. He was considered 'the cause why that they were enclosed within their monastery' and the monks subsequently 'have vexed me with many uncharitable

⁴⁴⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 154r (LP, IX, 668).

⁴⁴⁵ It was not until the 9 February 1536 that the next enforced closure took place.

⁴⁴⁶ See inventory of Dover priory made on 31 October (see LP, IX, 717), prior's letter LP, IX, 756, transcribed in C. R. Haines, *Dover Priory* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 312 - 314.

⁴⁴⁷ His letter, in response to Cromwell's letter of admonition, closes with 'I will ever be yours assured, as well in the office and without the office, as shall please you' see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 18r (LP, IX, 621). The postscript defiantly quotes John 8.32: 'veritas liberabit'.

⁴⁴⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 24v (LP, IX, 630).

surmises and opprobrious words, too much and too long to be written'.⁴⁴⁹ The abbot revealed that the 'daily lecture of divinity' commanded by Legh had initially been commenced but such was the papal leaning of the monks that the monk assigned to undertake the lecture 'indiscreetly (unknowing to me) did read the book of Eck's homilies'. The abbot sent these books 'to London to be delivered to master doctor Legh', which underlines the authority that Legh was seen to possess. Thereafter the abbot caused his own brother to 'read the lecture' but 'few or none' of the monks would attend, re-emphasising a strong commitment amongst the monks to undermining the application of parts of the Injunctions.

The Visitors were back in the London diocese at Royston priory on 17 October,⁴⁵⁰ followed by Berden priory⁴⁵¹ and on 19 October at Walden abbey.⁴⁵² In Legh's letter to Cromwell from Walden, he complained of being sick 'since I departed from your mastership and as evil at ease as I was in any journey this many years'.⁴⁵³ No doubt Legh's condition was largely brought on by Cromwell's reprimand. However, his illness was emphasised by the letter being in a new hand. Up until October, Legh's letters have principally been in ap Rice's handwriting with only the recent responses to Cromwell's criticism being in Legh's hand. The Walden letter appears to introduce John Aker as Legh's new clerk.⁴⁵⁴ This letter does not mention Cromwell's recent criticism of Legh's conduct, which clearly would have necessitated a personal response from Legh. Possibly, therefore, even though Legh was ill, he could not bring himself to use ap Rice to write the letter and so used Aker as his

⁴⁴⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 119r (LP, IX, 1167).

⁴⁵⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 24v (LP, IX, 630).

⁴⁵¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

⁴⁵² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 39v (LP, IX, 640).

⁴⁵³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 39v (LP, IX, 640).

⁴⁵⁴ referred to in Legh's next letter see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 47v (LP, IX, 651).

scribe. This supports the cold feeling between the two Visitors and ap Rice's fear that he would be blamed by Legh for Cromwell's reprimand.

Ap Rice told Cromwell that the abbot of Walden was 'a man of good learning and of right sincere judgement'. In a private conversation with the abbot 'upon stipulation of silence but unto you' ap Rice told Cromwell that the abbot had secretly contracted marriage'.⁴⁵⁵ This extraordinary revelation appears to have been admitted by the abbot in a later letter to Cromwell in which he referred to 'the secret council of my heart'.⁴⁵⁶ Ap Rice revealed that the abbot had confidence in Cromwell 'that this act should not be anything prejudicial unto him'.⁴⁵⁷ The abbot alleged that many who 'speak little' would be glad to have the remedy of marriage and suggested that if he was assigned a reasonable living he would willingly resign. It appears that Cromwell let this matter continue and indeed the abbot later recalled, 'your mastership was very good to me in this matter commanding me to use my remedy wisely without slander of the world'.⁴⁵⁸ Clearly Cromwell was in no way attempting to reform the abbot, but rather to use him as a pliable agent for the future. Ap Rice referred to the compertes of Walden as being extensive in sexual faults. He attributed this to the abbot exhorting the monks to tell the truth, and to not employing 'confederations' to hide the truth.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56r/v (LP, IX, 661).

⁴⁵⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 138 (LP, X, 389).

⁴⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56r (LP, IX, 661).

⁴⁵⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 138 (LP, X, 389). Ap Rice also uses the word 'remedy', meaning marriage, in his own letter.

⁴⁵⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661).

In July 1534, nineteen monks acknowledged the Supremacy,⁴⁶⁰ yet on 22 October 1535, three days after Walden's Visitation, ap Rice stated that 'there be now but 7 persons and they very old left in this monastery'. It seems likely that this massive reduction was a result of Legh's rigorous implementation of the Injunctions. Elsewhere in his letter, ap Rice referred to Cromwell's recent edict 'for not expelling of them that are above the age of 20' and admitted that many had already been 'dismissed in places where we have been, above the age'.⁴⁶¹ He could well have had Walden in mind, with the instruction coming too late for that house. Ap Rice suggested that, with the smallness of numbers and the abbot's lack of commitment to monasticism, Cromwell could suppress the house. *This talk of suppression was the first time ap Rice spoke unambiguously about such a step and perhaps demonstrates his awareness of Richard Layton's activities at Dover, Langdon and Folkestone.*⁴⁶²

On the 22 October, the Visitors were at Cambridge University, having previously visited Ickleton nunnery.⁴⁶³ The actions of Legh and ap Rice at Cambridge were a mirror of Layton and Tregonwell's at the University of Oxford, over a month beforehand.⁴⁶⁴ However, Logan noted that the Injunctions issued at Cambridge on 22 October had one important difference: the Visitor was allowed to add further Injunctions at his own discretion. Legh took advantage of this power by adding some

⁴⁶⁰ Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II (London, 1846), p. 303.

⁴⁶¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56r (LP, IX, 661).

⁴⁶² Ap Rice says, 'you might soon have that house clean derelinquished of all if you would' see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661).

⁴⁶³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340; PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661) and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48v (LP, IX, 651).

⁴⁶⁴ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), pp. 879 - 886.

aspects to underline the Royal Supremacy requirements in the main Injunctions, and also some day to day requirements, such as stopping the sale of fellowships.⁴⁶⁵

At Oxford, Layton had reported to Cromwell that, 'we find all men applying and glad to accomplish all things'.⁴⁶⁶ Similarly, at Cambridge, at the end of the Visitation, ap Rice was able to report that the university were 'all very conformable touching the kings business'.⁴⁶⁷ Clearly, an important aspect of the Visitation, the profession of the Supremacy, had not led directly to any problems.

However, the Visitors' letters *did* reveal that the imposition of the curricula changes had resulted in friction. A day after arriving at Cambridge, ap Rice voiced concern regarding the 'old blindness' of various heads of the university and colleges, whom he named and suggested should be replaced.⁴⁶⁸ Legh told Cromwell that the university was 'very joyful of your Injunctions' but supported ap Rice's comment, adding 'saving 3 or 4 of the pharisaical pharisees, from whom that blindness that is rooted in them is impossible or else very hard to eradicate and pluck away'.⁴⁶⁹

Legh and ap Rice considered their achievement at Cambridge, on behalf of Cromwell, was 'the profit of study and advancement of learning' through implementing the directions and Injunctions.⁴⁷⁰ They also noted the decline in the number of fellows, as a result of the payment of 'first fruits', and recommended the university be discharged of these payments. They voiced concern regarding the

⁴⁶⁵ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 880. See also later discussion on Cambridge Articles of Enquiry and how Legh's additional Injunctions may have emerged, in Section 3.1.

⁴⁶⁶ BL, Cotton Faustina C VII, fos. 210v, 211r (LP, IX, 350).

⁴⁶⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r (LP, IX, 708).

⁴⁶⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56r (LP, IX, 661).

‘decay of the university’ and directed their plea to Cromwell’s position as Chancellor of the university.⁴⁷¹ The contents of this letter reveal that any fears the Commissioners might have originally had, regarding acceptance of the Royal Supremacy, have been forgotten: the emphasis was on the new curricula.

While at Cambridge, Legh and ap Rice continued visiting local religious houses. At nearby Barnwell priory both Legh and ap Rice were present. The Visitation fees are known: Legh receiving £3/6/8d, ap Rice £2 and ‘their servants’ £1. It would appear they stayed overnight, with the cost of ‘wine, suckets and apples for the kings Visitors’ amounting to 52/6d. The hard riding had taken its toll, as the Visitors took the opportunity, at the prior’s expense, of having their saddles and trappings repaired, at a cost of £1.⁴⁷²

Having left Cambridge on 29 October, they visited Anglesey priory⁴⁷³ and probably spent the night at Swaffham Bulbeck nunnery.⁴⁷⁴ At Swaffham Bulbeck they found ‘neither tolerable sort of living nor good administration ... but all far out of order’. Legh and ap Rice revealed that the prioress ‘is noted of the common rumour of all the country hereabouts as well as the sisters’ to have a questionable relationship with a friar. Ap Rice enclosed a love letter from the friar to the prioress, ‘whereby you may perceive her conversation’. The friar had obtained the advowson of Sopham, value £30, from the prioress. Legh, however, ‘when he enquired of this

⁴⁶⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 84 (LP, IX, 694).

⁴⁷⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r (LP, IX, 708).

⁴⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r (LP, IX, 708). F. D. Logan, ‘The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535’, *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), p. 886, notes the rewards the Visitors were given which may have assisted their entreaties.

⁴⁷² PRO, SC 6 / Henry VIII / 252, no folio numbering.

⁴⁷³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

⁴⁷⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708).

gift he cancelled [it] that no man should meddle in it except the kings graces pleasure known'.⁴⁷⁵

From Denny nunnery, on 30 October, Legh continued his pressure on Cromwell to release all religious who wished to be dispensed. This is a theme which he continued in his extant correspondence during the remainder of this stage of the Visitation. From Cambridge, on 21 October, Legh told Cromwell 'genibus flexis et porrectis manibus instantissime petunt a stricte religionis observantia exonerari, as the more part intend now (as I am informed) at Denny Abbey'.⁴⁷⁶ A few days later, still at Cambridge, Legh repeated his Latinised comment (but in English) that Denny nunnery was a good example of 'religious persons which, instantly kneeling on their knees, holding up their hands, desire to be delivered of such religion as they ignorantly have taken'.⁴⁷⁷ This earlier contact with Denny suggests some forward warning of the progress and intentions of the Visitors. Possibly a small 'delegation' of nuns had been sent from Denny or a letter had been received from a faction at the nunnery. When at Denny, Legh and ap Rice reported 'there we found half a dozen of full, most instantly desired with weeping eyes to go forth'.⁴⁷⁸ At Denny the Visitors noted twenty eight nuns,⁴⁷⁹ which puts into perspective the earlier suggestion of Legh's that 'the more part'⁴⁸⁰ were 'on their knees' seeking release; when actually at Denny, he talked of only six. Furthermore, there may well have been half a dozen who wished to leave, but the example the Visitors gave is not of a fully professed nun. They noted a woman, Sir Giles Strangeway's sister, who 'was and is married', who

⁴⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708) and PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 282r (LP, X, 1251).

⁴⁷⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

⁴⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 84r (LP, IX, 694).

⁴⁷⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708).

⁴⁷⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 341.

⁴⁸⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

evidently escaped her husband but now wished 'to be dismissed and restored' to him. Clearly this particular woman, being married, could not be professed and it is wondered whether some others of the six were living, similarly, in a form of sanctuary. It also raises the question of how many women in similar situations at other nunneries were shown in the Visitors' compertes as having children.

Legh's correspondence regarding Denny and ap Rice's postscript to this letter to Cromwell has been identified by Gasquet as an important pointer to Cromwell's motivation and policy. Legh commented 'that they shall not need to be put forth, but that they will make instance [i. e. request] themselves to be delivered so that their doing shall be imputed to themselves and to no other',⁴⁸¹ and this is identified by Gasquet as suggesting that Legh was disclosing a 'secret policy pursued by Cromwell'. Effectively, Gasquet suggested Cromwell was using the rigour of the Injunctions to empty all religious houses.⁴⁸² Ap Rice's postscript is taken by Gasquet as containing a crafty double meaning which he saw as supporting the rigid application of the Injunctions. Looking closely at the letter helps identify whether the Visitors were referring to the means of dismissing all religious as Gasquet suggested.

While half of this letter dated 30 October concerns Legh and ap Rice's activities at Cambridge, the remainder relates to the nuns of Swaffham Bulbeck ('there the prioress and all would have gone forth if we had suffered them') and the nuns of Denny (who 'desired with weeping eyes to go forth'). When Legh, therefore, stated 'and so by this you may see that they shall not need to be put forth, but they will make instance themselves to be delivered', he was referring only to Swaffham Bulbeck and

⁴⁸¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708).

⁴⁸² F. A. Gasquet, Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (London, 1906), pp. 80/81.

Denny.⁴⁸³ However, we know from his previous correspondence,⁴⁸⁴ Legh was attempting to persuade Cromwell to dispense from religious life any who desired it, who were above the age of twenty-four. Thus, when Legh concluded his 30 October letter ‘And therefore do look for an answer of your pleasure in that behalf’, he is using the alleged examples of Swaffham Bulbeck and Denny to convince Cromwell. Legh was trying to gain a more extensive commitment to dismissing the religious than Cromwell was prepared to give. This did not reflect a secret policy of Cromwell, but revealed Legh’s own feelings regarding the religious life.

Analysing ap Rice’s post script is also revealing. He commenced, ‘Sir, although I reckon it well done that all were out yet I think it were best at their own instant suit they might be dismissed to avoid calumniation and envy’.⁴⁸⁵ Gasquet considered ‘all’ to mean at every religious house, but this is too wide an interpretation, going even beyond Legh’s proposals. The more likely interpretation is that ap Rice was referring specifically to the nuns of Denny (and possibly Swaffham Bulbeck). Thus, in saying ‘all were out’ he was referring to only the six at Denny who were making their ‘instant suit’. It is enlightening that, after such recent disagreements, ap Rice agreed with Legh regarding these nuns. Only a month before, ap Rice had pleaded with Cromwell for more temperance to be used in the dismissal of women as they ‘be of a maturity before men 2 years’.⁴⁸⁶ This concern regarding the dismissal of nuns was continued in his letter of 16 October.⁴⁸⁷ It now appears that recent experience at nunneries has led to a change of heart: if they could not or did not wish to keep to the monastic ideal, it was better for them to depart.

⁴⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r/v (LP, IX, 708).

⁴⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r, fo. 84r (LP, IX, 651 & LP, IX, 694).

⁴⁸⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708) - my underlining.

⁴⁸⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

Ap Rice reinforced this in the continuation of his footnote: ‘And so compelling them to observe these Injunctions you shall have them all to do shortly’.⁴⁸⁸ Here ap Rice is again referring to ‘all’ as those six making ‘their instant suit’; it was by enforcing the Injunctions that those six nuns would allegedly soon make suit for dismissal to Cromwell. This is supported by the next sentence; ‘and the people shall know it the better that it cometh upon their suit, if they be not discharged while we be here’.⁴⁸⁹ Clearly ‘here’ was Denny and did not relate to every monastery.

What also undermines Gasquet’s interpretation is the remaining, concluding, part of ap Rice’s postscript: ‘for then the people would say that we went for no other cause about than to expel them, though the truth were contrary, for they judge all things of the effects that follow and not always of the truth’.⁴⁹⁰ Ap Rice, in talking of Denny in this way, revealed that the Visitors were not engaged in a direct attempt to expel the nuns, although he appears to be increasingly persuaded to Legh’s opinion. It is a reflection of Cromwell’s policy that (certainly at this stage) the Visitation was not directed at clearing out the nuns of Denny or any other house. Ap Rice’s comments also revealed the perceived importance of public opinion in handling those religious who wished to leave. He was aware that Legh’s proposal, of allowing all those who desired to leave above the age of twenty-four, would be viewed in a negative way by ‘the people’; it was better that those religious who wished to leave should be seen to do so by their own clear entreaties. Effectively, in this letter Cromwell did not seem to be operating a secret policy. It was Cromwell who was restricting his Commissioner, Legh, from implementing extreme proposals.

⁴⁸⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 622).

⁴⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 622) - my underlining.

⁴⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 622) - my underlining.

⁴⁹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 622).

After Denny, the Visitors were at the Gilbertine house of Fordham, presumably on 31 October. Legh stated that Fordham contained only 'the prior and his monk',⁴⁹¹ confirmed in the *Compendium Compertorum* extract which also noted both as guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones*.⁴⁹² It would appear that they had already dismissed one monk.⁴⁹³ Legh revealed that the monk was at 'death's door' and 'my Lord of Northumberland' was founder at Fordham 'of whom, I suppose, you may very easily obtain his title and interest'. He noted that 'it is a proper house and it stands commodiously and pleasantly' and as it was ripe for closure was recommending altering the founder title in the king's favour. It seems more than coincidence that, three days later, Legh was writing to Cromwell, seeking a position for a kinsman, 'Master Doctor Rookeby'. He suggested Rookeby would be useful to Cromwell 'in examination of the foundations of religious houses or otherwise'.⁴⁹⁴ It would appear likely that Legh was at this stage aware of Cromwell's interest in assessing the value of king's foundation religious houses, even to the extent of transferring a house like Fordham into the king's hands. A local landowner, Edmund Bestrey, was evidently present at Fordham, or aware of Legh's recommendation, for a few days later he wrote to Cromwell, repeating Legh's comments and seeking the lease of the house.⁴⁹⁵ Landowners evidently were beginning to understand property might soon be available.

On 1 November, Legh and ap Rice were at Ely cathedral visiting the priory and interviewing Bishop Thomas Goodrich. Four relics were catalogued by the Visitors: the wimple of St Etheldreda, the wimple of St Audrey, Aaron's rod and St

⁴⁹¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 272 (LP, IX, 735).

⁴⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113r (LP, X, 364(3)).

⁴⁹³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 341 states Fordham had three canons.

⁴⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 224r (LP, IX, 762): presumably Dr John Rokeby.

Etheldreda's ring, which were used for various cures.⁴⁹⁶ These 'Superstitions' were catalogued by Robert Warmington at the start of the so called Norwich diocese *Compendium Compertorum* and not by John ap Rice as LP incorrectly states;⁴⁹⁷ the preceding pages of this *Compendium* extract, now missing, contained the compertes for Ely. The state of Ely priory evidently was criticised by ap Rice, as he wrote to Cromwell a few days after its Visitation to say, 'of Ely I have written to your mastership by my fellow Richard a Lee'.⁴⁹⁸ Legh, in writing from Ely, maintained his pressure on Cromwell to release those who wished for 'quietness of their consciences' to depart from religious life'.⁴⁹⁹ He continued, 'for your heart would lament to hear them, as I do, as this bearer, your servant, can show you'.⁵⁰⁰ Knowles considered Legh 'shaken by reproofs from Cromwell' after the recent criticism of his behaviour,⁵⁰¹ but this letter hardly shows it: Legh continued to labour Cromwell regarding the need for wider dispensation of religious.

On 2 November, the bishop of Ely wrote to Cromwell that Legh had just finished his Visitation at Ely 'and very substantially and discreetly hath used himself here like as he hath done to fore at Cambridge, much to the king's honour and gain, I ensure you'.⁵⁰² Bishop Goodrich had evidently complained to Legh about the inhibition of the bishops' ordinary powers during the course of the Visitation and

⁴⁹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 222 (LP, IX, 761).

⁴⁹⁶ A. N. Shaw, 'The *Compendium Compertorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation', pp. 9-11, proves that the 'superstitio' extract in the Norwich *Compendium Compertorum* extract is of Ely cathedral and not St Olaves as had hitherto been presumed. See also G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 695/696 and LP, IX, 364 (3) p. 143.

⁴⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113r (LP, X, 364(3), p. 143); the remainder of the manuscript is in ap Rice's hand.

⁴⁹⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145 (LP, IX, 772). Lee had accompanied the Visitors from London to Ely.

⁴⁹⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 272 (LP, IX, 735).

⁵⁰⁰ 'this bearer, your servant' was probably Richard a Lee.

⁵⁰¹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 285.

⁵⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 195 (LP, IX, 743).

Legh had advised him to ‘sue unto your mastership’.⁵⁰³ Legh certainly would have been pleased by the excellent testimony given to Cromwell, so soon after criticism regarding his conduct. Perhaps Legh and Goodrich were helping each other out as the bishop appeared glad about the counsel Legh gave.⁵⁰⁴

The next part of the Visitors’ journey, from Ely to St Osyth, is reflected in the corrected Norwich diocese *Compendium*. The crimes noted in the *Compendium* can now be compared with other sources, to provide greater detail of the actions and activities of Legh and ap Rice during this stage of their Visitation.⁵⁰⁵

The Visitors left Ely at the latest on 2 November and are not identified at Bury St Edmunds, twenty five miles away, until 4 November. It is likely they passed through Fordham priory, which they had already visited before arriving at Ely. It is possible in the intervening period they went to Stoke-by-Clare College. Legh had reported from Walden on 19 October that the Dean of Stoke was dead and that he had bequeathed five pieces of arras to Cromwell.⁵⁰⁶ Legh may have arrived to examine the state of the college and issue Cromwell’s instructions.⁵⁰⁷

At Bury, on their arrival, there were fifty-nine monks present and three away at Oxford. Ap Rice reported that they dismissed eight for being under age and a further five would depart ‘above age ... if they might’.⁵⁰⁸ These five ap Rice considered to

⁵⁰³ See Section 3.3 for Legh’s involvement with their construction.

⁵⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 195 (LP, IX, 743).

⁵⁰⁵ See summary details of Norwich diocese *Compendium* in Appendix 9, which specifies the correct ordering of houses visited.

⁵⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 39r (LP, IX, 640).

⁵⁰⁷ Cromwell’s bequest was sent on 10 November, see PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 31r (LP, IX, 801) and Matthew Parker, later archbishop of Canterbury, was appointed dean by Cromwell on 13 November, see CCCC MS 108, fo. 90.

⁵⁰⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145r (LP, IX, 772).

‘be of the best sort in the house and of the best learning and judgement’. There does not seem any sarcasm in this statement. He was willing to accept that monks of ‘best learning and judgement’ should be those who wished to leave; this reflects his increasingly negative estimation of the value of monasticism.

Ap Rice was aware that the manner of the Visitors’ proceedings at Bury might lead to complaint; ‘as I suppose you shall have suit made to you touching Bury ere we return’.⁵⁰⁹ Perhaps he remained sensitive regarding Cromwell’s complaints to Legh regarding the rigour of the Visitation. Ap Rice defended ‘our proceedings’: the abbot lived much in his granges, he delighted in playing dice and cards, in building for his pleasure, he did not preach openly, poor men could not lease farms and ‘he seems addict to the maintaining of such suspicious ceremonies as hath been used heretofore’. The diverse list sought to undermine the value of any complaints the abbot might make to the king or Cromwell. The accusations against the monks were overshadowed by a lengthy list of relics ‘and certain other superstitions’ which are itemised in the Norwich *Compendium Compertorum*.⁵¹⁰ Ap Rice sought to quickly provide Cromwell with information in case the king’s foundation monastery should attempt to mobilise its royal connections. The compertes, including Bury, were not sent until 11 November and so, evidently, ap Rice thought it important to send a preview on 5 November, while at Bury.

The Visitors left Bury by 6 November. The abbot immediately wrote to Cromwell requesting licence to ‘pass forth of the limits and septes of this monastery’ otherwise, he said, the lands could not be efficiently administered. The abbot’s threat

⁵⁰⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145r (LP, IX, 772).

⁵¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113v. A close examination of the Bury compertes follows in Section 3.1.

to Cromwell is veiled but clear: such a licence was required so that ‘a just account and reckoning thereof at all times may be made to the kings highness being only founder and patron of the same’.⁵¹¹ A grant by the abbey, of £20 (later increased) to Cromwell and his son probably smoothed over any difficulties.⁵¹²

The path of the Visitors can now broadly be followed from the ordering noted in the Norwich diocese *Compendium Compertorum*.⁵¹³ This ordering is supported and enlarged upon by the discovery in CCCC MS 111. The Visitors, therefore, continued northward to Ixworth, and the three religious houses at Thetford. It appears that the Visitors were, at this stage, issuing the Injunctions to some houses before their arrival. This is the case with Buckenham priory from where the prior wrote on 10 November to Cromwell requesting ‘your favourable licence’ not to apply certain of the Injunctions.⁵¹⁴ If other houses were also receiving advanced copies of the Injunctions, it may explain why on the 11 November Legh wrote to Cromwell, ‘you shall understand that hereabouts where we go at diverse places they have sold, ere we came, both lands and goods and had prepared themselves to go away and utterly to relinquish their houses’.⁵¹⁵ Given that Legh had been continually telling Cromwell that many religious wished to leave, perhaps he was strengthening his case by issuing the Injunctions in advance to cause panic ‘ere we came’.

From Thetford, they arrived at West Dereham, where Legh proposed replacement for the recently dead abbot.⁵¹⁶ Dom Roger Forman was supported by the

⁵¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 1 (LP, IX, 781).

⁵¹² BL, Harley 308, fo. 89r (LP, IX, 882) and PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 138 (LP, IX, 978).

⁵¹³ The incorrect ordering of LP, X, 364(2) and LP, X, 364(3) has already been proved in A. N. Shaw, ‘The *Compendium Compertorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation’, pp. 9-11. See Appendix 9.

⁵¹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 30 (LP, IX, 800).

⁵¹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808).

⁵¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 47 (LP, IX, 651); PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 84 (LP, IX, 694); BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 53 (LP, IX, 745); PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 808).

brethren ‘and of diverse honest and worshipful gentlemen thereabout’ and the Visitors sent him to Cromwell for ‘your further pleasure’.⁵¹⁷ By 18 November, Forman, then in London, was being referred to as the new abbot.⁵¹⁸ The Commissioners’ power to oversee elections, but not to confirm them, is demonstrated at West Dereham.⁵¹⁹ Legh and ap Rice considered the compertes obtained for West Dereham appalling and drew Cromwell’s attention to them, ‘we pray you to note well specially that at West Dereham’.⁵²⁰

From West Dereham, the Visitors travelled to the many houses in the East of Norfolk. At Crabhouse nunnery they noted that four of the nuns, including the prioress, had children,⁵²¹ describing the house to Cromwell as a ‘lewd nunnery’.⁵²² Both their letter and the *Compendium Compertorum* relate that the nunnery had sold certain lands to Mr Conisbie and Mr Gybsen which the Visitors sequestered. They also ‘stayed the prioress and sisters there from further alienation until the king’s pleasure or yours be known therein’.⁵²³ It is interesting to note that they felt that the king might have some involvement in such a small house.

While at Westacre, Legh and ap Rice told Cromwell that ‘the greatest houses we came to commonly they be so confederate, by reason of their heads being mere pharisees, that we can get little or no compertes there’.⁵²⁴ This comment was supported by the *Compendium*, enclosed with the letter, where Bury, Ixworth and

⁵¹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 808).

⁵¹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 87, fo. 47 (LP, VII, 1446) incorrectly dated in LP.

⁵¹⁹ Overriding the apparently recent authority of the Commendator of Welbeck, under the broad seal, to undertake Praemonstratensian elections, see BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 53r (LP, IX, 745).

⁵²⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808).

⁵²¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114v.

⁵²² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808).

⁵²³ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808).

⁵²⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808).

Thetford canons are noted as ‘suspicio confederationis’.⁵²⁵ While many crimes were listed in this section of the Norwich *Compendium*, the Visitors were using this ‘confederation’ and the speed of the Visitation, as an apology that they had not found more. They suggested Cromwell send ‘a commission to certain houses "*ad melius inquirendo*" and give them that shall go somewhat more leisure, we doubt not but you shall find them all naught’.⁵²⁶ While no doubt Legh dictated the letter and ap Rice wrote and also signed it, the use of ‘we’ demonstrates an agreement on the general state of religious houses: where they were ‘confederate’ the religious must have been hiding their crimes and where they were not ‘confederate’ many crimes were identified. Thus, when the Visitors said ‘all naught’ they were referring to all religious houses. This is a fairly dramatic shift, certainly by ap Rice. Such a revelation suggests this was what Cromwell now wanted to hear: if you search adequately, ‘you shall find them all naught’. The apology for lack of compertes suggests this is what was now required, the more the better.

Comparison of the Norwich diocese *Compendium* extracts and CCCC MS 111 identifies that the *Compendium* was not providing a full listing of the houses visited. Kings Lynn, Hempton, Weybourne and Carrow religious houses were also examined, yet do not appear in the *Compendium*.⁵²⁷ As every house mentioned in the Norwich *Compendium* has negative comments, it is probably fair to assume that at the four excluded houses, no crimes could be found. Again, this reflects the purpose of the list – Cromwell wanted to hear of crimes.

⁵²⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113v.

⁵²⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808), ‘to better enquire’ - my underlining.

⁵²⁷ While these four houses are small, with complements of three, four, two and nine respectively, others within the Norwich *Compendium* are equally as small.

From Westacre on 11 November to Norwich cathedral on 21 November, a total of fourteen houses were visited. The religious of Norfolk knew the Visitors were on their way. A day or two before they arrived at Castle Acre, the monks granted the right of next presentation of an advowson to Thomas Cromwell, Richard Cromwell and John ap Rice;⁵²⁸ no doubt Legh satisfied himself with a more direct reward on his arrival. The important priory of Walsingham⁵²⁹ and St Benet's abbey were examined during this eleven day period.

It seems that on 19 November, Legh visited Horsham St Faith priory. Legh reported that he had examined the prior and the convent regarding some matter which Cromwell had previously raised and 'I well perceive there is no such thing toward there, not yet done, as your mastership wrote to me, but that it is contrary that you were informed of'.⁵³⁰ Evidently some accusation had been made, but of what nature is unclear. It would seem that before 11 November, Cromwell had issued some instructions to Legh, who had responded, 'And as touching St Faiths your commandment is already there put into execution according to your mind and pleasure'.⁵³¹ However, while Legh told Cromwell that Horsham St Faith was blameless, this did not restrain him from sequestering the assets of the priory. On 21 November, Prior John Sarysbury wrote to Cromwell complaining that 'it hath pleased master Visitor your deputy to sequester as well the possessions and moveables of this house as me and my brethren of the same, for what cause or consideration I know not'. Sarysbury complained that 'sinister report of such as be not my friends, without

⁵²⁸ Norfolk Record Office, ON Reg 10/16, fo. 35v. All kinsfolk, of course.

⁵²⁹ See examination of Walsingham Articles of Enquiry in Section 3.1.

⁵³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 849).

⁵³¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808). The servant who put into execution Cromwell's commands is probably the same who delivered the Injunction to Buckenham before the Visitors' arrival (see above).

cause brought this matter to pass'.⁵³² Whatever the accusation, it would seem that Horsham St Faith was on a hit list for closure. A manuscript exists, containing a list of nine houses, including Horsham St Faith, which appears to have been a summary of those closed or targeted for closure. The list includes Dover, Langdon and Folkestone, which were being closed the same week Legh was at Horsham St Faith.⁵³³ In January, Sarysbury was still complaining of his lot and came to London to see Cromwell and show him evidence that Lord Dacres of the South was not, after all, the founder; a canon, who presumably had been dismissed by Legh, had hidden a charter by which, 'it shall undoubtedly appear the kings majesty to be the very founder'.⁵³⁴ From this it appears the prior was attempting to remain in Cromwell's favour – successfully, as he was appointed bishop of Thetford in March.⁵³⁵

Perhaps Legh was aware of Cromwell's intention to suppress St Faith's as he related to Cromwell the income of the house, describing it as 'a commodious and a proper house'. He continued, 'there be but 5 monks with the prior and 2 of them instantly desire to be dismissed of the religion'.⁵³⁶ Legh's comments demonstrated to Cromwell that it would not take much effort to close the house.

The theme of houses with a small number of religious is underlined in Legh's letter of 19 November. He told Cromwell, 'there be many pretty houses here in Norfolk, both of monks and canons, which hath in them but the prior and one with

⁵³² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 78 (LP, IX, 865).

⁵³³ PRO, SP 1 / 239, fo. 294r (LP, Addenda I, 1038). Other than St Faith, only Thurgarton priory on this list was not closed by 28 February 1536 (see also LP, IX, 816). For Thurgarton, see Section 2.4.2.

⁵³⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 341 and PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 164r (LP, IX, 173).

⁵³⁵ LP, X, 423.

⁵³⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 849).

him, and what your pleasure is to be done in this ... I desire to know'.⁵³⁷ Legh was suggesting the minimum number required for a functioning monastery was not always available in the Norwich diocese. However, Legh had himself severely reduced the number of monks. For example, probably a day after leaving Norwich the Visitors were at Langley. On their arrival there were fifteen canons⁵³⁸ and on their departure only six. Of sixteen Norwich houses where figures are available, Legh appears to have dismissed forty per cent of the complement.⁵³⁹ It is, therefore, not surprising many houses had 'but the prior and one with him'.

At St Olaves, perhaps about 21 or 22 November, the trail of the Visitors in the Norwich diocese from the *Compendium* ceases. However, their continuing route can now be traced from CCCC MS 111. The remaining stage of Legh and ap Rice's Visitation circuit has not previously been clearly identified by historians.

On 27 November, they were at Ipswich.⁵⁴⁰ During this five or six day period, they had visited between ten and thirteen religious houses, plus the bishop of Norwich's palace at Hoxne.⁵⁴¹ This increased pace of visiting suggests some new strategy. With geographically diverse small houses scattered around the Suffolk countryside, it seems likely that the policy of individual visits had ended. Just a few days later it can be identified that the canons of Little Dunmow priory had their Visitation at Coggeshall abbey.⁵⁴² It, therefore, appears that, in some circumstances, occupants of certain religious houses were now being told to report to larger local

⁵³⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 849).

⁵³⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 341.

⁵³⁹ Knowles, with a smaller sample, calculates a similar decrease, see D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 309.

⁵⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 104 (LP, IX, 889).

⁵⁴¹ See Appendix 2, sheet 3 and 4.

monasteries for their Visitation. This suggests that speed had become more important but also that the Visitation had become more specific in its required information. Evidently questions about the state of buildings, the report of the religious by 'common fame' and other issues requiring the presence of the Visitors at the religious houses were no longer seen as being necessary. The conclusion is that both the need to have the Visitation completed before the next parliamentary session and the information required from the Visitation, had been decided.

Legh's letter to Cromwell from Ipswich notably mentioned nothing about the monastic Visitation.⁵⁴³ Indeed, none of the Visitors' letters from this time mentioned any specific details of compertes obtained during the Visitation. By the end of November, the Visitors were accomplished in the techniques of investigation and had, apparently in agreement with Cromwell, reduced the whole process into a few simple steps. Thus, from Ipswich, Legh was concerned about Bishop Richard Nix's financial arrangements in his final illness and pressing Cromwell's interest.⁵⁴⁴

During this period of Visitation in east Suffolk, Legh appears to have taken an aggressive stance. The Franciscan nuns of Bruisyard pleaded with Cromwell that they were not disposing of their goods or 'alienating' anything or wasting their woods. In 'humbly beseeching' Cromwell to intercede with the king, the founder of Bruisyard, 'that of his benevolent grace will suffer us and our house to continue his bede women ...', suggests Legh's report to Cromwell had threatened closure of the

⁵⁴² See later.

⁵⁴³ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 104 (LP, IX, 889).

⁵⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 104 (LP, IX, 889).

nunnery.⁵⁴⁵ The twenty nuns of Bruisyard had everything to fear from the example of the Benedictine nuns of nearby Bungay. Here all seven nuns⁵⁴⁶ were dismissed by Legh and as there was ‘not one nun left’, the Duke of Norfolk, ‘as founder, lawfully entered thereunto’.⁵⁴⁷ From Ipswich the Visitors re-entered the London diocese and were at Coggeshall monastery in the week commencing 28 November,⁵⁴⁸ having presumably already visited St Botolph’s, Colchester *en route*. A few months later certain monks of Coggeshall made depositions to Thomas Legh against their abbot. They accused the abbot of hiding ‘certain of the jewels and evidences belonging to the place, thus with craft he did intend to deceive and defraud the kings grace and his Visitor, contrary to all our minds, we nothing knowing thereof till now of late’.⁵⁴⁹ However, another deponent, Richard Clarke, stated that the abbot, ‘perceiving that he should be visited by the kings Commissioners gave counsel unto his brethren’ suggesting all at the monastery were aware that chalice, plate and jewels were hidden before Legh’s arrival.⁵⁵⁰ From these testimonies it would appear that the monastery was forewarned as to the intent of the Visitors. The statement by the monk John Bokkyng clearly suggests the main activities of the Visitors were known in advance, either through a formal notice or by general repute, as the abbot ‘calling his brothers sundry times before him gave them counsel and also willed them to say that in case the kings Visitors should examine them, at their Visitation, of the estate of the said monastery and what plate they had the said brethren should answer that everything was well ordered and that they should not confess to have any knowledge of one great

⁵⁴⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 22 (LP, IX, 1094). It seems likely that this undated letter, relating to the Injunctions, was as a result of Legh’s visit.

⁵⁴⁶ CCCC MS 111, fos. 341, 342.

⁵⁴⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 252 (LP, X, 1236) the Duke took possession at ‘St Andrew tide’. (30 November) Legh was at Bungay perhaps about the 24 November.

⁵⁴⁸ BL, Add. MS 20,022.

⁵⁴⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 103, fo. 215 (LP, X, 774).

⁵⁵⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 156r (LP, X, 164(2)).

chalice, a pyx and one holy water stock, all of silver ...'.⁵⁵¹ Agreements to hide the truth, or 'confederation', which Legh and ap Rice had earlier claimed existed at many houses, were apparent at Coggeshall. It would seem that, due to the speed of the Visitation, the 'confederation' stood firm. Shortly afterwards, however, a complaint, possibly encouraged by the clause in the Injunctions enabling individuals to protest directly to Cromwell, led the whole intrigue to be discovered.

The prior of Little Dunmow and his ten canons made a fifteen mile journey to Coggeshall for the Visitation of his house.⁵⁵² In the prior's account book the entry for the first week in Advent 1535 was, 'my costs and rewards to the kings Visitation at Coggeshall – 57/8d'. The prior's account book reveals that it was only two weeks after the Visitation that 'the novices went away at the kings commandment'.⁵⁵³ This demonstrates that the action of dismissing those defined by the Visitors as under age was left to the head of the house. While Little Dunmow, through not being visited in situ, may be a special case, it appears, by this stage of the Visitation, Thomas Legh was happy to entrust the head of a house with implementing the Injunction regarding the age of taking vows.

With Little Dunmow known to have travelled to Coggeshall for its Visitation, it is likely that Tilty, Leighs and perhaps other small houses noted in the CCCC MS 111 were also examined in this manner.⁵⁵⁴ It seems significant that the small Augustinian priory of Thremhall was specifically marked as 'non visitat',⁵⁵⁵ yet both Tilty and Hatfield Broad Oak (or Hatfield Regis), which were less than five miles from

⁵⁵¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 160r (LP, X, 164(2)).

⁵⁵² BL, Add. MS 20022 (LP, VIII, 865); CCCC MS 111, fo. 342.

⁵⁵³ BL, Add. MS 20,022: the cost of the dismissed novices' 'apparel' was 48s 10d.

⁵⁵⁴ The ordering of these houses in CCCC MS 111, fo. 342 may suggest this.

Thremhall, were noted as being visited by Legh. If Legh had been physically in the proximity, previous experience has demonstrated he would have visited the house, however small. This evidence again demonstrates the speed and increased superficiality of the Visitation process by the first week of December.

There is no evidence to directly link Legh with Tilty's surrender less than three months later. Whether or not Legh physically came to Tilty, the abbey definitely received the Injunctions from him.⁵⁵⁶ It appears that one monk was dismissed on age grounds as a result of the Visitation.⁵⁵⁷

Perhaps St Osyth was visited by Legh before Coggeshall. Legh certainly came to St Osyth and examined the canons, as the letter of Thomas Solmes reveals.⁵⁵⁸ The policy regarding those to be dismissed on age grounds is clear. Solmes related that Legh had advised him to write to Cromwell for licence to leave his religious order. Solmes had been at the monastery since the age of thirteen and was professed before he completed his fourteenth year. He evidently was now twenty-five years of age and so beyond the '24 years complete' category. Clearly Legh had advised Solmes to write the letter, and so continue his own lengthy lobbying of Cromwell regarding the perceived need to extend the scope of dispensation from vows. Thus it can be seen, even though Solmes allegedly took vows at only fourteen years of age, his current age of twenty-five precluded him from automatically being dismissed. That Legh was not dismissing such an individual appears to demonstrate that he was performing, to the letter, the Injunctions given to him by Cromwell, and not wildly dismissing people out

⁵⁵⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 319.

⁵⁵⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 151r (LP, X, 408(1)).

⁵⁵⁷ Comparison of CCCC MS 111, fo. 342 with PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 151r (LP, X, 408).

⁵⁵⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 26r/v (LP, IX, 1157). See also VCH, Essex vol. 2, p. 161.

of hand, as ap Rice had earlier suggested. However, later analysis of the dismissal rate appears to suggest that Legh was more zealous in this regard than the other Visitors.⁵⁵⁹

At this time, Beeleigh abbey was visited. A letter three weeks later from Beeleigh's founder, Henry, Earl of Essex, suggests that a request from the abbot, perhaps linked to the Injunctions, was granted by Cromwell, 'and I thank you of your goodness showed unto the Abbot of Beeleigh'.⁵⁶⁰ After Beeleigh, Legh and ap Rice would have next visited the mighty abbey of Waltham, which would have been on the route outlined by CCCC MS 111; it is unlikely they would have omitted the richest house in Essex.⁵⁶¹

It would appear that by the middle of December, Legh and ap Rice were again in London. They certainly visited Elsing Spital hospital at this time⁵⁶² and could well have visited Barking nunnery,⁵⁶³ Stratford Langthorn⁵⁶⁴ and other houses not visited when last in London at the beginning of October. This stay in London would have allowed Cromwell to give his instructions to Layton, Legh and Bedyll personally regarding the forthcoming Visitation of York province and Lincolnshire. It would have been at this time Layton 'appointed to meet with Doctor Legh'⁵⁶⁵ at Lichfield,

⁵⁵⁹ See analysis in Section 3.2 Injunctions.

⁵⁶⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 88 (LP, X, 94). The earl goes on to refer to Coggeshall and Dr Legh.

⁵⁶¹ VCH, Essex, vol. 2, p. 170.

⁵⁶² CCCC MS 111, fo. 342.

⁵⁶³ Remembering Audley's request in September for Legh to delay the Visitation of Barking, see PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 68r (LP, IX, 487).

⁵⁶⁴ which was certainly visited, see PRO, SP 1 / 90, fo. 204 (LP, VIII, 297) dated by LP circa February 1535. However, the recipient, Sir Roger Cholmley, was not elected Recorder of London until June 1535 (S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558*, vol. 1 (London, 1982), p. 644): 'this last Visitation' will, therefore, refer to Legh.

⁵⁶⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 162r (LP, IX, 1005).

the place at which they jointly commenced the Northern Visitation.⁵⁶⁶ The manner in which Layton, Legh and Bedyll visited various houses on their way to their northern circuits manifestly demonstrates previous co-ordination between the Visitors.

Earlier, Tregonwell, Cave and Legh himself had independently visited the majority of religious houses in the non-Lincolnshire portion of the Lincoln diocese. That on their travels north, Layton, Legh and Bedyll visited these geographically disparate houses demonstrates a plan, as well as the desire to make the whole of the Royal Visitation as complete as possible.

While Layton and Bedyll were to wait on the king at Richmond, on either the afternoon of 17 December or the morning of 18 December,⁵⁶⁷ it is not possible to confirm Legh's presence. However, Legh and ap Rice would have been in London at the time, embarking on the last stage of their joint tour about 20 December.⁵⁶⁸ This last stage is demonstrated by the CCCC MS 111, although the ordering is somewhat erratic, suggesting that a number of the religious houses were called to a central point. Never previously has it been identified that ap Rice accompanied Legh to Lichfield before the commencement of the Visitation of York Province.⁵⁶⁹

Legh's first identified port of call was the unvisited houses in the Bedford archdeaconry. However, his route would have passed St Albans and Dunstable. This may explain the extraordinarily late appeal of the abbot of St Albans for 'relaxation of some Injunctions heretofore given', dated 22 January 1536. With the original Visitation of St Albans in mid October, it is unlikely he was appealing regarding

⁵⁶⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 93r (LP, X, 364).

⁵⁶⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130 (LP, IX, 982).

⁵⁶⁸ Deductions relative to later datings.

⁵⁶⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340 clearly states Legh was accompanied by ap Rice and, as the original document was drawn up by ap Rice, he would have known where he went. D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 280 states they parted in Essex.

Injunctions given three months previously. It is, therefore, possible the abbot was appealing as a result of Legh's second visit.⁵⁷⁰

Legh presumably visited the large Benedictine nunnery of Elstow, south of Bedford, before visiting the nearby Augustinian priory of Caldwell.⁵⁷¹ This was followed by Harrold priory, which probably had been visited only the day before by Layton on his way north.⁵⁷²

On his way to Hinchingbroke, where he visited the nuns and the sick abbess on 23 December,⁵⁷³ Legh visited Stoneley.⁵⁷⁴ As Kimbolton castle was only a few hundred yards from Stoneley priory, the intriguing possibility presents itself that Legh undertook a commission for Cromwell or the king concerning its occupant, Catherine of Aragon. Legh had previously acted as an intermediary when he 'cited' the then Queen Catherine to appear at Dunstable in May 1533 for Archbishop Cranmer's enquiry into the validity of her marriage to King Henry.⁵⁷⁵ Cromwell had, after all, only on 17 December allegedly agreed to Chapuys' request to remove the queen to other quarters and advance her some money.⁵⁷⁶ Legh could have received instructions to act in some way. Of course, Legh's possible presence at Kimbolton could be related to her illness. Within a week of his visit, Catherine had a relapse, and on 30 December, the king allegedly told Chapuys 'Madame would not live long'.⁵⁷⁷ With Legh in such close proximity to Catherine on 22 December, it is difficult to believe

⁵⁷⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 138 (LP, X, 152).

⁵⁷¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 342.

⁵⁷² See Layton's itinerary in Appendix 2, sheet 3. If Legh had preceded Layton, then Layton could not have helped referring to it in his written description of his own visit, see BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 162r/v (LP, IX, 1005).

⁵⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 150 (LP, IX, 1009).

⁵⁷⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343.

⁵⁷⁵ LP, VI, 661.

⁵⁷⁶ SSP, vol. 5, part 1, p. 590: 'Cromwell, as usual, gave me a favourable answer'.

Legh was not instructed to give some feedback regarding her health.⁵⁷⁸ Further, the bishop of Llandaff was then at Kimbolton⁵⁷⁹ and it is unlikely that Legh would lose the opportunity of quizzing him. Already on 11 November, Vaughan and Becansaw, on their Visitation at Llandaff cathedral, found the bishop at his interview ‘worthy of great correction’ including ‘the negligence of the bishop to declare with the people the word of God’. Legh’s visit could have partly consolidated the king and Cromwell’s letters on this subject to the bishop of Llandaff on 7 January 1536.⁵⁸⁰

At Huntingdon priory, Legh dismissed only one canon⁵⁸¹ and gave the prior instructions to sequester the goods of Hinchingbroke nunnery once the imminent death of the abbess occurred.⁵⁸²

An interesting example of Legh’s perceived power is seen at this time with King’s College Cambridge sending a fellow, on 23 December, to intercept him. The college was evidently aware that Legh was at nearby Huntingdon and sought the opportunity for relaxation of their Injunctions.⁵⁸³

On 25 December, Legh visited the Cistercian monastery of Sawtry, at which the monks of nearby Ramsey abbey stated that Legh ‘gave liberty to half the house ... to depart’.⁵⁸⁴ Logan commented that ‘the accuracy of this comment defies validation’.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁷ *SSP*, vol. 5, part 1, p. 600.

⁵⁷⁸ She died on 7 January. Chapuys’ letters give details of the progress of her illness and fears for her safety, see *SSP*, vol. 5, Nos. 238, 246; vol. 6, Nos. 3, 9, 10, 13, 16.

⁵⁷⁹ He was Catherine’s confessor.

⁵⁸⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 111, fo. 33 (*LP*, X, 45) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 8 (*LP*, X, 46).

⁵⁸¹ Compare CCCC MS 111, fo. 342 and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 336r.

⁵⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 150 (*LP*, IX, 1009).

⁵⁸³ See Kings College, Cambridge, KCAR / 4 / 1 / 12, Mundum Book, vol. 2 and F. D. Logan, ‘The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535’, *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), p. 884.

⁵⁸⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo E IV, fo. 234 (*LP*, X, 103).

However, it can now be shown to be true. On Legh's arrival, he noted twelve religious.⁵⁸⁶ A few months later, the Suppression Commissioners noted only six canons, including Thomas Sudbey who was not a priest.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, half of the religious were dispensed. Given that the six released were unlikely all to have been below the age of twenty-five, it seems clear that by now Legh did have a change in instructions allowing a greater latitude to dispense religious.⁵⁸⁸

From Sawtry, Legh would have continued north to Peterborough abbey before turning eastwards towards Owston, presumably also visiting nearby Launde.⁵⁸⁹ In this phase, Legh was avoiding those houses already visited by Cave.⁵⁹⁰ From Owston, Legh travelled to Burton Lazars hospital. Here some weighty matter was apparently found against the master, which 'cause of deprivation your mastership [Legh] had knowledge of in your time of Visitation'.⁵⁹¹ In little over a year after his visit, Legh had obtained a right of succession to the mastership,⁵⁹² which can hardly be a coincidence.

Legh then continued westwards towards Lichfield, visiting the north Leicestershire houses of Kirkby Bellers and Ulverscroft.⁵⁹³ Having been at Sawtry on Christmas day, Legh probably arrived at Lichfield by 29 December, joining Layton, who had arrived a week earlier. At Lichfield, ap Rice and Legh parted company, having spent five continuous and stormy months together in Visitation. William

⁵⁸⁵ F. D. Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England c. 1240 - 1540* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 164.

⁵⁸⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 342.

⁵⁸⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 338r.

⁵⁸⁸ F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', p. 216.

⁵⁸⁹ CCCC MS 111, fos. 342, 343.

⁵⁹⁰ see Section 2.3.4.

⁵⁹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 127, fo. 224 (LP, XII(2), Appendix 14).

⁵⁹² LP, XII (1), 795 (Grant No. 17).

Blytheman took over as registrar for the Northern Visitation and ap Rice presumably returned to London and Cromwell with the compertes and Visitation Act Book.

When back in London, ap Rice was involved with processing the first tranche of muniments, foundations, charters, etc, which religious houses, visited in the first four months of the Visitation, had been commanded to send to Cromwell by Christmas.⁵⁹⁴

Ap Rice's work in attending monastic and other Visitations was now over and his role, under Cromwell's direction, was in the preparation for the March Suppression Act.

⁵⁹³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343.

⁵⁹⁴ Conclusion of Injunctions, see D. Wilkins (ed.), Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 791. Bodl, MS Lat. Hist. D. 2, fo. 34r, fo. 39v notes ap Rice's involvement as does CCCC MS 111, fo. 240.

2.3.3 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr John Tregonwell

Dr John Tregonwell, a layman, had been seasoned in the royal service prior to his appointment as a Commissioner in the Royal Visitation. His legal skills in the court of arches and as a judge of the admiralty resulted in the king using Tregonwell throughout the proceedings of the royal divorce. He was also sent abroad to partake in diplomatic negotiations in 1532. In early 1534, Tregonwell was involved in monastic business, including the election of the abbot of Tewkesbury.⁵⁹⁵ In November / December 1534, he was named in a draft commission as one of three vicegerents, and so his involvement in the Royal Visitation in 1535 seemed assured.⁵⁹⁶

While it is possible to accept that Tregonwell was accompanying the king's progress in the summer of 1535, it has hitherto been impossible to identify whether he accompanied Richard Layton in his earlier Royal Visitation.⁵⁹⁷ The abbot of Osney, writing on 15 September, told Cromwell 'to be advertised that Master Dr Tregonwell and Master Dr Layton deputies unto your goodness ... hath visited the king's grace's prior monastery of Osney'.⁵⁹⁸ That Tregonwell had not been involved with monastic Visitation in the previous two months is now made reasonably clear by new evidence, which distinguishes between Tregonwell and Layton's individual Visitation circuits.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁵ LP, VII, 400.

⁵⁹⁶ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (forthcoming), entry on Tregonwell by A. N. Shaw.

⁵⁹⁷ *Conversation with Cunich* (author of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (forthcoming) entry on Richard Layton) had earlier highlighted this doubt.

⁵⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 178r (LP, IX, 375).

⁵⁹⁹ CCCC MS 111, fos. 339/340. However, the diocesan categories in this manuscript are out of order, as is proved by dating in Appendix 4. The earliest smaller houses Tregonwell could have visited are, therefore, those listed in the 'Diocese of Lincoln' on CCCC MS 111, fo. 340. The religious houses

At the end of July and beginning of August 1535, Tregonwell was in Oxford, but the purpose of this visit is not clear.⁶⁰⁰ Clearly by 7 September Tregonwell was again in Oxford,⁶⁰¹ accompanying Richard Layton until the morning of Monday 13 September.⁶⁰² Both had a commission 'for the Visitation of the University of Oxford' which incorporated three objectives: firstly, to obtain from the university, from every college, from every hall, from every discipline and every scholar, a signed profession acknowledging the king's Supremacy; secondly, to obtain the oath acknowledging the Succession Act from each person in the university; and thirdly, to issue Injunctions 'for the increase of learning'.⁶⁰³ With so many religious attending Oxford, for example at Canterbury, Durham and Gloucester colleges, there is no evidence that Layton and Tregonwell attempted to gain compertes from these monastic institutions.

It would appear that, while at Oxford, Tregonwell received his commission to visit monastic houses in the southern part of the Lincolnshire diocese.⁶⁰⁴ Appendix 4 details Tregonwell's Visitation itinerary for the next four months, and Map 3 identifies his route. In his letter of 12 September, announcing he was the next day off 'towards Godstow and other places to execute effectually the commission that you have given unto me', Tregonwell noted that he was then expected to return to Cromwell.⁶⁰⁵ Evidently, Reading abbey was not in his commission, as his letter asked

within this diocese tie up almost exactly with Tregonwell's letter of 28 September [PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 457)], detailing his movements after leaving Oxford.

⁶⁰⁰ CCCO, Libra Magna 1, fo. 119, fo. 120r. Tregonwell was entertained at Corpus Christi College on Thursday 29 July and the following week was provided with information on Bishop Oldham, bishop of Exeter 1504-1519.

⁶⁰¹ Magdalen College, Oxford, Ledger C, fo. 66.

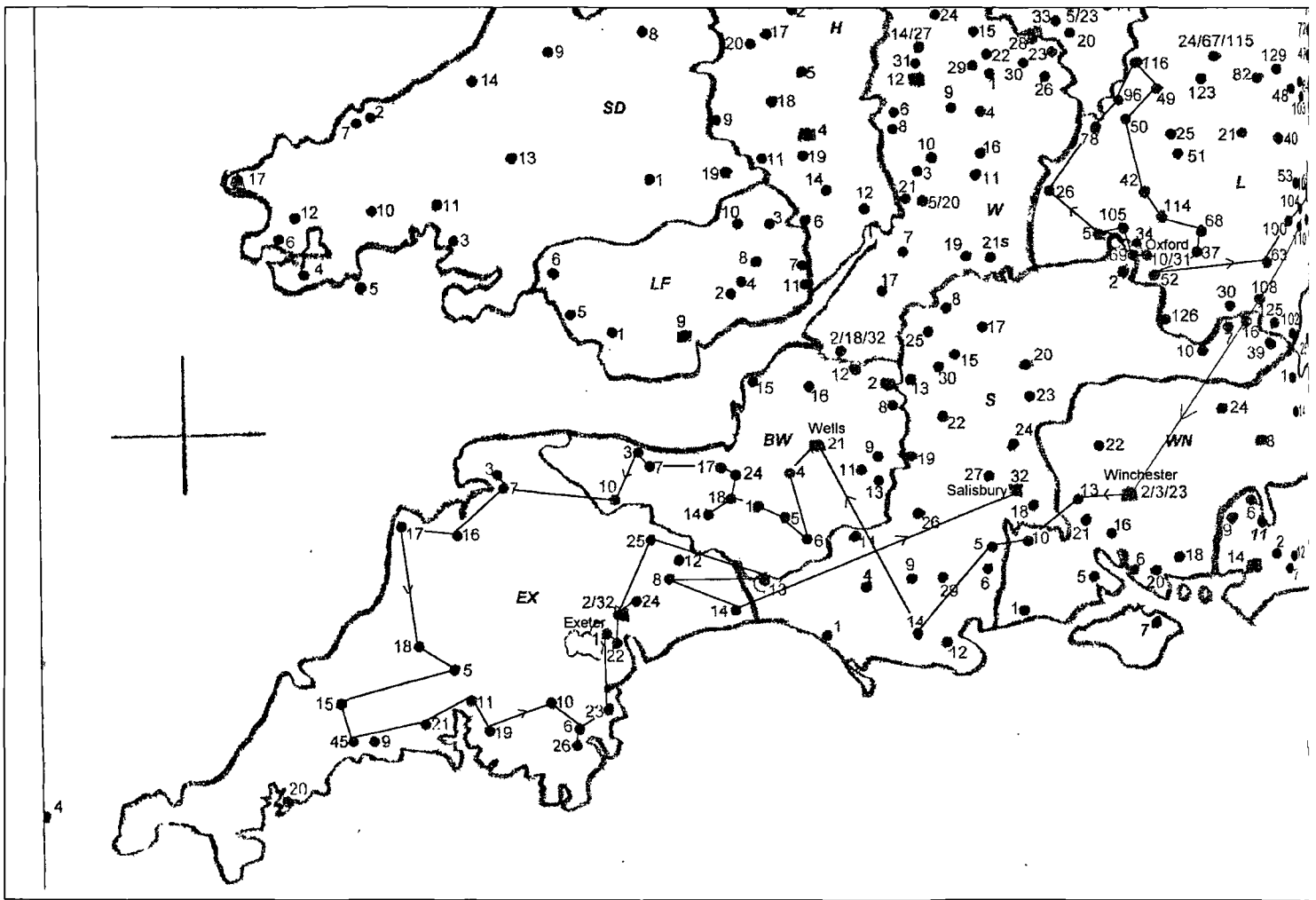
⁶⁰² BL, Cotton Faustina CVII, fos. 210, 211 (LP, IX, 350); PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351).

⁶⁰³ SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351). F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), pp. 861-888, for a detailed analysis of Tregonwell and Layton's Visitation at Oxford.

⁶⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351).

⁶⁰⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 149 (LP, IX, 351).

MAP 3 Dr John Tregonwell's Visitation Circuit



Cromwell's clarification if he should visit.⁶⁰⁶ In the following fifteen days, Tregonwell went to ten religious houses.⁶⁰⁷ His letter dated 10 September from Studley abbey gave Cromwell a potted history of his visits to these houses. His letter contained information about sexual crimes, the quality of the master of the house, the state of repair, the learning of the inhabitants and the finances of each house whether they merit approval or concern. Knowles considered, from this letter, that Tregonwell was 'perhaps the most reliable' of the Visitors.⁶⁰⁸ The letter certainly appears balanced with no apparent attempt to universally condemn every monastery. Tregonwell's report does not reflect Hoyle's view that the Commissioners' objective was to provide damning information on the monasteries at this stage of the Royal Visitation.⁶⁰⁹ The summary given by Tregonwell does not appear out of place, with findings from a typical Bishops' Visitation. At Eynsham abbey, Tregonwell noted the 'raw sort of religious persons' had already been punished by the bishop of Lincoln in his Visitation'.⁶¹⁰ He also commented that the abbot 'as much as I can perceive by inquisition ... is chaste of his living and doth right well over look the reparations of his house'.⁶¹¹ At Bruern abbey, the abbot was also described favourably. Tregonwell demonstrated some knowledge of the previous Visitation of Bruern when he congratulated the abbot on bringing to good rule his monks 'which heretofore were insolent';⁶¹² being a Cistercian house and not subject to diocesan Visitation, this may

⁶⁰⁶ Thomas Legh appears to have undertaken the Visitation on 25 September, see PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 12 (LP, IX, 439).

⁶⁰⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 457). The itinerary Tregonwell relates ties up with the ordering of houses in CCCC MS 111, fo. 339.

⁶⁰⁸ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 284. A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1993), p. 200, makes similar comments.

⁶⁰⁹ R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

⁶¹⁰ Unfortunately not extant. The most recent is 1520. See A. H. Thompson, *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517 - 1531*, Lincoln Record Society Publications 33 (1940), p. lxxix.

⁶¹¹ SP 1 / 97, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 457).

⁶¹² SP 1 / 97, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 457).

demonstrate that Tregonwell inspected previous compertes and Injunctions during his Visitation.

Tregonwell visited two nunneries in this period. At Godstow he noted that one nun had had a child, but qualified this by noting the birth occurred thirteen or fourteen years previously, and had been punished by the bishop of Lincoln who sent her to Godstow 'where now and ever since that time she has lived virtuously'. At Catesby he noted that the nuns were '(by as much as I can learn) without suspicion of incontinent living'.⁶¹³ Tregonwell presumed the jurisdiction of this Cistercian house had been usurped by the bishop of Lincoln 'for that order [Cistercian] as you know hath always been exempt from the bishop'. However, perhaps Tregonwell was demonstrating his newness to Visitation as Cistercian nunneries rarely escaped episcopal Visitation.⁶¹⁴

At the Gilbertine priory of Clattercote, Tregonwell had a set-back when the prior and three canons told him that Cromwell had given the commission to visit solely to the master of Sempringham 'so that none but he should meddle with that order'. Evidently Tregonwell was unaware of this alleged commission and 'so departed thence negotio infecto'.⁶¹⁵ Perhaps again this wariness demonstrated a newness to monastic Visitation and the extent of his commission.

⁶¹³ SP 1 / 97, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 457).

⁶¹⁴ The bishop's powers were not questioned in the Visitation of Catesby in 1520 and 1530. See A. H. Thompson, Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517 - 1531, vol. 2, Lincoln Record Society Publications 33 (1944), pp. 101 - 105.

⁶¹⁵ No proof exists that the Gilbertine houses were exempt from Visitation by the Royal Commissioners. However, in the application of the Suppression Act they were excluded from its provisions.

At Bicester Priory, Tregonwell congratulated the prior on his control over the canons as well as the financial accounts. The canons were reported to be in ‘good order’ except one who, afraid of being punished for his incontinent living, ‘ran away and so he remains at this time in Apostasy’.

This letter of Tregonwell is one of the clearest summaries extant from the Visitational correspondence. Its content no doubt reflects the issues that Tregonwell thought would interest Cromwell – the quality of the abbot, the sexual crimes discovered, the physical state of the monastery and the extent of learning in the Holy Scripture. These issues were much in line with typical episcopal Visitations. However, what plainly was missing was the extent to which the monks and nuns were fulfilling their religious duties in their attendance and fulfilment of divine service. Bishops’ Visitations typically looked closely at the manner in which the choral office was carried out – at Chacombe, in June 1520, the bishop had noted slackness in the office.⁶¹⁶ Equally, the petty grievances which often occur in bishops’ compertes are lacking. It, therefore, seems that while Tregonwell may be reliable the information he was conveying, brief as it was, was directed to a limited investigation of monastic life.

In the conclusion of the letter, Tregonwell told Cromwell he intended to move from Studley nunnery to Notley abbey, Thame abbey, and ‘last of all to Dorchester where I make an end unto the time I may know your further pleasure’.⁶¹⁷ He then finished the letter ‘who [God] preserve your mastership’. However, this was then crossed out, suggesting Tregonwell had just received knowledge of Cromwell’s

⁶¹⁶ P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. 1, *The King’s Proceedings* (London, 1956), p. 49 and A. H. Thompson, *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517 - 1531*, vol. 2, Lincoln Record Society Publications 33 (1944), p. 106.

⁶¹⁷ SP 1 / 97, fo. 37v (LP, IX, 457).

‘further pleasure’ as he added ‘upon Friday next [1 October] I trust to be ready to come to your mastership according to your commandment sent to me by your letters’.⁶¹⁸ What was in those letters is clarified in the recently discovered source.⁶¹⁹ On visiting Dorchester, Tregonwell then visited the Benedictine nunneries of Markyate, St Giles in the Wood [Flamstead] and St Margaret’s; at this stage he could also have visited the larger houses at Missenden and Ashridge. To complete nine houses in five days is a faster rate than he had hitherto achieved, but as he had been commanded to come to Cromwell, perhaps this quickened his pace.⁶²⁰

Cromwell was still with the court at the beginning of October and so Tregonwell could have met him in the environs of Southampton.⁶²¹ At this stage, Tregonwell’s role in the Visitation appears to have been sharpened. Hereafter in the Visitation, he was referred to as ‘the general Visitor ... throughout the diocese of Salisbury, Bath and Wells and Exeter’;⁶²² he became not just Royal Visitor of monasteries but of secular establishments as well.

Tregonwell’s new role no doubt emerged from the discussions that appear to have taken place in Winchester / Bishops Waltham less than a fortnight before Tregonwell reported to Cromwell.⁶²³

On leaving court, Tregonwell appears to have visited a few religious houses in Winchester diocese on his way to the three dioceses for which he was now

⁶¹⁸ SP 1 / 97, fo. 37v (LP, IX, 457) - my underlining.

⁶¹⁹ CCCC MS 111, fos. 339, 340.

⁶²⁰ It is possible, given pre-planning, that the three nunneries were visited all at one site, all three being a few miles from each other and two to five miles from the Bonhommes monastery of Ashridge.

⁶²¹ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), The Lisle Letters, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1981), No. 455. See Appendix 12.

⁶²² Wells Cath, Charter No. 758, fo. 1r; the earliest reference dated 25 October 1535.

responsible. On 26 September, Layton had written to Cromwell enclosing 'the names of the abbeys of Winchester diocese which Doctor Legh and I have not meddled with at all'.⁶²⁴ It is to be supposed that the smaller priories of Breamore and Mottisfont were on that list, as Tregonwell subsequently visited them.⁶²⁵ He also visited the Cistercian abbey of Bindon in Salisbury Diocese⁶²⁶ before arriving at Wells cathedral in mid October.

On 25 October, Tregonwell visited the cathedral church of St Andrew in Wells and delivered to the bishop and dean certain Injunctions concerning the attendance at choir of the vicars choral.⁶²⁷ Tregonwell found the attendance of the vicars at choir very lax and he instituted a system of fines; henceforth if prime, or high Mass or evensong were missed 'without any lawful cause' they would be individually fined a farthing, a halfpenny and a farthing respectively. The vicars thereupon gathered in the Common hall and put the Injunctions into 'due execution' by decreeing that the Communer would be responsible for collecting quarterly any resulting fines, having the power to exclude from his chamber any vicar who did not pay.⁶²⁸

It would appear that the Injunctions given to the bishop and dean and chapter were more extensive than those relating to the vicars choral. John Smith senior and John Smith junior, principals of the vicars choral, agreed to put the Injunctions 'in as much as they do concern us' into practice. This possibly suggests that Injunctions

⁶²³ See Section 3.3.

⁶²⁴ SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

⁶²⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340.

⁶²⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 340: here Bindon is incorrectly listed in the Bath and Wells diocese.

⁶²⁷ Wells Cath, Charter No. 758.

⁶²⁸ Wells Cath, Charter No. 758. In the manuscript it is stated that the vicars gathered together on 15 October. Elsewhere it is stated that the Injunctions were delivered on 25 October. Clearly, they could not be enacted before being received. It seems probable that the 15th was an error for the 25th - i. e. the vicars choral met the same day that the Injunctions were received.

also dealt with other matters in the cathedral church. While visited monasteries at this time were commanded by Injunction to send to Cromwell any ‘papistical writings’ in their possession by Christmas, this was not the case with Wells cathedral church. It was not until the end of January 1536 that the dean and chapter instructed the treasurer of Wells and the archdeacon of Bath to send Cromwell, on their behalf, all ‘papistical writings and bulls’.⁶²⁹ This delay suggests that Cromwell’s demand was made late, well after Tregonwell’s departure from the cathedral. Tregonwell does not appear to have issued any Injunctions in his Visitation of the cathedral in October 1535 to affect the ‘boy bishop’ ceremony or the exhibiting of relics, as these were still taking place a year later.⁶³⁰

While at Wells, Tregonwell visited St John’s hospital. This is the first time he was identified as visiting a monastic hospital, suggesting this extension to his brief was added by Cromwell early in October.⁶³¹

From Wells, Tregonwell may next have stopped at Glastonbury abbey, which had already been visited by Layton in August. The abbot’s letter to Cromwell of 26 October, the day after Tregonwell delivered Injunctions at Wells, noted ‘I am inhibited the exercising of jurisdiction in all such peculiar places, to the said monastery belonging’.⁶³² The abbot noted that this instruction stopped him from holding courts in the Glastonbury peculiar, the king’s ‘gracious Visitation depending’, yet he had already been visited. Perhaps this desire for relaxation of the inhibition

⁶²⁹ Wells Cath, Ledger book D, fo. 10v / 11r (31 January 1536). A virtually duplicate entry also appears (fo. 11v) dated 22 April 1536. Coincidentally, on 22 December 1535, the Dean and Chapter enforced a grant by the bishop of Bath and Wells to Cromwell of £20: Ledger book D, fo. 9v/10r.

⁶³⁰ Wells Cath, Communer accounts (1327 - 1600), p. 195.

⁶³¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 339.

⁶³² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 73 (LP, IX, 685).

was triggered by Tregonwell's advice or by Tregonwell actually delivering the inhibition.

Tregonwell then continued his Visitation of the central and western parts of the Bath and Wells diocese: the houses on the east had already been visited by Layton in August and, in the north, Woodspring at least was definitely not visited.⁶³³

The appeals from abbots for licence to relax certain of the Injunctions given to them show that Tregonwell had been at Athelney on or before 4 November and Cleeve on or before 8 November.⁶³⁴ The abbot of Athelney reported that Tregonwell 'hath execute the act of Visitation for the reformation of good religion where he found (thanks be to God) the house in meetly good order as it will appear at his return'. Tregonwell appears to be acting even-handedly by the Abbot's report. Tregonwell clearly had told the Abbot of Athelney to seek diminution of the Injunctions, but interestingly, neither this abbot nor that of Cleeve, apparently, sent a 'token' to Cromwell.

A few days later, on 9 November, Tregonwell was at Barlinch priory. Here he revealed that Cromwell had given him 'authority by your commission to receive resignations and to direct and order elections of all abbots and priors being within the limits of your said commission'.⁶³⁵ However, it is evident that he was not instrumental in evicting the current prior or selecting a new prior at Barlinch. In a footnote to his letter, Tregonwell revealed that the bishop (of Bath and Wells) 'would

⁶³³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 332 Woodspring is specifically marked as 'not visited'; probably nearby Barrow Gurney (or Minchinbarrow) was also not visited.

⁶³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 226 (LP, IX, 763) and PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 790).

⁶³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 25 (LP, IX, 795).

have elected the said Barwick to be prior if my coming hither had not been, for the house is not of the king's foundation'.⁶³⁶ Tregonwell considered Barwick 'most apt and meet for that room of any within that monastery', but did not exercise his delegated authority from Cromwell, preferring to have Cromwell's 'special pleasure ... by your writing' before acting. This sensitivity in making a decision suggests a reluctance for action by Tregonwell, even though the current prior, the bishop and, it would seem, the founder, Edmund de Fortibus of Bessels Leigh, agreed that Barwick was the ideal candidate. Tregonwell told Cromwell nothing of the moral state of the priory, but only that the lands were worth £100 per year, the debt amounted to £60 and the house was 'in some ruin and decay'.⁶³⁷

On 9 November, Tregonwell appears to have completed the monastic Visitation of Bath and Wells diocese and that day 'rode to Barnstable' and thereby commenced the Visitation of Exeter diocese. It is fortunate Tregonwell was specific in stating Barnstable abbey was his first stop in the diocese. The first entry in the CCCC MS 111 under Tregonwell's Visitation of Exeter diocese is Tywardreath abbey, with Barnstable the second entry.

Tywardreath is located in the south west corner of the diocese in Cornwall. This absence of a logical itinerary (related to geography or extant records) is rare in the CCCC MS 111 listings. The remainder of the Exeter diocese listing has a comfortable flow, allowing the easy interpolation of the many religious houses greater than £200 net income.⁶³⁸ It is unlikely that Tywardreath abbey was visited by a surrogate, as Tregonwell is known to have visited Bodmin priory, not ten miles

⁶³⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 25 (LP, IX, 795).

⁶³⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 25 (LP, IX, 795).

away.⁶³⁹ It is possible that the entry was initially overlooked on the original record and was copied in at the top of the list of houses when the error was recognised.

Tregonwell would have been at Bodmin priory in mid November. The prior sent an undated letter to Cromwell shortly after Tregonwell's departure, complaining of the activities of Roger Arundell and confirming that he had sent a 'judgement' via 'Master Doctor'.⁶⁴⁰ It can be inferred from the prior's letter that Tregonwell had not found all well: one of the canons 'is yet out in apostasy as Master Doctor Tregonwell can well inform your mastership' although prior Thomas blames Roger Arundell for removing the canon 'out of my house with violence'. Furthermore, the prior's introduction to his letter suggests tensions amongst the canons in his priory before Tregonwell's visit: 'that through your wisdom and goodness I am set in a good quietness with my brethren, trusting that they will continue in that comfortable behaviour both for the augmentation of good religion and for tendering your favour in accomplishing your honourable requests unto them'.⁶⁴¹ The prior's letter shows no evidence of Tregonwell accomplishing his Visitation through the application of undue pressure or questionable methods. Indeed he seems more interested in the activities of Roger Arundell regarding the priory's weirs and appears confident that Tregonwell would act as an intercessor with Cromwell.⁶⁴²

After leaving Bodmin, Tregonwell continued his Visitation of monasteries in south west Cornwall and then journeyed over the Tamar into southern Devon reaching

⁶³⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 339.

⁶³⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 119 (LP, IX, 908).

⁶⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 119 (LP, IX, 908).

⁶⁴¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 119 (LP, IX, 908): 'honourable requests' can be presumed to be the Injunctions Tregonwell had left with the priory.

⁶⁴² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 119 (LP, IX, 908).

Exeter by the end of December 1535.⁶⁴³ On 1 January 1536, Tregonwell was with the canons and chapter of Exeter cathedral when they granted Cromwell stewardship of the dean and chapter lands in Devon.⁶⁴⁴ Tregonwell's actions in the Visitation of the dean and chapter and vicars choral are not recorded.⁶⁴⁵ A letter from Cromwell at the end of the previous August, addressed to the dean and chapter, identified an area of concern which Tregonwell could well have followed up: 'and where as you by reason of certain private statutes that you claim to have amongst you which hath been made for your private lucre contrary to positive law, equity and conscience'.⁶⁴⁶ However, extant records at Exeter cathedral do not confirm any references to Injunctions or Visitation by Tregonwell, as they do at Wells cathedral and, as will shortly be seen, at Salisbury cathedral. Bishop John Veysey was either at his palace at Chudleigh (south of Exeter) or at his cathedral palace at the time of Tregonwell's visit.⁶⁴⁷ It, therefore, seems credible that discussion took place between them both, with the bishop being quizzed on the Supremacy issue and preaching, as other Visitors were enacting at this time.⁶⁴⁸

While at Exeter, Tregonwell visited St Nicholas priory before visiting monasteries in east Devon, perhaps including Forde abbey, a peculiar of Exeter

⁶⁴³ See Appendix 4.

⁶⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 4 (LP, X, 4) 'we send now ... 100/- sterling delivered unto the said Master Tregonwell'; Exeter Cath, MS 3551 (Acts of Chapter) f 96r: on 15 January 1536 the Chapter formally sealed this transaction.

⁶⁴⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 128, fo. 85 (LP, XIII (1) 75). However, dated 13 January (1538?) is recorded 'At the king's Grace's Visitation here [Exeter] Dr Tregonwell gave us an Injunction amongst others that we shall not put in execution any statute of this church, which is contrary to the king's laws'. The Visitation here referred to probably related to a later Visitation than January 1536.

⁶⁴⁶ Exeter Cath, MS 3498/73 (The draft of this letter is PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 202r (LP, IX, 191) but incorrectly ascribed to Chief Justice Fitzjames).

⁶⁴⁷ DRO, Charter No. 14, fo. 79r/v, fo. 80r.

⁶⁴⁸ e. g. BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 125 (LP, X, 91).

diocese located in Dorset.⁶⁴⁹ He then appears to have made his way to Salisbury cathedral without any monastic Visitations, at this stage, in the Salisbury diocese.⁶⁵⁰

On 18 January, Tregonwell was in Salisbury cathedral issuing Injunctions to the bishop, Nicholas Shaxton, and the dean and chapter.⁶⁵¹ His notary in Salisbury and probably during Tregonwell's entire Visitation of the south west, was Thomas Peersse, or Pearce. The first Injunction, to obey all their statutes as far as they agree with sacred letters and the holy word, and as long as they were not in opposition to royal statutes and laws, appears straightforward; this could have been defined for any religious institution. Equally, the second Injunction, that at least twice a week something from Holy Scripture be read, to which all priests of the cathedral and the city must come under threat of penalty, could have been applied elsewhere. However, the remainder of the Injunctions deal with matters specific to the cathedral church and it is difficult to see how they were issued, unless by examination a few days before by Tregonwell. These Injunctions deal with the statutes and ordinances of the Residentiary canons, regulating their payment relative to their attendance; the method in which the canons were to be nominated to benefices; and the method in which vicars choral were to be paid. All were enjoined to obey these Injunctions and any other the bishop might make according to the king's wishes.

On this occasion, Tregonwell issued an article to the Residentiary canons, requiring them to prove that the 'Customary of St Osmund' was authentic.⁶⁵² Evidently they convinced Tregonwell as on 22 January, in the chapter house, he

⁶⁴⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 339.

⁶⁵⁰ Legh and ap Rice had visited most of the monasteries in Salisbury during August and September 1535. See Map 2.

⁶⁵¹ Wilts. and Swin., D1 / 1 / 4, fos. 65r - 68r.

confirmed the 'customary' to be 'authentic'.⁶⁵³ Whether by coincidence or not, that day the Residentiary canons agreed to make Cromwell 'high stewardship of all our lands, which office, all be it of truth, was never granted to any man heretofore'; they also agreed 'a small fee of £5 by the year', the grant and the fee 'we have delivered unto the right worshipful master doctor Tregonwell to your use'.⁶⁵⁴

Clearly the Injunctions at Salisbury cathedral and the extract from Wells cathedral did not demonstrate any individual examination of canons, vicars choral or any other cathedral priests. None of the Injunctions related to compertes dealing with moral offences. The Injunctions demonstrated attempts to improve the quality of divine service through the penalisation of poor attendance and regular preaching of the Word of God. Of course, they also demonstrate the remorseless pressure on these secular priests to accept the legitimacy of the Royal Supremacy.

Tregonwell appears to have finished his Royal Visitation at this time and presumably then went back to London, by the end of January 1536, to report to Cromwell and deliver his report on the various monastic houses within his commission. Nothing further is recorded of Tregonwell's whereabouts until he was seen with ap Rice at Worcester priory on 13 March, overseeing the election of the new prior.⁶⁵⁵ It seems likely that he was in London in the intervening period, when decisions on the form of monastic suppression were being made.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵² Bishop Osmund was the founder of the old cathedral and established the chapter of canons.

⁶⁵³ Wilts. and Swin., D1 / 1 / 4, fos. 67v - 68r.

⁶⁵⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 139 (LP, X,153).

⁶⁵⁵ Worc. D & C, register A6(iii), fo. 1r.

⁶⁵⁶ In the June 1536 parliament, Tregonwell was Receiver of Petitions in the House of Lords, a position he could also have had in the previous parliamentary session commencing 4 February 1536.

2.3.4 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Francis Cave

It has been a mystery who was responsible for the Visitation of much of the Midlands in 1535. Knowles even suggested that many of these monasteries escaped Visitation.⁶⁵⁷ However, the CCCC MS 111 identifies Dr Cave as the phantom Visitor, accompanied by Thomas Shaldwell his notary in the Visitation.⁶⁵⁸

Francis Cave came from a large Northamptonshire family. One of his elder brothers, Sir Ambrose Cave, was at the time of the Visitation a leading figure in the order of St John of Jerusalem in England.⁶⁵⁹ As with many of the Royal Visitors, Francis Cave was an advocate of Doctors' Commons, being admitted 14 October 1533.⁶⁶⁰ Robertson suggests he was advanced by Cranmer in 1533⁶⁶¹ and he appears to have included Cromwell as a client in his legal practice.⁶⁶² In all events he was clearly trusted by Cromwell to undertake the duties of Royal Commissioner in the summer of 1535.

Little is known of the notary Thomas Shaldwell (or Shadwall). He is identified as of the 'City of London court and agent, scribe and registrar of Cant.' in November 1535.⁶⁶³ In 1544, he signed himself as notary of Coventry and Lichfield diocese.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁵⁷ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

⁶⁵⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343.

⁶⁵⁹ LP, IX, 1083 (Grant No. 6); LP, X, 882, 900, 905.

⁶⁶⁰ F. Hargreaves, *Sketches of the Lives of Eminent English Civilians* (London, 1804), p. 33.

⁶⁶¹ M. L. Robertson, 'Thomas Cromwell's Servants: The Ministerial Household in early Tudor Government and Society', p. 459.

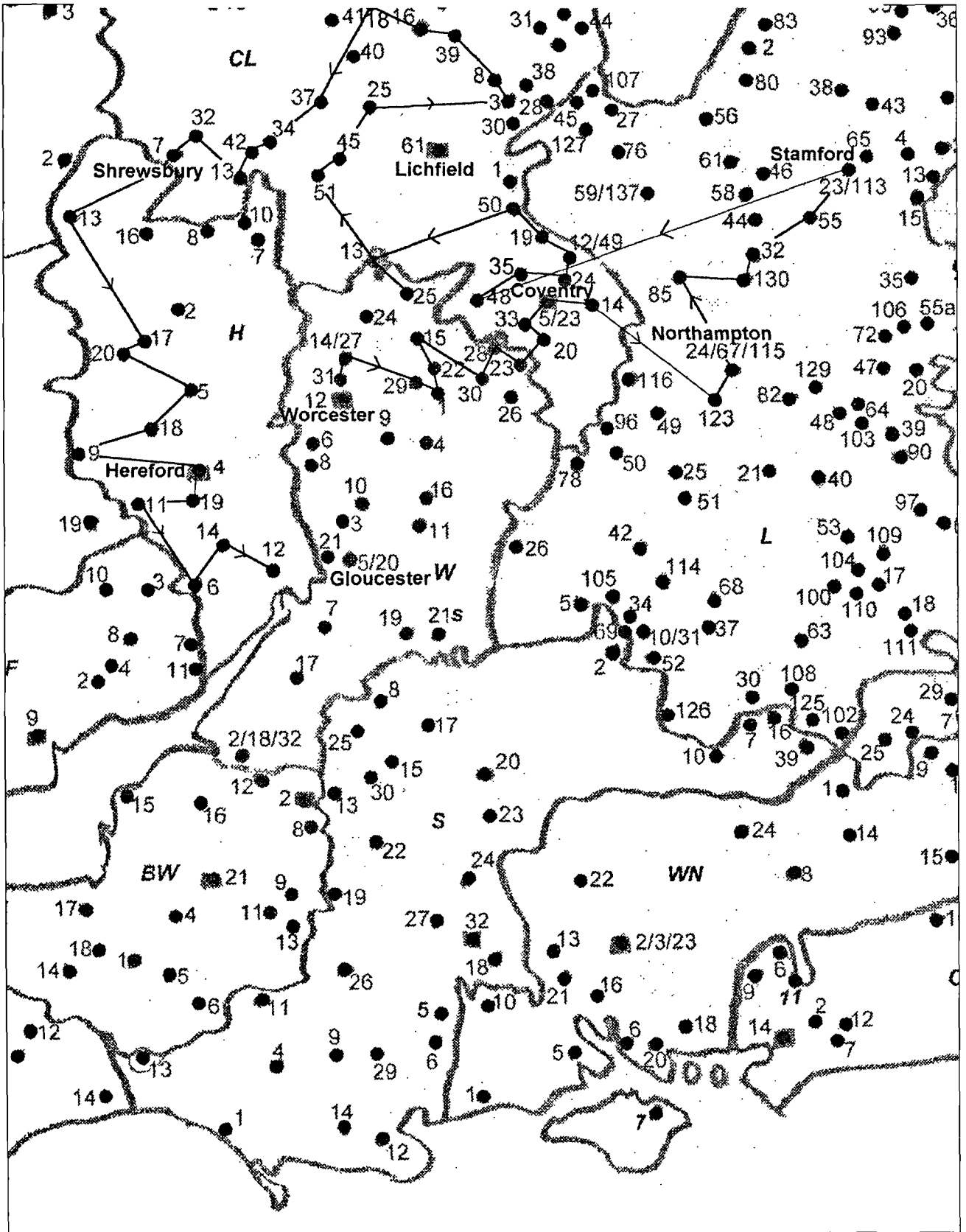
⁶⁶² S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558*, vol. 1 (London, 1982), p. 595: his age is deduced to be have been about thirty-five at the time of the Visitation.

⁶⁶³ CUL, E. D. R. G. /1 / 7, fo. 108v.

'Cant.' may denote Cambridge or Canterbury.

⁶⁶⁴ Worc. RO, 2337 / 732-4 No. 48 identifies his notarial mark and handwriting (12 July 1544).

MAP 4 Dr Francis Cave's Visitation Circuit



With no extant correspondence from Cave and no references from third parties during the course of his part in the Royal Visitation, the only evidence of his involvement is from CCCC MS 111.⁶⁶⁵ However, using indirect evidence, it is possible to re-create his Visitation circuit and give some estimation of its dating. Map 4 identifies the probable route and Appendix 5 identifies details of his itinerary.

It seems likely that Cave was present with Cromwell in the king's summer progress at Gloucester and Berkeley Heron. His commission initially included the religious houses in the northern part of Worcester diocese. This definitely included Whistones, Westwood, Cook Hill, Pinley, Wroxhall and St Sepulchre's in Warwick and probably included the larger house of Bordesley.⁶⁶⁶ Evidently this phase was completed by the end of August, as on 3 September the steward of St Sepulchre's, the earl of Derby, wrote to Cromwell stating, 'here say that the priory ... should among others be suppressed and put down'.⁶⁶⁷ Since Cave had noted there were only three canons at the priory,⁶⁶⁸ it appears his attitude at the Visitation had engendered such fear into the religious they had warned the earl of potential suppression. While in Warwick, the secular college of St Mary was probably visited, indicating that, as with the other Visitors, secular colleges were also in Cave's remit.⁶⁶⁹

From Warwick, Cave moved into the southern tip of Coventry and Lichfield diocese, visiting Stoneleigh abbey before possibly entering the Northampton

⁶⁶⁵ pp. 343, 344 'Comperta coram magistro Cave in [presentia notorium] publici Thomas Shaldwell'.

⁶⁶⁶ CCCC MS 111, fos. 343, 344.

⁶⁶⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 76 (LP, IX, 262).

⁶⁶⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343.

⁶⁶⁹ CUL, E. D. R. G. / 1 / 7, fo.108v.

archdeaconry of Lincoln diocese.⁶⁷⁰ Commencing with Swardsley nunnery, he then moved into Northampton, visiting the Cluniac nunnery of de la Pre, but not the large abbey of St Andrew's.⁶⁷¹

Moving northwards towards Stamford, he definitely visited Rothwell and presumably included the large Praemonstratensian abbey of Sulby. The Cistercian house of Pipewell was in this locality and it must be of Cave that its steward, Sir William Parr, wrote to Cromwell, 'at the late being of the Visitors in these parts they visit[ed] the monastery of Pipewell'.⁶⁷² With Cave apparently visiting Northamptonshire in September it appears that the 'abbot and all his brethren' delayed appealing to their steward regarding the Injunctions Cave left with them for over a month.⁶⁷³

Cave's circuit in Northamptonshire ended at Stamford St Michael nunnery. It may have been because Northamptonshire was his family's county that he was selected to visit much of it. However, he did not cover it fully, and Layton and Bedyll later filled the gaps. The southernmost part of the county, including the religious houses of Canons Ashby and Catesby, were also visited by Tregonwell in September, which suggests some co-ordination between the two Visitors.

Cave next appears to have embarked on a huge anti-clockwise sweep, starting in the Coventry area and covering the southern part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese before moving southwards, through Hereford and ending up near Gloucester before

⁶⁷⁰ The itinerary hereafter represents *best fit* among the groups of data noted in CCCC MS 111, fos. 343, 344.

⁶⁷¹ Subsequently visited by Layton in December.

⁶⁷² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 43r (LP, IX, 822), dated 15 November.

Christmas. This is exciting because never before has the route been discovered or even theorised upon. Cave's Visitation of the Coventry and Lichfield houses took much of October, while the Hereford diocese houses were completed in November.

It can be presumed that the large abbeys of Kenilworth, Coombe and Coventry priory were visited at the start of this stage.⁶⁷⁴ Henwood, Maxstoke and Arbury were then definitely processed.⁶⁷⁵ The route from Arbury to Polesworth nunnery passes the large houses of Nuneaton and Merevale and so it is fair to assume that they were visited.

With the completion of the Coventry archdeaconry, Cave moved west, visiting the most northerly Worcester diocese monastery of Dudley.⁶⁷⁶ Moving north, the two small nunneries of Brewood White Ladies and Black Ladies were visited on the way to Baswick (or St Thomas') priory in Stafford. In the Stafford archdeaconry, Tutbury, Rocester, Croxden and Ranton were visited. Clearly at this stage the large Benedictine monastery of Burton on Trent was visited, which explains why the house is not included in the *Compendium Compertorum* of the northern houses.⁶⁷⁷ Cave did not visit Trentham and Stone because they had already been visited, at the beginning of August, by Legh and ap Rice.

⁶⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 43r/v.

⁶⁷⁴ It must be recalled that CCCC MS 111 details only those religious houses of less than £200 net income.

⁶⁷⁵ Cave had been at Maxstoke priory a year earlier, examining 'a very simple young fellow' for speaking 'opinions', see PRO, SP 1 / 87, fo. 53r (LP, VII - 1460).

⁶⁷⁶ And, presumably, Halesowen.

⁶⁷⁷ See Northern Visitation of Layton and Legh, Section 2.4.2.

Cave next moved into the Salop archdeaconry, calling at Lilleshall, Wombridge, Buildwas and Haughmond on his way to Shrewsbury abbey.⁶⁷⁸ At Buildwas monastery Cave found twelve monks, of whom he dismissed four and found two guilty of incontinence and two of sodomy.⁶⁷⁹ This is the only instance where it can be seen that his style of reporting is the same as the other Visitors. Further, Bishop Rowland Lee's appeal on behalf of the 'abbots of Shrewsbury and Lilleshall and the prior of Wombridge as well for the having of their instruments as for the relaxation of their Injunctions' demonstrates that he was fully implementing the Injunctions common to the rest of the Commissioners.⁶⁸⁰ A later list of complaints against the abbot of Shrewsbury identifies Cave was using the range of Injunctions common among the other Visitors.⁶⁸¹

Cave then entered Hereford diocese, commencing at Chirbury priory and steadily moving south, until he arrived at Flaxley abbey. After Chirbury, Wigmore priory was visited. A year later, accusations were made against the abbot of Wigmore; 'the said abbot infringed all the kings Injunctions which were given him by Doctor Cave to observe and keep'.⁶⁸²

Cave was at Leominster before 20 November. Bishop Rowland Lee wrote to Cromwell that day from nearby Ludlow, 'where of late by the kings highness authority and yours in your most honourable Visitation the poor prior of Leominster

⁶⁷⁸ LP, X, 259(1): N.B. LP incorrectly identifies C[a]mbridge for Wombridge; CCCC MS 111, fo. 344.

⁶⁷⁹ W. G. Clarke-Maxwell, 'Buildwas Abbey - the survey of 1536', in Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society, vol. XLVI, (Shrewsbury, 1931 - 1932), p. 68.

⁶⁸⁰ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 51r (LP, X, 259(1)). This is placed in LP in February 1536. It is earlier - perhaps November/December 1535.

⁶⁸¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 163 (LP, X, 165).

⁶⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 117, fos. 147r, 149v, 150r (LP, XII(1), 742(1), (3)).

... was enjoined and commanded to keep the cloister as a conventual monk'.⁶⁸³

Bishop Lee asked Cromwell to 'tender the said prior with your lawful favour and that he may have licence to go at liberty as other heads of such religious houses have'.⁶⁸⁴

Surprisingly, there is no reference to the visiting of St Guthlac in Hereford, whose net value was £121 per annum. South of Hereford, at Aconbury, it is possible that Cave finished the installation of the new prioress put in motion earlier in the month by Becansaw and Vaughan.⁶⁸⁵

After Aconbury, Cave visited Abbey Dore, Monmouth,⁶⁸⁶ Flanesford and Flaxley. It is, therefore, likely he travelled back to London with his Visitation Book to be with Cromwell early in December. Cave's part in the Royal Visitation was then completed and he is not heard of again until the monastic suppressions of 1538.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 87, fo. 49 (LP, VII, 1449).

⁶⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 87, fo. 49 (LP, VII, 1449).

⁶⁸⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 134 (LP, IX, 1164); CCCC MS 111, fo. 344 and see Becansaw and Vaughan Visitation circuit in Section 2.3.5.

⁶⁸⁶ See PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 142 (LP, X, 393).

⁶⁸⁷ S. T. Bindoff, The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558, vol. 1 (London, 1982), p. 595.

2.3.5 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr John Vaughan and Dr Adam Becansaw

The Visitation of the Welsh dioceses, other than Bangor, was the responsibility of Dr John Vaughan and, for much of the time, Dr Adam Becansaw. Their joint responsibility as Commissioners is clear, but knowledge of their earlier careers is lacking.

Dr Vaughan of Narberth, Pembrokeshire⁶⁸⁸ was a layman who was knighted soon after the Visitation.⁶⁸⁹ Vaughan was elected to the college of Advocates in February 1535⁶⁹⁰ and perhaps came to Cromwell's attention because of his legal skills. He later benefited from the spoils of the dissolution.⁶⁹¹

Little is known of Dr Adam Becansaw.⁶⁹² He was a priest and holder of an unnamed prebend in the St Asaph diocese.⁶⁹³ He can be seen as a confidant of Cromwell in early 1535. Becansaw wrote to Cromwell in April, wishing to be 'advertised of your pleasure in such matters at my late being with your good mastership it please you to break unto me'.⁶⁹⁴ He then continued telling Cromwell of the 'Abominable lives, in adultery notoriously',⁶⁹⁵ apparently referring to 'knights and diverse gentlemen in the diocese of Chester' who bribed the archdeacon to evade punishment. Becansaw appeared to be already aware of Cromwell's plans regarding ecclesiastical Visitations.

⁶⁸⁸ D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 84.

⁶⁸⁹ D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 90.

⁶⁹⁰ F. Hargreaves, *Sketches of the Lives of Eminent English Civilians* (London, 1804), p. 33.

⁶⁹¹ D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), pp. 90/91.

⁶⁹² His name is sometimes noted as Becanshaw, Beconsaw or Bekensall.

⁶⁹³ John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300 - 1541*, vol. 2, Hereford diocese (IHR, London, 1962), p. 48.

⁶⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 91, fo. 140r (LP, VIII 495): Gairdner dates the letter April 1535.

⁶⁹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 91, fo. 140r (LP, VIII 495).

At the start of August 1535, Becansaw was at Whatcroft, in Cheshire, acting on behalf of Cromwell in investigating the ‘pretensed executors unto the late bishop of St Asaph’.⁶⁹⁶ Bishop Henry Standish, a leading supporter of Catherine of Aragon, had died on 9 July and the whereabouts of his casket, left in sole keeping of the abbot of Whalley, was under investigation.⁶⁹⁷

On, probably, Friday 20 August, Becansaw wrote ‘in haste’ to Cromwell from Vale Royal abbey in Cheshire,⁶⁹⁸ Becansaw was accompanied there by Vaughan. He stated that on Tuesday 10 August they met two priests in the forest of Delamere, north west of Vale Royal, who complained about the archdeacon of Chester. Becansaw noted that the alleged activities of the archdeacon ‘seemeth doth not agree with that I do perceive now in the king’s Visitation in so much no man is obedient to any ordinary immediately but only unto the king’s highness as unto the supreme head which is one of our chief articles of Visitation’.⁶⁹⁹ Becansaw’s comments suggest that he had just received a commission, along with Vaughan, to undertake the king’s Visitation and he was testing his interpretation of that commission. Perhaps Vaughan had brought the instructions and the commission directly from Cromwell. Their attendance at Vale Royal abbey may have been related to Legh’s and ap Rice’s Visitation and election of the new abbot, earlier in the month.⁷⁰⁰ It appears that

⁶⁹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 35 (LP, IX, 34 (1)).

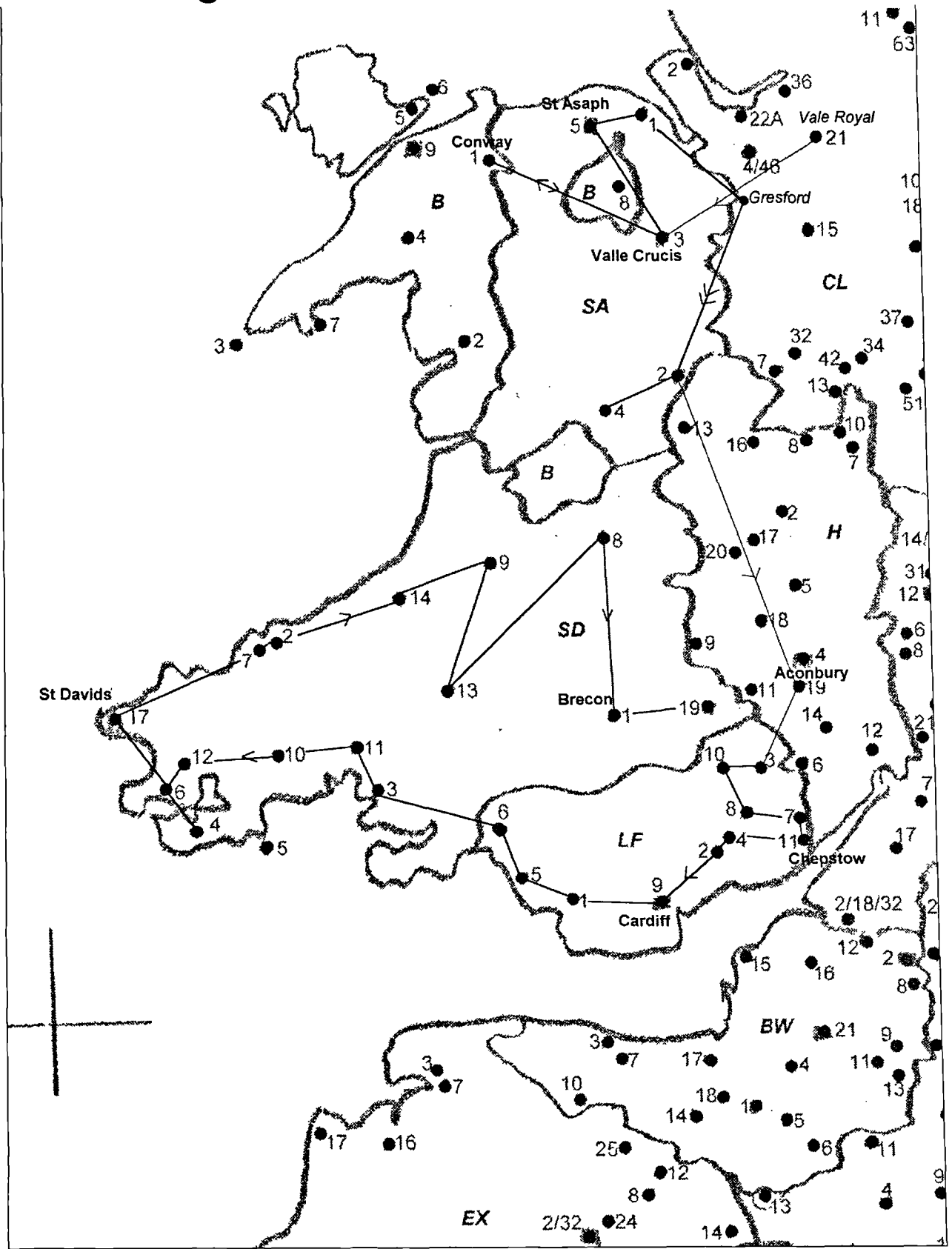
⁶⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 29 (LP, IX, 32).

⁶⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 35). LP dates this as 6 August. However, the reference to the Injunctions date it to after 15 August. See analysis of Injunctions in Section 3.2.

⁶⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 35) - my underlining. It appears Becansaw is referring to the item in the Visitors’ General Injunctions (G. Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxi, lxii): ‘Also, that the Abbot ... and brethren may be declared, by the king’s supreme power ... to be absolved and loosed from all manner (of) obedience ... by them heretofore perchance provided ... to the said Bishop of Rome or to any other ... potentate, person or place ... such statutes by the king’s grace’s Visitors, be utterly annihilate’.

⁷⁰⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

MAP 5 Vaughan and Becansaw's Visitation Circuit



Becansaw and Vaughan commenced their Visitation shortly afterwards, in the diocese of St Asaph. Map 5 identifies the route taken in Visitation.⁷⁰¹

Becansaw and Vaughan reported later that on 22 to 25 August, ‘we did visit the Abbey of Valle Crucis in the which we have found many things to be reformed as shall appear unto you at our coming up. The abbot came in and was sworn and examined and afterwards carried by the servants of Mr Brueton [Sir William Brereton] unto the castle of Holt and one of his monks with him (which we took being apostate) there they do remain’.⁷⁰² They also reported the decay and ruinous state of the monastery and church and that its debts amounted to £200. The prior ‘we find by our Visitation a good, virtuous and well disposed man’. The prior declined to be considered as a replacement for the abbot because of the ‘debt and decay’ of the house. Becansaw and Vaughan proposed to return to Valle Crucis on 4 or 5 September to determine a new election, according to Cromwell’s pleasure. They proposed the abbot of Cymmer, in Bangor diocese,⁷⁰³ also a Cistercian House, who ‘would fayne have it and would give your mastership £20 towards your duty’ but no more.⁷⁰⁴

On 30 August ‘according to our commission and ... according unto your letters’ they obtained the resignation of Abbot Geoffrey Johns in the chapterhouse at

⁷⁰¹ Appendix 6 provides the detail of this itinerary.

⁷⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244); the colourful story of Abbot Robert Salisbury, who had become a leader of a band of robbers, is told in D. H. Williams, The Welsh Cistercians (Leominster, 2001), pp. 67/68. It is possible Basingwerk abbey was visited before Valle Crucis, see CCCCMS111, fo. 349.

⁷⁰³ Map ref. B2.

⁷⁰⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244).

Conway.⁷⁰⁵ Becansaw and Vaughan proceeded to a new election and ‘all the monks in the said house with one assent and agreement without any contradiction did choose and elect Dom Richard ap Rhys to be Abbot’.⁷⁰⁶ Notwithstanding the fact that ap Rhys was apparently Cromwell’s favoured candidate, the Visitors did not install him because it was confirmed that his age was only 24.⁷⁰⁷ The general Injunction specifying that religious profession could not be made ‘ere he be 24 years of age complete’⁷⁰⁸ accounted for the Visitors’ reticence in confirming ap Rhys’ election. Even though the Visitors told Cromwell that ap Rhys exhibited a dispensation, they ‘stayed the election’ for Cromwell’s approval.⁷⁰⁹

On 4 or 5 September, they had planned to return to Valle Crucis to ‘deprive and depose’ the abbot and hold a new election.⁷¹⁰ Whether they did undertake this is not known; the abbot of Cymmer was unsuccessful in his aspirations regarding Valle Crucis and John Durham of St Mary Graces eventually became abbot.⁷¹¹ It seems unlikely that Cromwell could have issued instructions regarding his choice by 4 September; the letter from his Commissioners telling him of their proposed action was, after all, sent only on 1 September.⁷¹² It is clear Lord Rochford made suit to Cromwell for ‘the promotion of John Durham’ during the king’s summer progress,

⁷⁰⁵ Conway abbey was just within the Bangor diocese boundary. However, CCCC MS 111, p. 349 notes its location in neighbouring St Asaph diocese. Clearly, Becansaw and Vaughan’s commission considered it within St Asaph diocese.

⁷⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244).

⁷⁰⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 251 (LP, VIII, 1150): Cromwell had received representation, earlier in July, on behalf of ap Rhys from Bishop Roland Lee.

⁷⁰⁸ G. Burnett, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), p. lxiii. See discussion on this Injunction in Section 3.2.

⁷⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244); unfortunately the alleged dispensation is not recorded in FOR.

⁷¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244).

⁷¹¹ D. H. Williams, The Welsh Cistercians (Leominster, 2001), pp. 80/81.

⁷¹² PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244).

perhaps with the king's blessing.⁷¹³ Certainly, the new abbot had been confirmed by 25 November, when he was entertained at Shrewsbury (possibly on his way to Valle Crucis to take up his appointment).⁷¹⁴

By 1 October, Vaughan and Becansaw were back at Gresford⁷¹⁵ and on 14 October, Becansaw announced to Cromwell that 'according to your instructions' the Visitation of St Asaph diocese had been completed.⁷¹⁶ In his own letter to Cromwell, also from Gresford and dated 14 October, Vaughan demonstrated that the 'instructions' from Cromwell were to visit not only religious houses but also other ecclesiastical institutions: 'since our coming many a store of them that kept concubines openly in their houses being single men and single women having betwixt them many children, be now married, the priests with their concubines be now reformed and have left their concubines and every man that we found by detection guilty we punished openly in the face of the country'.⁷¹⁷ Effectively Becansaw and Vaughan were acting as the ecclesiastical court for the diocese of St Asaph under Cromwell's control during the *sede vacante* period of the bishopric. This demonstrates that Becansaw and Vaughan had a much wider responsibility than the Visitors who were working in the dioceses of England. It also explains why it took them almost two months to complete the Visitation of St Asaph diocese, which had only four religious houses. They evidently perceived their work as religious reform: the people 'thanking God highly that ever such power should come among them to

⁷¹³ LP, X, 902; The king's possible direct involvement in ecclesiastical affairs can also be seen in 'the king's most gracious letters sealed with his great seal' dated 18 August 1535, sent via the Lord Chancellor, to Becansaw and Vaughan, requiring them to induct Robert ap Meredith into a St Asaph vicarage. See PRO, SP 1 / 96, fos. 61 - 62 (LP, IX, 244).

⁷¹⁴ SRRC, 3365/465 Bailiff Accounts, 27 HVIII.

⁷¹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 98 (LP, IX, 511); the letter is from Vaughan but the use of 'we' and 'us' suggests Becansaw was at hand. Gresford was next to Holt Castle in Flintshire, the centre for military operations in Wales.

⁷¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607).

call them from their sinful living unto the knowledge of God. The people at the sermons do marvellously wail their errors'.⁷¹⁸

Having argued against the inclusion of Dr Ellis Price and William Glynn in a joint Visitation of the rest of the Welsh diocese,⁷¹⁹ Becansaw and Vaughan were at Llandaff cathedral, Cardiff, in south Wales by 11 November. On their way to south Wales they travelled through Herefordshire and were instructed by Cromwell to 'proceed in the election of the prioress of Aconbury'.⁷²⁰ Joan Skydmor was elected, but the installation was delayed because of the absence of surety for the first fruits. Evidently this house, in the diocese of Hereford, was not in their commission, being visited by Cave a few weeks later. From the dating of correspondence, they must have been engaged in the Visitation of Llandaff diocese by the end of October, visiting Tintern abbey, Grace Dieu and Usk before arriving at Llandaff cathedral.⁷²¹ On 11 November, in the Visitation of the cathedral, they found the bishop, George Athequa (the Spanish confessor of Catherine of Aragon), and his archdeacon, John Quarre, guilty of letting their mansions become ruinous and 'also in many other things worthy of great correction as shall appear unto you by our Registry of Visitation'.⁷²² As a result, the Commissioners dramatically 'sequestered the fruits both of the said bishopric and the archdeaconry into the king's hands and yours'.⁷²³ The bishop evidently was seen as suspect regarding the Royal Supremacy issue: his 'negligence

⁷¹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 7 (LP, IX, 608).

⁷¹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 7 (LP, IX, 608); D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 281.

⁷¹⁹ See Section 2.3.6 for Ellis Price and William Glynn's Visitation of Bangor diocese.

⁷²⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 134 (LP, IX, 1164).

⁷²¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 349.

⁷²² PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 134 (LP, IX, 1164).

⁷²³ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 35 (LP, IX, 806).

... to declare unto the people the word of God' being 'remedied' by the Visitors through the appointment of preachers, 'there to remain till our coming again'.⁷²⁴

The Commissioners told Cromwell on 11 November that they expected shortly to finish the Visitation of Llandaff and commence the Visitation of St David's diocese on 20 November. They expected to be in St David's for about two months, 'returning towards London there to be with your mastership' by 14 January 1536.⁷²⁵ It is evident that seventeen religious houses were visited, including Haverford West, Carmarthen and Brecon, as well as parish Visitations.⁷²⁶

With the attendance on Cromwell in mid January 1536 the Royal Visitation of the monasteries in the Welsh diocese effectively ended. However, the activities of Vaughan in March and April 1536 have created confusion among historians.⁷²⁷ For example, Williams noted that the two Visitors were visiting through the winter up to at least 28 April 1536, perhaps coming back to London for part of the winter and that the concluding stages of the Visitation may have been undertaken by Vaughan alone.⁷²⁸

The Visitors' correspondence suggests that the promise of Becansaw and Vaughan to be back in London by mid-January 1536 was fulfilled. This is important, as otherwise the suggestion is maintained that the Visitation of Wales continued after

⁷²⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 35 (LP, IX, 806).

⁷²⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 35 (LP, IX, 806).

⁷²⁶ CCCC MS 111, fo. 349 and see Appendix 6.

⁷²⁷ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 281: '... and four months later they are at Llandaff again'.

⁷²⁸ D. H. Williams, The Welsh Cistercians (Leominster, 2001), p. 84.

the Suppression Act had been passed in March,⁷²⁹ thus undermining the theory that Visitation data was used to create the Act.

On 22 March 1536, Becansaw wrote to Cromwell ‘since my last departure from your mastership’ when summarising the twenty marks he had obtained as a result of the St Asaph bishopric being *sede vacante*.⁷³⁰ It will be recalled that in August he had acted for Cromwell after the death of the bishop of St Asaph.⁷³¹ It does not seem realistic to suppose Becansaw had only collected as little as twenty marks (£13 6s 8d) in a period extending well over six months: Becansaw must have been referring to his recent departure from Cromwell.

On 22 March Becansaw wrote from Whatcroft in Cheshire,⁷³² and shortly before, on 16 March, Vaughan wrote from Cardiff telling Cromwell that he intended to ‘end my Visitation in the diocese of Llandaff the 26th day of this March’.⁷³³ Evidently, Becansaw and Vaughan had parted company, as demonstrated by Vaughan’s use of the first person singular throughout this letter.⁷³⁴ It cannot, therefore, be doubted that Vaughan and Becansaw did part company, probably after their return to London in January⁷³⁵ Becansaw possibly had a commission to act for Cromwell in St Asaph’s diocese in some capacity during the *sede vacante* period, while Vaughan had a new Visitation commission.

⁷²⁹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 285.

⁷³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 238 (LP, X, 522).

⁷³¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607).

⁷³² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 238 (LP, X, 522).

⁷³³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 216 (LP, X, 481).

⁷³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 216 (LP, X, 481).

⁷³⁵ thus confirming Williams’ theory: D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 84.

At the 'end' of February 1536, Vaughan was at Monmouth, presumably having travelled from London. He told Cromwell that he had gone to the priory at Monmouth even though it was 'not within my commission' and found things far out of order.⁷³⁶ This house, in the diocese of Hereford, was in the commission of Dr Cave.⁷³⁷ Vaughan also reports, 'I hear such saying by the common people of all the houses of monks that you have within Wales also Tintern and the priory of Brecon be greatly abused and have transgressed the king's Injunctions and the Injunctions were given them by a decree and sub poena deprivationes'.⁷³⁸ Clearly, these two houses had already been visited as they had been given the Injunctions. The CCCC MS 111 notes that the compertes at Tintern and Brecon were gathered by Becansaw and Vaughan, showing they had already visited these houses during the first tour ending mid January 1536.⁷³⁹

In his next two letters, it is clear that Vaughan's purpose in this second tour is the Visitation of the diocese of Llandaff and St David's 'at which Visitation in all parts where I sat diverse supplications both of matters of office and of instance were presented unto me'.⁷⁴⁰ Vaughan was overseeing the ecclesiastical courts and following up his earlier Visitations; after all, at Llandaff in November he had told Cromwell 'we have assigned preachers there to remain till our coming again into those quarters'.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 142 (LP, X, 393).

⁷³⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 343. However, even though Monmouth had a *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income of £56, and so well below £200, it is not noted in CCCC MS 111, fo. 344 as having been visited. In Vaughan's letter he does not say Monmouth are transgressing the Injunctions but he does say there are rumours that Tintern and Brecon have not kept the king's Injunctions. Perhaps Monmouth never received the king's Injunctions, because they were not visited in 1535 - 1536.

⁷³⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 142 (LP, X, 393).

⁷³⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 249.

⁷⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 216 (LP, X, 481) and PRO, SP 1 / 103, fo. 189 (LP, X, 746).

In the light of these deductions it is now clear that when on 28 April Vaughan sought guidance from Cromwell as to when he should ‘come to your mastership with abridgement of my compertes’ he is not talking of the Visitation of the monasteries, but the Visitation of the parishes.⁷⁴² This analysis undermines the prevailing interpretation that Vaughan (with or without Becansaw) was visiting parts of Wales after the Suppression Acts had been passed in March⁷⁴³ and decisions had been taken about Welsh monasteries without any examination of the Visitation register. It can now be seen that in March and April Vaughan was engaged in a Visitation tour, but not related to the Royal Visitation of the monasteries;⁷⁴⁴ they had completed that by mid January 1536.

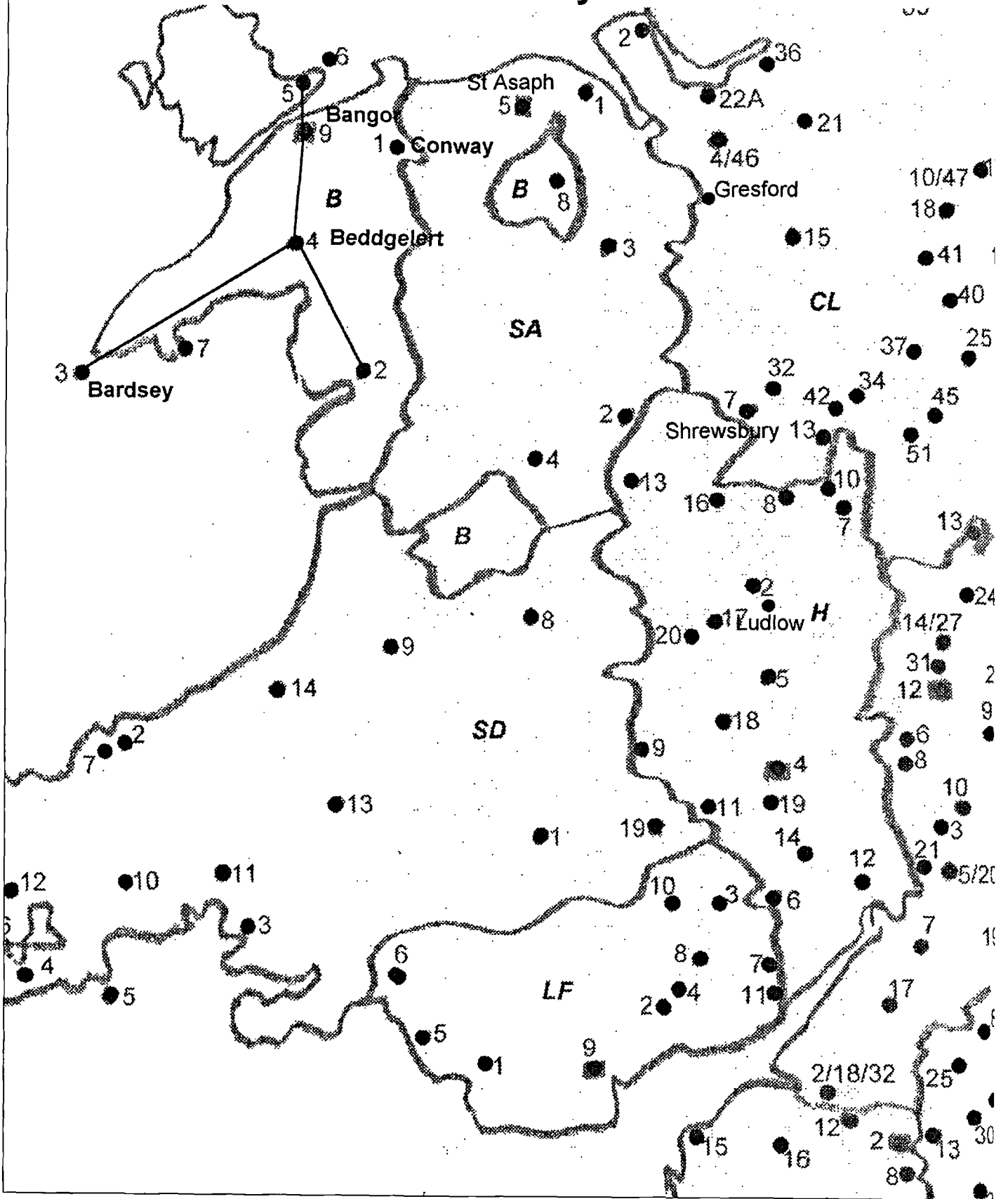
⁷⁴¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 35 (LP, IX, 806) - my underlining.

⁷⁴² PRO, SP 1 / 163, fo. 189 (LP, X, 746).

⁷⁴³ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 285.

⁷⁴⁴ Vaughan is described as ‘Visitor in the parts of Wales’ in May 1536, see National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth: Penrice and Margam Abbey Collection, MS 2812.

MAP 6 Ellis Price and Wm. Glynn's Visitation Circuit



2.3.6 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Ellis Price and Dr William Glynn

While the dioceses of St Asaph's, Llandaff and St David's were visited by Becansaw and Vaughan, the remaining Welsh diocese, Bangor, was visited by Dr Ellis Price⁷⁴⁵ and Dr William Glynn. Map 6 gives some indication of the houses Price and Glynn visited.⁷⁴⁶

Dr Ellis Price graduated from St Nicholas Hostel, Cambridge with LL. B in 1523 and DCL in 1534.⁷⁴⁷ His success at Cambridge gave him the name 'The Red Doctor'.⁷⁴⁸ He is best later remembered as the agent who sent the *Darfel Gardarn* statue to Cromwell where it was allegedly used to burn the martyr John Forest.⁷⁴⁹

Dr William Glynn was a priest who had been chancellor of Bangor in 1534 and archdeacon of Anglesey, in the Bangor diocese, at the time of the Royal Visitation.⁷⁵⁰ His local knowledge made him an ideal candidate for visiting Bangor diocese. He was a noted pluralist, having many ecclesiastical offices, for which he incurred the displeasure of Henry VIII shortly after the conclusion of the Royal Visitation.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607) also known as Dr Ellis ap Robert, son of Sir Robert ap Rice. See D. H. Williams, The Welsh Cistercians (Leominster, 2001), p. 68.

⁷⁴⁶ Appendix 7 details the circuit from available evidence.

⁷⁴⁷ Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885).

⁷⁴⁸ S. T. Bindoff, The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558, vol. 3 (London, 1982), pp. 151/152 (from his doctoral gown).

⁷⁴⁹ P. Marshall, 'Papist as Heretic: The Burning of John Forest, 1538', The Historical Journal, 41, 2 (1998), p. 356.

⁷⁵⁰ John Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300 - 1541, vol. 11, The Welsh Diocese (IHR, London, 1965), pp. 7, 10.

⁷⁵¹ LP, X, 432, 433.

Price began exercising 'the office of Visitation within the limits of Wales'⁷⁵² at the beginning of October 1535.⁷⁵³ Both Becansaw and Vaughan complained on 13 October about Price being 'joined' with them in the commission. Price was accused of riding 'about the country with his concubine openly', of showing the king's commission of Visitation 'pompously' in taverns and undoing the good work Becansaw and Vaughan allegedly had done.⁷⁵⁴

Evidently the criticism had effect and on 18 November Price was writing from Ludlow to Cromwell, acknowledging he had 'of late' received the vicar general's letter telling him to cease his Visitation. Cromwell had taken this step because of Price's 'lightness, youth and progeny'. Price strongly denies the accusations 'by those (I know well) be not my friends' and claims he has done nothing 'contrary to the commission your honourable instructions, articles, Injunctions committed and given unto us'.⁷⁵⁵ While at Ludlow, Price gained the support of Bishop Roland Lee, president of the Council in the Marches of Wales. Lee was a friend of Price's deceased father, which may account for his favourable intervention.⁷⁵⁶ Lee told Cromwell 'he is young and must have a time, for the tree groweth not to be an oak at the first day'.⁷⁵⁷

But Price had not been inactive in October and it is clear his commission was for the Bangor diocese. On 21 November Sir Richard Bulkeley wrote to Cromwell regarding Penmon abbey, on Anglesey, in the diocese of Bangor. The prior, John

⁷⁵² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 63 (LP, IX, 843).

⁷⁵³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607): Becansaw reports on 14 October, 'but now of late cometh with a new commission Dr Ellis'.

⁷⁵⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 6 (LP, IX, 607); SP 1 / 98, fo. 7 (LP, IX, 608).

⁷⁵⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 63 (LP, IX, 843); the original MS has been slightly damaged and the words underlined have been deduced by me.

Godfrey, had been ‘enclosed up’ in his house ‘by Doctor Ellis Price and one William Glynn, Commissioners authorised by the king’s highness and by your mastership’. Bulkeley sent twenty nobles from the prior and promised more ‘beseeching you that I may have your letters that the poor prior may be at liberty as he was afor’.⁷⁵⁸ This is the only record that Glynn was a Commissioner in the Visitation.⁷⁵⁹

On 30 November, Margaret Countess of Salisbury and John Lord Hussey (of Princess Mary’s household) wrote to Cromwell referring to the priory of Bethkeleert [Beddgelert] in the diocese of Bangor, ‘lately suppressed’.⁷⁶⁰ As they were writing from Knolle, in Kent, on behalf of Princess Mary’s footman (the bearer of the letter) who hailed from the Beddgelert area it is likely some weeks had passed since its suppression.⁷⁶¹ It is, therefore, likely that Price and Glynn had undertaken the suppression in October.

Glynn wrote to Cromwell on 2 November, shortly before Price’s commission was revoked, telling him ‘that the sale of abusing and mart of vice is now thanks be to Jesus greatly decayed in these parts, and so shall daily, if the great maintainer of them, the bishop of Rome, I mean with his complicity, may be expelled utterly and out of mens hearts’.⁷⁶² Glynn seeks advice regarding marriage within the fourth degree of affinity and plainly is overseeing a Visitation of all ecclesiastical institutions and ecclesiastical courts in the same way as Becansaw and Vaughan. It would seem probable, given Glynn’s known activity at the time, that he was referring to the

⁷⁵⁶ D. H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, 2001), p. 77.

⁷⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 87, fo. 42 (LP, VII, 1443).

⁷⁵⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 79v (LP, IX, 866).

⁷⁵⁹ John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300 - 1541*, vol. 11, The Welsh Diocese (IHR, London, 1965) pp. 7, 10.

⁷⁶⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 110 (LP, IX, 900).

Bangor diocese, where his own authority already existed. There is no reason to believe that Glynn's commission or involvement with the Visitation of Bangor was in any way affected by the removal of Price.

Contrary to current understanding, it appears that Price's commission was reinstated. An entry in the Cambridge University account book notes Price's lecture on civil law was given by a substitute while Price was involved in the king's business in parts of Wales.⁷⁶³ Further, the bishop of Bangor later wrote to Cromwell, noting that Price had visited his diocese 'authoritate regia and levied upon the clergy £20 over and besides gifts of horses ... amounting to ... [an]other £20'.⁷⁶⁴ It would, therefore, appear that Price was reinstated by Cromwell and probably rejoined Glynn by the end of 1535.

Undoubtedly the Visitation of Bangor diocese continued. On 31 January 1536 the 'Clergy of the Diocese of Bangor' wrote to Cromwell, from Bangor, saying that 'of late we ... were visited by the king's Visitors and yours'.⁷⁶⁵ As the letter accepts, 'many of us (to acknowledge the truth to your mastership) be detected of incontinence as it appeared by the Visitors books'. The clergy 'humbly submit ourselves unto your mastership's mercy heartily desiring you of remission or at the least wise of merciful punishment and correction'. They also appealed against the Injunction 'lately given us by the foresaid Visitors' regarding the expulsion of women 'as we have customably kept in our houses' since this will undermine the clergy's ability to

⁷⁶¹ Knolle Manor was near to Eltham Palace where Mary was then being held.

⁷⁶² BL, Harley 604, fo. 75 (LP, IX, 748) - my underlining.

⁷⁶³ W. G. Searle (ed.), Grace Book I (Cambridge, 1908), p. 309, which also notes William Glynn's return to Cambridge in 1536.

⁷⁶⁴ BL, Harley 283, fo. 153r.

⁷⁶⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 225 (LP, X, 215).

maintain hospitality and relief.⁷⁶⁶ It is unlikely that the clergy would have delayed this request for forgiveness and relaxation of the Injunction till long after the Visitors had completed their work. It can be presumed that the Visitors had completed their work and that their report and perhaps they themselves, were on their way to Cromwell at the end of January.

Thus, by the end of January 1536, it can be seen that the Visitation of religious houses in Wales had been completed. Becansaw and Vaughan had promised to be with Cromwell by 14 January and the remaining diocese, Bangor, with only eight religious houses, appears to have been completed by 31 January.

⁷⁶⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 225 (LP, X, 215). It is interesting to note the reference to 'Visitors', supporting Price's reinstatement.

2.3.7 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Thomas Bedyll

Dr Thomas Bedyll was the oldest of the Commissioners. He was a fellow of New College and received his BCL in 1508; at Oxford he was a contemporary of Francis Cave's father.⁷⁶⁷ He became Archbishop Warham's secretary and is regularly identified in affairs of the Canterbury diocese.⁷⁶⁸ Bedyll had early involvement in the king's 'great matter' and with Tregonwell and others was 'of the counsel of the kings side' when Cranmer declared the marriage to Catherine null and void. Bedyll was a deacon and obtained licence to allow him not to be ordained priest and yet retain his wide range of ecclesiastical benefices.⁷⁶⁹ By mid 1535 he was archdeacon of Cornwall and had a variety of prebends, including Milton Ecclesia, in the Lincoln diocese. His future part in the Royal Visitation seemed certain, with his name included in a draft commission of late 1534.⁷⁷⁰

By the time of the Royal Visitation he had proved his loyalty to Cromwell in pressing the issue of Royal Supremacy at the inquisition of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More.⁷⁷¹ Bedyll clearly recognised that it was Cromwell who had 'brought many things to pass within this two years which you have compassed and ended according to your intent, mind and purpose'.⁷⁷² At the beginning of August 1535, Bedyll evidently felt isolated and frustrated in London, while Cromwell and the court were in the West Country and the Royal Visitation had commenced without Bedyll

⁷⁶⁷ C. W. Boase (ed.), Register of the University of Oxford, Oxford Historical Society (1885), p. 58.

⁷⁶⁸ e. g. LPL, Cranmer's register, fo. 4v; or CCA, Register T, fo. 312r (appointment as registrar and agent 25 October 1526); or CCA, Register T2, fo. 5r.

⁷⁶⁹ FOR, p. 36, 26 November, 1535: 'disposed not to proceed to priests order for 2 years'

⁷⁷⁰ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), p. 659.

⁷⁷¹ Old Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885); D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 273, 274.

⁷⁷² PRO, SP 1 / 92, fo. 189 (LP, VIII, 730).

having a role.⁷⁷³ On 28 July, Bedyll had written requesting a warrant for Visitation in Kent at Leeds [priory] or elsewhere, or near London,⁷⁷⁴ to no avail. Indeed, by the end of August, Bedyll had written two or three times to Cromwell without reply, claiming to be ‘the most diligent servant you have’.⁷⁷⁵ However, in November, Bedyll was commissioned, along with Henry Polstead and John Anthony, to take the surrenders of Langdon, Dover and Folkestone priories, although Bedyll was clearly the most senior, solely acknowledging each of the surrender deeds.⁷⁷⁶

Early in December, Bedyll was with Layton at Syon, attempting to force the brethren to accept the king’s title, and, on 17 December, wrote to Cromwell that they remained ‘obstinate’.⁷⁷⁷ On 18 December, he intended to ‘wait upon the king’ with Layton, presumably to update Henry on the acceptance of the Supremacy by the Syon community.

It is at this time that Bedyll appears to have been given his initial commission as a royal monastic Visitor. It is possible that, in mid December, Bedyll, Layton and Legh had the opportunity for a joint meeting with Cromwell or, indeed, the king. However, Bedyll later demonstrates a doubt concerning his Visitation powers compared with Legh, and a vagueness about his commission which suggests he was solely briefed by Cromwell.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 24).

⁷⁷⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 164v.

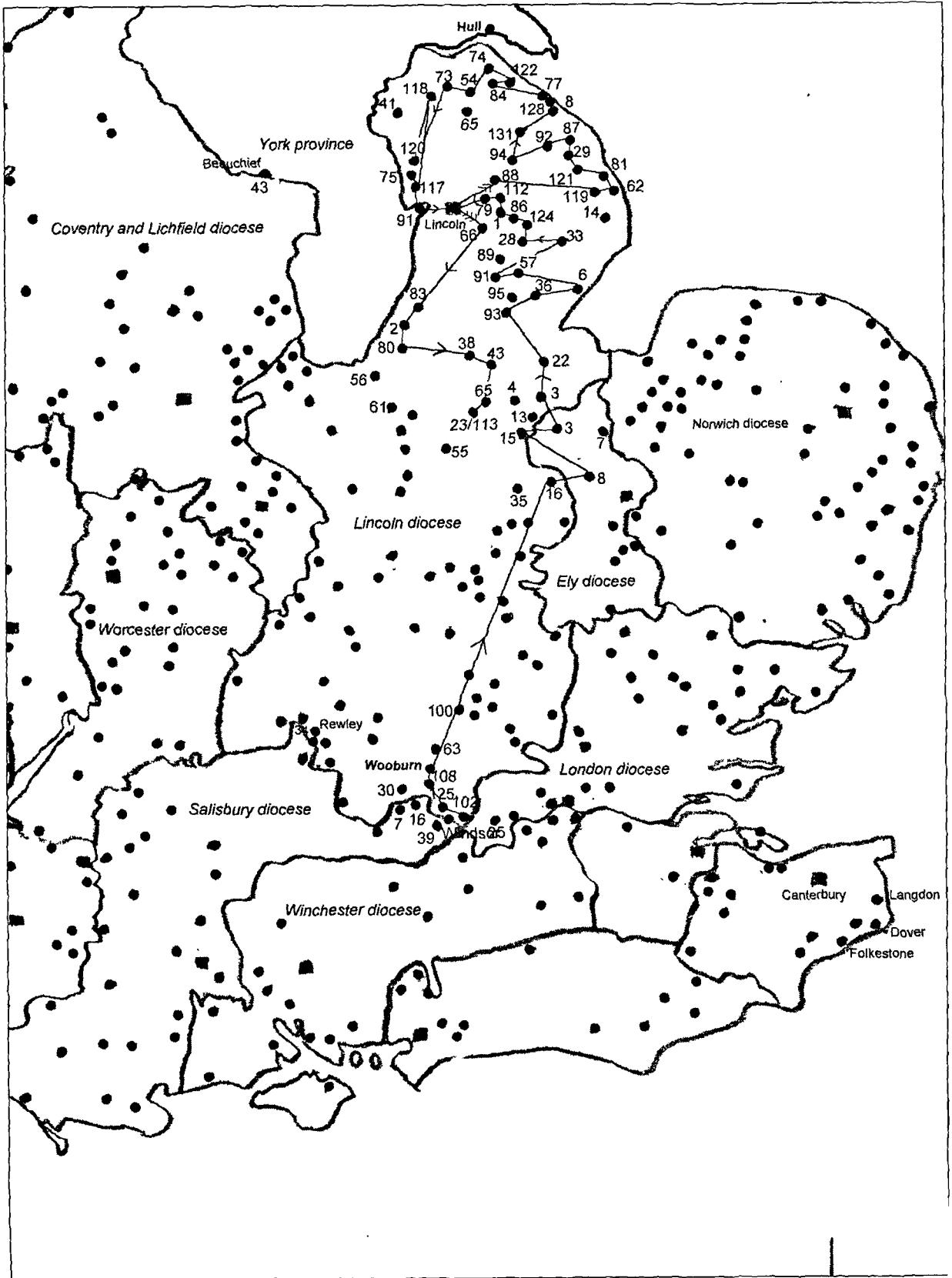
⁷⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 85, fo. 141 (LP, VII, 1089).

⁷⁷⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 258 (LP, IX, 829) and LP, IX, 816. Clearly from PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 47 (LP, IX, 828), Bedyll was not present at the surrender of Dover, nor perhaps at Folkestone or Langdon.

⁷⁷⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 152 (LP, VIII, 954) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130 (LP, IX, 986).

⁷⁷⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

MAP 7 Dr Thomas Bedyll's Visitation Circuit



The notary Bedyll used as his registrar in the Visitation is not recorded. It could have been Thomas Argall, a notary public, whom Bedyll earlier described to Cromwell, perhaps too disparagingly, as 'his servant'.⁷⁷⁹ The only evidence to support Argall's involvement is the joint right of presentation identified at Thornholme priory during the Visitation.⁷⁸⁰ However, Argall is noted as scribe of the acts for testamentary business in the new vicegerential court, as well as the Prerogative court of Canterbury, and so he may well have been fully engaged with this business in London.⁷⁸¹

Bedyll appears to have set out on his Visitation commission in the last week of December or the first week of January. He initially visited the nunneries of Ankerwyke, Burnham and Little Marlow, as Map 7 demonstrates.⁷⁸² As the bishop of Lincoln was at his palace at Wooburn at this time, situated between Burnham and Little Marlow, there can be little doubt he was questioned by Bedyll. With Bedyll about to undertake the Visitation of the principal archdeaconry of his diocese, it seems natural to presume that Bishop John Longland would have his Royal Supremacy credentials checked in the same way as the other Visitors had examined the bishops in their jurisdiction. This visit is reflected by Longland, a few days later, reminding Cromwell that 'your mastership commanded me not to meddle with any religious houses'.⁷⁸³ Perhaps also there was some acrimony in Bedyll's discussions with

⁷⁷⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 76, fo. 40 (LP, VI, 469), 11 May 1533.

⁷⁸⁰ Linc. A, Bj / 3 / 5, or Bj / 5 / 12 No. 8, fo. 14v.

⁷⁸¹ C. J. Kitching, 'The Probate Jurisdiction of Thomas Cromwell as Vicegerent', Institute of Historical Research Bulletin 46 (1973), p. 103.

⁷⁸² CCCC MS 111, fo. 345. See Appendix 8 for details of Bedyll's itinerary.

⁷⁸³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 62 (LP, X, 66).

Longland which later reflected itself in the sharp letter from Cromwell, but drafted by Bedyll, commanding Longland to allow the priory of Spalding 'to live in quiet'.⁷⁸⁴

At Little Marlow, Bedyll found five nuns.⁷⁸⁵ The prioress reported to her kinsman, Cromwell, 'your Visitors have been here of late who have discharged three of my sisters, the one is dame Katherine, the other two is the young women that were last professed'.⁷⁸⁶ The prioress told Cromwell that 'there shall be none left here but myself and this poor maiden' and 'if it will please your goodness to take this poor house into you[r] own hands, either for yourself or for mine own n[ephew], your son'. It is because Bedyll had dismissed so many that the prioress recognised the religious life could no longer function at this house, with a complement reduced to only two. However, Cromwell surprisingly did not take up this early offer of closure from his kinswoman and Little Marlow was included in the forthcoming Suppression Act.

Bedyll then moved north, possibly visiting Missenden and Ashridge and the few other houses in the south eastern part of Lincolnshire diocese unvisited by Tregonwell and Legh.

By 13 January, Bedyll was at Ramsey abbey where he remained at least until 15 January. The emphasis of his visit was undoubtedly on pursuing the acceptance of the Royal Supremacy. In looking through the foundation documents and statutes he discovered a number of Anglo-Saxon charters. One charter, he told Cromwell, noted that King Edgar signed 'himself to be emperor of England'.⁷⁸⁷ This title, effectively designating that the king of England had no temporal overlord, is reminiscent of the

⁷⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 227 (LP, X, 218).

⁷⁸⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 345.

⁷⁸⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 71 (LP, IX, 1166).

⁷⁸⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 233r (LP, X, 90).

build-up to the Act in Restraint of Appeals of 1533.⁷⁸⁸ In Bedyll's following letter to Cromwell, two days later, he referred again to this charter, reinforcing the imperial claim: 'the said Edgar exempts the abbot and his convent and all his men from the power of all bishops and makes them immediately subject to himself and albeit they were exempted, the bishop of Rome had never to do with them'.⁷⁸⁹ That Bedyll still felt such material was important to unearth, demonstrates a continuing uncertainty and a need to provide evidence against papal claims.

Bedyll also found a charter of King Edward the Confessor who 'by his kingly power could exempt this monastery of Ramsey from all bishops' powers'.⁷⁹⁰ Again, this reflected an urgency to support, with ancient evidence, the Supremacy Act of November 1534, by which parliament had already subscribed this power to the king. Bedyll found no difficulty in implementing the first Visitation Injunction – 'the extirpation and taking away of the usurped and pretended jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome within this realm'. He reported to Cromwell, 'as far as I can yet perceive the abbot and his brethren here be as well contented to renounce all the bishop of Rome his usurped jurisdictions'.⁷⁹¹ The abbot underlined his commitment by preaching on the Royal Supremacy in the parish church on Bedyll's arrival.

That Bedyll commanded Ramsey to send the charters to Cromwell, as denoted in the standard Injunctions, is identified by the copy processed by ap Rice in London.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁸ S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 163-165.

⁷⁸⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

⁷⁹⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 233r (LP, X, 103).

⁷⁹¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 233v (LP, X, 103).

Two days later, still at Ramsey, Bedyll had had time to further investigate the house. He was now even more enthusiastic about the loyalty of the abbey: ‘in mine opinion the abbot and convent be as true and as faithful obedientiaries to the kings grace as any religious folks in this realm’.⁷⁹³ That he investigated the house for crimes is clear as they ‘live uprightly as any other after the best sort of living that has been among religious folks this many years’. His only complaint was that they were ‘more given to ceremonies than is necessary’, emphasising the Erasmian tone of the Injunctions.

It seems clear that Bedyll had not been instructed to find faults, which undermines any claim that the Visitors were deliberately falsifying evidence. Bedyll noted at Ramsey, ‘I pray I may find other houses in no worse condition and then I would be right glad that I took this journey’.⁷⁹⁴ This demonstrates he had not received instructions from Cromwell to gain negative evidence of sexual crimes even at this late stage of the Visitation. His positive view of his Visitation task may, of course, represent poor briefing by Cromwell in the manner the commission was to be implemented. In the same letter, Bedyll decried the fact that Legh had been widely dispensing religious from their vows and claimed that the monks of Ramsey ‘think that I have like authority as Doctor Legh’. He further requested Cromwell ‘beseeching you to write your mind [on] this behalf and in such other things which you would me to do in this journey’.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹² See CCCC MS 111, fo. 209.

⁷⁹³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

⁷⁹⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

⁷⁹⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

Another comment made by Bedyll reinforces the apparent lack of clarity in the Visitation of the Lincoln diocese. Bedyll asked Cromwell, ‘If it pleases you to grant me a commission to visit the religious houses unvisited in Lincoln diocese which shall be nigh my journey it should be much to my commodity’.⁷⁹⁶ This suggests that Bedyll was aware of many Lincoln diocese houses which had not been included in his journey of Visitation. This sounds odd, especially being written on 15 January, and suggests Cromwell had decided against a complete Visitation of the Lincolnshire diocese. The comment becomes odder when looked at in relation to Legh’s letter from Roche abbey a week beforehand. Here Legh wrote to Cromwell, telling him, ‘please it your mastership where as I intended to have gone to the Charterhouse in the Isle of Axeholme, according to your pleasure’.⁷⁹⁷ Axeholme Charterhouse was in Lincoln diocese and it is clear that Cromwell had already allocated this house, near as it was to the York province boundary, to Legh on the grounds of logistical efficiency. Albeit that anything to do with a Charterhouse at that time was considered important, this example demonstrates Cromwell’s forward planning in the Visitation.

Perhaps the ‘journey’ Bedyll was initially commissioned by Cromwell to make was to obtain signed and sealed oaths from those religious houses who had not already acknowledged the Royal Supremacy. This emphasis on the Supremacy would be supported by Bedyll’s comments at Ramsey abbey. More specifically, it can be tentatively deduced that Bedyll’s ‘journey’ was initially planned by Cromwell only to include the exempt houses in Lincolnshire. Cranmer’s metropolitan Visitation of Lincoln in August 1534, whose objective was to obtain oaths from ecclesiastical individuals and organisations acknowledging the Succession and Royal Supremacy,

⁷⁹⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234r (LP, X, 103).

⁷⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 40 (LP, X, 50) - my underlining.

excluded exempt houses.⁷⁹⁸ Cranmer's commissary at Lincoln, Richard Gwent, also found himself in the middle of a protestation from Longland against Cranmer on the legality of a Visitation in his diocese, which stunted his progress in the Visitation.⁷⁹⁹ However, in analysing the 'Acknowledgement of Supremacy' returns for the county of Lincolnshire, it is clear they are virtually complete for male religious houses. The only houses not included are Cistercian and Praemonstratensian abbeys, which were outside Gwent's remit. Thus the Cistercian houses in Lincoln of Kirkstead, Louth Park, Revesby, Swinshead and Vaudey, and the Praemonstratensian houses of Barlings, Hagnaby, Newbo, Newsham and Topholme may well not have signed and sealed the Supremacy oath.⁸⁰⁰ This possible gap in acknowledging the Supremacy gives credence to the idea above that Bedyll's original Visitation commission from Cromwell in Lincolnshire was only to the exempt houses. Hence Bedyll was asking to extend his journey to other religious houses which had not been visited in the current Visitation.

The apparently poor briefing given to Bedyll by Cromwell could well be because of a change in priority in the Royal Visitation at the end of 1535, the emphasis now possibly being on obtaining a thorough acknowledgement of the Supremacy from religious who previously had not given their oath.

⁷⁹⁸ P. Ayris (ed.), 'Thomas Cranmer and the metropolitan Visitation of Canterbury province 1533 - 1535' in S. Taylor (ed.), From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 24.

⁷⁹⁹ P. Ayris (ed.), 'Thomas Cranmer and the metropolitan Visitation of Canterbury province 1533 - 1535' in S. Taylor (ed.), From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 8.

⁸⁰⁰ This polarisation of omissions is unlikely to be a coincidence. For acknowledgements see Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II, pp. 279 - 306.

From Ramsey, Bedyll travelled north in a leisurely way, writing eleven days later from Spalding abbey on 26 January.⁸⁰¹ From this letter it is evident that he had stopped on the way at Crowland abbey. However, given the gap in time, it seems likely he stopped elsewhere too. As Bedyll's route passed Thorney, it is possible he visited this major abbey in the north of Ely diocese, which Legh omitted at the end of October. However, it is also likely that Bedyll called at Peterborough abbey in connection with the preparation of Catherine of Aragon's funeral. Richard Cromwell had called at Ramsey on Thursday 13 January, when Bedyll was there, presumably on his way to Peterborough.⁸⁰² Bedyll noted from Spalding 'that I have written lately to you 2 or 3 time of sad matters'.⁸⁰³ These lost letters would appear to be related to his recent activities in the time since he left Ramsey, and may be concerns resulting from the intermediate Visitations.

On 27 January, Bedyll concluded his Visitation at Spalding. The Injunctions given to the abbey demonstrate a close examination of the particular circumstances of Spalding and went beyond the standard Injunctions previously seen as perfunctory.⁸⁰⁴ Bedyll considered he had 'substantially reformed such things as were then to be reformed' and drafted a letter in Cromwell's name to send to the bishop of Lincoln to tell him so.⁸⁰⁵ In this draft he told Longland, 'that [the] house pertaineth to my cure and not to yours being neither founder nor benefactor of the same, as I will show you more at large when it shall fortune me next to speak with your lordship'. This news would have been a revelation to the bishop, as it had been visited by his predecessors. Bedyll may have found some documents arguing that it was exempt from the bishop's

⁸⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 192 (LP, X, 181).

⁸⁰² Catherine was buried at Peterborough abbey on 29 January, see SSP, vol. 5, part 2, p. 39.

⁸⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 192 (LP, X, 181).

⁸⁰⁴ See Section 3.2 on Injunctions.

influence. In requesting the bishop to ‘suffer and permit the prior and the convent there to live in quiet’ he alleged that the bishop had been supporting ‘certain busy fellows of the town of Spalding’ in their suit for priory farms. As a result, ‘the prior has been put to much trouble and unquietness (as I am credibly informed)’.⁸⁰⁶

Perhaps, therefore, it is more a case of an attack on the influence of Bishop Longland, similar to Layton’s complaint at Leicester.⁸⁰⁷ After all, Bedyll concluded, in Cromwell’s name, ‘I must and will aid and succour the said prior, as it appertains to my office and to such trust as the king’s grace has put in me concerning the religious persons and other of the clergy of his realm.’⁸⁰⁸

We have no surviving correspondence from Bedyll after Spalding, and his progress thereafter can be measured only by CCCC MS 111. This manuscript makes it clear that Bedyll’s request to extend his journey to visit all the Lincolnshire houses was granted. Bedyll’s pace of visits was leisurely up until Spalding. Thereafter, he visited up to forty-nine houses in only six weeks.⁸⁰⁹

Bedyll made his way northwards, visiting the south east of Lincoln county. The abbot of Barlings commented ‘the Visitor Mr Bedyll came so suddenly on him’, which emphasises both his speed and the absence of normal Visitation forewarning. While the abbot was ‘in such fear of deprivation [at the] time of the kings late Visitation’ such was Bedyll’s speed he did not identify a financial irregularity the abbot later admitted.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 227 (LP, X, 218).

⁸⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 227 (LP, X, 218) ‘as I am credibly informed’ is, of course, by Bedyll.

⁸⁰⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 163r (LP, IX, 1005).

⁸⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 227 (LP, X, 218).

⁸⁰⁹ See Appendix 8.

⁸¹⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 245r (LP, XII(1), 702).

Bedyll appears to have been at Thorneholme priory on or just before 23 February, identified from a presentation by the priory to Thomas Bedyll and Thomas Argall.⁸¹¹ Visiting around thirty houses in less than twenty-seven days, Bedyll must have been under pressure to complete his Visitation.

Continuing in an anti-clockwise direction, Bedyll headed south to Heynings, Torksey and Fosse. At this closing stage, he visited Broadholme nunnery, located within a salient of the York province, eight miles west of Lincoln.

It can then be presumed Bedyll's next step was Lincoln cathedral, where its prebendaries, vicars choral and other ecclesiastical positions could be examined. Measured by the Thorneholme dating, he would have been at Lincoln by the end of February, enabling his Visitation Act Book to be sent to Cromwell at the same time Layton and Legh were arriving in London with their own compertes from the York province Visitation. This is unlikely to be a coincidence and suggests the last minute rush was required to fit Cromwell's timetable.

Bedyll does not seem to have returned immediately to London with his Act Book as the cathedral common fund recorded a payment to 'Thomas Wilson of Lee Angell in the bailiwick of Lincoln for expenses of master Thomas Bedyll for three days in March ... 52/11d'.⁸¹² That the dean and chapter were examined by Bedyll is demonstrated 'in the expense of Roger Pett riding in order to speak with the kings Visitor for the business of the chapter ... 4/8d'.⁸¹³

⁸¹¹ Linc. A, PD / 1536 / 3.

⁸¹² Linc. A, Bj / 3 / 5 (Richard Bevercoats, 1530 - 46 accounts) 1535/6 - unnumbered, or Bj / 5 / 12 No. 8 (Ric. Bevercoats draft a/cs), fo. 12r.

⁸¹³ Linc. A, Bj / 3 / 5, or Bj / 5 / 12 No. 8, fo. 14v.

After Lincoln cathedral, Bedyll continued visiting religious houses in the south west of the county. Nocton, Newbo, Belvoir, perhaps Croxton, Vaudey and Bourne were visited before entering Stamford and completing his thorough Visitation of Lincolnshire (or the archdeaconry of Lincoln).

The two last entries, Rewley and Beauchief, in Bedyll's Visitation circuit are difficult to tally with the clear route expressed in the bulk of the entries in CCCC MS 111. The Cistercian house of Rewley is near Oxford and would have fitted more sensibly into Tregonwell's Visitation when he was in the area in September. However, perhaps Cromwell had some commission for Bedyll at Oxford before his return to London, which made it convenient for Rewley to be visited then.⁸¹⁴ The Praemonstratensian house of Beauchief, the last entry for Bedyll in CCCC MS 111, appears under its own diocesan heading of 'Coventry and Lichfield [diocese]'.⁸¹⁵ This abbey, located on the Derbyshire/Yorkshire border, (near Sheffield) was some distance from Bedyll's circuit. Perhaps this is an error and should be included in Layton and Legh's joint Visitation which continues directly under the Beauchief entry in the manuscript.

Thus ended Bedyll's Visitation. From an unhurried start, it ended in a frantic rush to visit the large number of religious houses in Lincolnshire. In identifying Bedyll's circuit of Visitation, the previous assumption by Knowles that 'Lincolnshire,

⁸¹⁴ Alternatively, the Rewley entry may have been misplaced in the manuscript (due to a copyist error) and should have been included near the commencement of the Bedyll entries when he was in the south of Lincoln diocese.

⁸¹⁵ CCCC MS 111, fo. 346.

particularly rich in religious houses, was apparently not covered',⁸¹⁶ has been for the first time, disproved.

An important footnote to Bedyll's Visitation of Lincolnshire is to refute the claim that Dr John London had any responsibility for monastic Visitation. Knowles stated correctly that London played no part in the Royal Visitation of 1535 - 1536.⁸¹⁷ However, more recently Bowker claimed that London did have a part in the Lincolnshire Visitation.⁸¹⁸ This study confirms London was not a monastic Visitor. Bowker's reference has been accidentally misdated to 1535, when it should have been 1536.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁶ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

⁸¹⁷ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 354.

⁸¹⁸ M. Bowker, 'The Supremacy and the Episcopate: the Struggle for Control, 1534 - 1540', The Historical Journal, xviii, 2 (1975), p. 238; and M. Bowker, The Henrician Reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland 1521 - 1547 (Cambridge, 1981), p. 78.

⁸¹⁹ Linc. A, Bj / 3 / 5: these accounts are for the year commencing 17 September 1536, not 1535.

2.4 The Northern Visitation of York Province

2.4.1 Introduction to the Northern Visitation and its *Compendium Compertorum*

The last important stage of the Royal Visitation, the survey of the York province and parts of the Coventry and Lichfield diocese, commenced at Lichfield in the closing days of 1535. It is not surprising Cromwell left this northern ecclesiastical area until last. Richard Layton, in his letters of May and June, seeking the commission for the Visitation of the north for himself and Thomas Legh, clearly revealed there could be problems. The earlier letter stated that there was a need to ‘set forth the kings authority of supreme head by all means you could possible’ and a Visitation ‘can be no better way devised for the rude people in the north to beat his authority into their heads’.⁸²⁰ However, in the following letter, Layton revealed there could be an armed reaction: ‘we know and have experience, both of the fashion of the country and the rudeness of the people, our friends and kinsfolk be dispersed in these parts, in every place ready to assist us if any stubborn or sturdy carl might perchance befound a rebellion’.⁸²¹ These comments could be interpreted as an exaggeration, but it is true that within ten months of the start of the Northern Visitation, the largest popular revolt in English history occurred. The ‘Pilgrimage of Grace’ showed that it was not just Henry Salley, monk of Furness abbey, who felt that ‘there should be no secular knave head of the Church’.⁸²²

⁸²⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 56v (LP, VIII, 955).

⁸²¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13r,v (LP, VIII, 822).

⁸²² See A. N. Shaw ‘The Involvement of the Religious Orders in the Northern Risings of 1536/7: Compulsion or Desire?’ *Downside Review*, vol. 117, No. 407 (April 1999), pp. 89 - 114; A. N. Shaw, ‘Papal Loyalism in 1530s England’, *Downside Review*, vol. 117, No. 406 (January 1999), pp. 28 - 34.

Cromwell appears to have accepted Layton's view of the likely problems in the north and assembled a team for the Visitation along the lines Layton had suggested. By the end of 1535, both Layton and Legh had shown themselves to be tough, confident Commissioners, each experienced in handling the range of tasks required in the Royal Visitation. Layton brought a team from London with him.⁸²³ Legh was accompanied by his scribe, 'one Akers',⁸²⁴ and, despite his denials, probably a few of the '12 men waiting on him in livery',⁸²⁵ of which ap Rice had complained. These 'rufflers and serving men' who surrounded Legh at the end of October, had scared ap Rice so much that he feared 'irrecoverable harm' from them.⁸²⁶

The third important person who joined the Visitation team at Lichfield was William Blytheman, who was to be the registrar and notary during the Visitation.⁸²⁷ In May, Layton had suggested to Cromwell 'Blytheman, your servant, to be registrar',⁸²⁸ in the Northern Visitation. Like Layton and Legh, Blytheman had strong northern roots and experience, as a notary, in the ecclesiastical affairs of Durham and York. Blytheman signs himself notary public, Durham diocese in July 1517⁸²⁹ and Clerk of Acts in that diocese in January 1520.⁸³⁰ By 1528, Blytheman was known to Cromwell,⁸³¹ and in 1531 required Cromwell's help in obtaining the reversion of the position of registrar in the archdeaconry of Richmond.⁸³² At the beginning of 1535, Blytheman's importance is recognised by his appointment as a Commissioner for the

⁸²³ On his journey northwards, he notes 'we depart towards Lichfield', see BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 163v (LP, IX, 1005) - my underlining.

⁸²⁴ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77v.

⁸²⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁸²⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 24v (LP, IX, 630).

⁸²⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 346.

⁸²⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 56r (LP, VIII, 955) - my dating.

⁸²⁹ DUL - ASC, Register V, fo. 170v - this suggests the attribution of a BCL at Cambridge in 1519 - 20, see Old Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885), is incorrect.

⁸³⁰ DUL - ASC, Register V, fo. 189r.

⁸³¹ LP, IV, 4877.

Commission of the Tenth survey in the bishopric of Durham, archdeaconry of Richmond, Northumberland and Newcastle and Westmorland.⁸³³ At the end of March, the Archbishop of York received the king's commission for the survey from Blytheman himself⁸³⁴ and used him as an intermediary with Cromwell 'about certain doubts' concerning its implementation.⁸³⁵ By this time, Blytheman's close ties with Cromwell were such for him to be considered a servant.⁸³⁶ Cromwell rewarded his ability by granting him the office of comptroller of Newcastle by October 1535.⁸³⁷ Given Blytheman's legal ability, local knowledge and loyalty to Cromwell, it is not surprising he was chosen as the notary and registrar for the Visitation. At the time of the Visitation, Blytheman was 41 years old.⁸³⁸

Layton arrived at Lichfield on the evening of Wednesday 22 December and may have busied himself with examining the dean and chapter and vicars choral.⁸³⁹ He had to wait until perhaps 29 December before Legh arrived,⁸⁴⁰ with Blytheman presumably also arriving, from the north, by this date.⁸⁴¹ Thus, it was not until 29 December that the Commissioners could embark on their journey, a week later than most historians recognise.⁸⁴²

⁸³² LP, V, 96.

⁸³³ LP, VIII, 149 Grants No. 65, 68, 73, 82.

⁸³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 91, fo. 164 (LP, VIII, 463).

⁸³⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 308 (LP, VIII, 754).

⁸³⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 56r (LP, VIII, 955) and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 12 & 13 (LP, IX, 617 & 618).

⁸³⁷ BL, Titus BI (LP, VIII, 1061) and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 12 (LP, IX, 617).

⁸³⁸ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 78r. Aged 48 in 1542.

⁸³⁹ Lich. RO, D30/2/1/4 microfilm, sheet 4 - no reference to Layton or changes to statutes. Also financial accounts of dean & chapter destroyed in Civil War.

⁸⁴⁰ Legh was at Sawtry in Huntingdonshire on 25 December.

⁸⁴¹ It is, however, possible that Blytheman travelled with Legh from London.

⁸⁴² Only Coulton's contributor (Mr Warren Sandwell) has previously put forward this start date, see G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 764, 765. However, I disagree with his dating of Layton's letter: see Section 2.3.1.

My earlier work⁸⁴³ discovered the path of the Commissioners in the Northern Visitation and made inferences about its method and purpose. To summarise, the identification of an error in the binding of the *Compendium Compertorum* manuscript,⁸⁴⁴ detailing the compertes for the Province of York and Coventry and Lichfield diocese, allowed the document to be identified as two separate quires.⁸⁴⁵ Therefore, the standard listings of the religious houses contained in the *Compendium* noted in LP as well as later copies and widely referred to by historians,⁸⁴⁶ are in error. The corrected listing⁸⁴⁷ demonstrates the broad path the Visitors traversed from Lichfield cathedral to Ludlow in the two months of the Visitation.

Layton's letter of 4 June 1535 to Cromwell asked for the commission, with Legh for the Visitation of the North, 'to begin in Lincoln Diocese northwards here from London, Chester diocese, York and so forth to the borders of Scotland, to ride down one side and to come up the other'.⁸⁴⁸ In the event, the commission was apparently for the York Province and parts of Coventry and Lichfield diocese which had not yet been visited, and the large number of religious houses involved required a different schedule. The corrected *Compendium* format is reflected by Visitatorial correspondence identifying first a northern sweep from Lichfield, which included the Nottingham archdeaconry, York and West Yorkshire, up to Northumberland; the east coast of Yorkshire was then covered down to Hull, followed by a move northwards again, through central Yorkshire to Richmond. The Visitors then crossed the

⁸⁴³ A. N. Shaw, 'The *Compendium Compertorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation'.

⁸⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 91 - f 110.

⁸⁴⁵ An explanation of the error is contained in Appendix 13. The PRO has accepted my findings.

⁸⁴⁶ LP, X, 364(1); BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 184 - 157r; BL, Lansdowne MS 988, fo. 1 - 17 or Chatsworth House, Devonshire Collections 70F.

⁸⁴⁷ A. N. Shaw, 'The Northern Visitation of 1535/6: Some New Observations', Downside Review, vol. 116, No. 405 (October 1998), pp. 281-283. Appendix 10 gives details.

Pennines to Carlisle and down the west coast through Cumberland, Lancashire and the Chester archdeaconry of Coventry and Lichfield diocese to Ludlow, much as Layton originally visualised in his 4 June letter. Knowles attempted to give some colour and feel to the Visitation, purely from Visitatorial correspondence: ‘they then took the fork at Scotch Corner and made for Barnard Castle’.⁸⁴⁹ However, the revised *Compendium* listing gives a reasonably clear view of progress beyond what other analysts of the document have been able to contemplate. Undoubtedly, criss-crossing of the route occurs within the momentum of the ordered listing, as can readily be seen in Map 8. This does not suggest randomness, but the likelihood that the Commissioners occasionally worked separately. In addition, the manner in which Blytheman wrote up the entries in his Act book of compertes, may not have been in a strictly geographical way. Further, it is possible that groups of small houses were called to central points for ‘Visitation’.⁸⁵⁰ This means that their listing of compertes in the Visitation Act Book, would not necessarily be in a strictly logical geographical order.

Fresh evidence discovered by the author of this work in the CCCC MS 111, helps to further the understanding of the manner in which the Visitors organised themselves. This listing, titled, ‘Comparta magistro Rico Laiton et Tho Lighe legem doctoris in presentia William Blytheman notorium publici’ details religious houses with a net income of less than £200 per annum, identifying their monastic order, complement and founder.⁸⁵¹ The first title is ‘Coventry and Lichfield’ within which

⁸⁴⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 10 (LP, VIII, 822); T. Wright (ed.), *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of Monasteries*, Camden Society, New Series xi (1875), p. 256.

⁸⁴⁹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

⁸⁵⁰ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 32/37: ‘the nuns of Esholt in Airedale went in a body to St Oswalds near Pontefract to meet Dr Legh’.

⁸⁵¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 346.

the first two entries, Repton and Gresley, are correctly allocated. However, the remainder of the entries are principally from the York diocese with a few in the Lincoln diocese. It would, therefore, appear that Archbishop Parker's copyist omitted to include the diocesan titles.⁸⁵² The remaining titles in this Visitation are 'Carlisle diocese', 'Durham diocese' and 'Northumbria'.⁸⁵³ What is missing from this list are the entries for Lancashire (north of the river Ribble) and the archdeaconry of Chester, which were Layton and Legh's final stage of the Northern Visitation.⁸⁵⁴

In comparing the CCCC MS 111 list with the corrected *Compendium Compertorum* list, four observations can be made. First, the list of houses from Repton up to Richmond, St Martin's, in the amended 'Quire 1' of the corrected *Compendium Compertorum* binding (which identifies the first stage of the Visitors' journey north before they crossed into Durham diocese) is reflected similarly in the opening entries of CCCC MS 111.⁸⁵⁵ This confirms the deductions made about the errors currently existing in the *Compendium Compertorum* binding. Secondly, the CCCC MS 111 identifies houses which have previously not been recognised as having been visited. The present research makes it clear that the *Compendium Compertorum* listing does not include all the ecclesiastical institutions visited by Layton and Legh. Writing from Leicester priory, Layton told Cromwell, 'This morning we depart towards Lichfield church, and from thence to certain abbeys upon

⁸⁵² CCCC MS 111, fos. 346 - 348.

⁸⁵³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 348.

⁸⁵⁴ The grand total of religious shown in the complete manuscript of all the Visitations differs from the arithmetic total of entries by 195. The difference is largely made up of the missing Lancashire and archdeaconry of Chester entries, as well as Bangor diocese, demonstrating that Archbishop Parker's copyist either failed to reproduce the missing entries or the original document had already been mislaid.

⁸⁵⁵ CCCC MS 111, fos. 346/347. Interestingly, Healaugh Park (WR) and Calder (CU), which are identified after Richmond, St Martin, and clearly out of order, have been filled in at the end of the column, apparently because of accidental omission elsewhere.

Trent side, and so pass on to Southwell'.⁸⁵⁶ Legh, writing from Richmond, said he had been to Sherburn hospital and Hull. He links Hull with Mount Grace, and it is evident that he is referring to Hull Charterhouse.⁸⁵⁷ Southwell (NT), Sherburn (DU) and Hull Charterhouse (ER) are not however contained in the *Compendium Compertorum*.⁸⁵⁸

The CCCC MS 111 shows that Marrick nunnery (NR) was visited and most excitingly, five additional houses in Durham diocese: Wearmouth, Newcastle nunnery, Lindisfarne, Farne and Holystone.⁸⁵⁹ Also confirming that the CCCC MS 111 is not complete, five religious houses can be identified which are in the *Compendium Compertorum* but not CCCC MS 111. These are Breadsall (DE), St James, Derby (DE), St Mary, Derby (DE), Thicket (ER) and North Ferriby (ER). It can, therefore, be concluded that neither list is complete, and other excluded houses, such as Watton (ER), Lenton (NT), Newstead (NT) and Egglestone (NR) may also have been visited but without extant record.

Comparing the lists of religious houses and secular colleges within the *Compendium Compertorum* and the CCCC MS 111 with the Visitation correspondence, it is possible to see the speed at which Layton and Legh worked. Table 1, below, presumes Layton and Legh commenced the Visitation on 29

⁸⁵⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 131 - 132 (LP, IX, 1005). The letter was sent from Lichfield, but he wrote most, if not all, of it before his Visitation of Leicester priory.

⁸⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26 (LP, X, 288).

⁸⁵⁸ Hereafter, brackets after houses refer to county locations to aid the reader. See Appendix I for summary.

⁸⁵⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 348.

December⁸⁶⁰ and ended it on 27 February, the day before they set off back to London with the ‘clean book’ of compertes.

TABLE 1 Northern Visitation: rate of Visitation of religious houses and secular colleges

<u>Documented Period</u>	<u>Houses Visited</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Average rate over period (houses per day)</u>
29 Dec to 7 Jan (Roche)	18	10	1.8
7 Jan to 12 Jan (St Mary’s York)	19	5	3.8
12 Jan to 20 Jan (Richmond 1)	17	8	2.1
20 Jan to 26 Jan (Newcastle)	7	6	1.2
26 Jan to 3 Feb (Whitby)	15	8	1.9
3 Feb to 12 Feb (Richmond 2)	21	9	2.3
12 Feb to 17 Feb (Furness)	12	5	2.4
17 Feb to 23 Feb (Hornby)	c. 7	6	1.2
23 Feb to 27 Feb (Ludlow)	c. 13	4	3.25
Total	129	61	2.1

Some variation can be seen in the average of about two houses visited a day.⁸⁶¹

The comparatively low rate of 1.2 for the six days up to Newcastle reflects the brief interval with the bishop of Durham at his Bishop Auckland palace. The faster rates of

⁸⁶⁰ bearing in mind previous comments on the timing of Layton and Legh’s meeting. Table 1 includes only the religious institutions named in the *Compendium Compertorum* and CCC MS 111.

⁸⁶¹ Layton and Legh were at Richmond on two separate occasions, hence the designations Richmond 1 and Richmond 2.

over three houses per day on the St Mary's York and Ludlow runs, suggest some sort of division of labour to allow the Commissioners to undertake such extensive programmes. The last four day period, from Hornby to Ludlow, with its increased pace, perhaps reflects the imminence of the 29 February deadline for returning to London.⁸⁶²

Analysing the coverage that the Visitors achieved by diocese shows, in Table 2, that the Visitors set out to be as extensive as possible in their Visitation of religious houses.⁸⁶³

TABLE 2 Northern Visitation: comparison of total number of religious houses in Northern Diocese with number visited

<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Number of religious houses & cells</u>	<u>Number visited</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
York	88	74	84%
Durham	21	18	85%
Carlisle	6	6	100%
Coventry & Lichfield Diocese (Chester archdeaconry only)	12	11	92% ⁸⁶⁴
Total	127	109	85%

⁸⁶² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271) 'by Shrovetide'.

⁸⁶³ Table 2 excludes secular colleges and the Visitations at Lincolnshire diocese houses.

⁸⁶⁴ However, Vale Royal was not visited on the Northern Visitation as it had already been visited in September. See Section 2.3.2.

Gairdner stated that the Visitors examined only four out of ten houses in Yorkshire,⁸⁶⁵ which the above table clearly refutes. Coverage in the northern counties was probably even greater than the 85 per cent figure calculated above, given the fact that neither set of manuscripts is complete. There seems no reason to believe Layton and Legh were not being meticulous in their coverage of the north. The pressure they were under is not reflected in a shoddiness of coverage.

The third observation is that the comparison between the two manuscript listings may shed more light on variations in the way religious houses were visited. Woodward was the first to identify that ‘the nuns of Esholt in Airedale went in a body to St Oswalds, near Pontefract, to meet Dr Legh’,⁸⁶⁶ a distance of over twenty miles. This work has also shown that the canons of Little Dunmow travelled over eighteen miles for their Visitation by Legh at Coggeshall abbey.⁸⁶⁷ Looking again at Table 1, it is evident that for the period 7 to 12 January, the Visitors could not physically visit almost four houses per day, even if they did split up. It is during this period that Nostell, St Oswalds was visited, along with the nuns of Esholt, solely by Legh.⁸⁶⁸ The groupings of data in the two documents may suggest that Legh also had visited Hampole (WR) and Kirklees (WR) at St Oswalds. Similarly, Sinningthwaite (WR), Nun Appleton (WR) and Healaugh Park (WR) may have had their Visitation at Selby. This superficiality of inviting the inmates of a religious house⁸⁶⁹ to a central point for Visitation immediately reduced the width of questions the Commissioners could pose. As identified in Legh’s Visitation of East Anglia, it allowed only a small number of

⁸⁶⁵ LP, X, Preface, p. xlv.

⁸⁶⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 32/37. My thanks to Professor Woodward for kindly giving me the reference for his discovery, PRO, SP5 / 2, fo. 36v.

⁸⁶⁷ See Legh and ap Rice Visitation, Section 2.3.2.

⁸⁶⁸ PRO, SP 5 / 2, fo. 36v.

⁸⁶⁹ Most of the predicted examples appear to be nunneries.

items to be checked: presumably gaining individual acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy, cataloguing a narrow list of crimes as well as obtaining founder and some financial data.

With the large number of houses to be visited, in such a short time and with the need to co-ordinate the transfer of religious from isolated areas to central monasteries, such as St Oswalds, there was evidently need for formal planning. This might explain why Layton arrived at Lichfield cathedral a week before Legh: he needed to issue and circulate instructions to the various monasteries so that the Visitation could be effectively accomplished in the limited time scale. On the morning before he arrived at Lichfield, Layton had written that they intended ‘to be at York within a day after the 12th day ... and thus to make speed with diligence and true knowledge of everything is our intent’.⁸⁷⁰ The comment demonstrated that Layton had a time scale in mind from the outset, and it was in Lichfield that he had the opportunity to plan it in detail. The degree of planning becomes evident when Legh is at Roche abbey on 7 January, with Layton apparently elsewhere on the Visitation.⁸⁷¹ Legh had been instructed by Cromwell to visit the Axeholme Charterhouse but ‘the way was such I could not conveniently do’. Instead he sent a servant to Axeholme with letters and as a result the monks sent ‘their proctor’ to Legh at Roche abbey with their signed and sealed acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy.⁸⁷² As Axeholme was twenty miles away from Roche, Legh must have planned this exercise in advance, knowing where he would be located. It is difficult to believe that he could remain at Roche for a day or less to co-ordinate such a project, given the distance involved. Possibly Legh also

⁸⁷⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 163r (LP, IX, 1005).

⁸⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 40r (LP, X, 50). Layton did not sign the letter and was not mentioned in it. He wrote or was referred to in the other five extant letters Legh signed in the Northern Visitation.

⁸⁷² PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 40r (LP, X, 50).

used his planned stay at Roche as a focal point for the Blythe (NT), Mattersey (NT) and Wallingwells (NT) religious to come to him for their Visitation.

The Fourth observation is that, while the ordering of religious houses between the two listings is broadly in the same sequence, there are differences, apart from the omissions previously mentioned.⁸⁷³ These differences are instructive because their existence removes the possibility that one of the lists was sourced directly from the other. These lists have, therefore, been compiled from other sources, independent of each other.

The basic source of all information from the Northern Visitation is the Visitation Act Book, referred to by Blytheman. Blytheman mentioned that during the interrogation at Furness abbey (LA) 'one Akers, clerk to Doctor Legh, ... wrote ... in the book of the Acts of the said Visitation'.⁸⁷⁴ At the end of the Northern Visitation, Blytheman provided Cromwell, from the Act Book, with 'a clean book of the compertes' which 'I have made'. These were then personally delivered by Layton and Legh on their return to London.⁸⁷⁵

The flow of information of the Visitation Act book to the extant sources can, therefore, be described as in Diagram 1.

⁸⁷³ Bear in mind the CCCC MS 111 excludes houses with a *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income (VE) greater than £200 pa (with the exception of Thurgarton).

⁸⁷⁴ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77v.

⁸⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 90r (LP, X, 363). He also intended to 'shortly bring you a double thereof myself' when he returned to London week commencing 14 March. However, he would have arrived, probably, after the Suppression Act was passed.

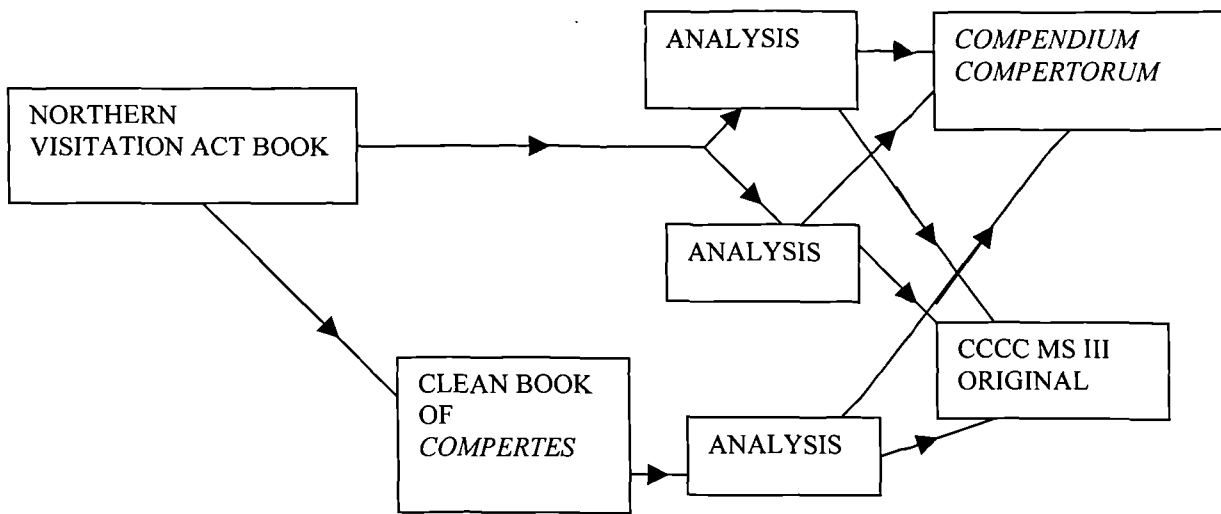


Diagram 1. Processing of Information from Northern Visitation Act Book

The intermediate analysis could have taken more than single stages, as information was refined and re-tabulated, depending on the requirements of Cromwell or indeed the king. This would help explain why the ordering of houses between the *Compendium Compertorum* and CCCC MS 111 demonstrate differences, yet the common information they contain (the founders data), is the same.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁶ Such is the detail that the copyist error in CCCC MS 111, fo. 347 can be easily identified: he has copied the founder information for a batch of sixteen houses, in many cases one step out of alignment. Outside the group, only one of the remaining forty-two comparative examples is different (Neasham).

Up until now, the nature of the northern *Compendium Compertorum* manuscript has been misunderstood. Confusion has resulted from the positioning in LP of Blytheman's letter noting he was sending from Ludlow Castle 'the clean book of compertes' to Cromwell.⁸⁷⁷ The following LP entry details the *Compendium Compertorum* itself,⁸⁷⁸ implying that the *Compendium Compertorum* is the clean book of compertes. After all, the manuscript is headed '*Comperta*'⁸⁷⁹ and the parchment cover is titled, '*Compendium Compertorum per Doctorem Layton et Doctorem Legh in Visitatione ...*'.⁸⁸⁰ Woodward took this view, noting the '*Compendium Compertorum*, or "Book of Findings", which Layton and Legh produced after their northern tour'.⁸⁸¹ More recently Hoyle repeats Knowles' view that the *Compendium Compertorum* represented 'the Visitation returns' of the Northern Visitation.⁸⁸² This direct link between Layton and Legh's Visitation and the *Compendium Compertorum* has, therefore, been widely accepted but this is a false supposition. The *Compendium Compertorum* is not a document directly emanating from the Northern Visitation, but represents a refined, edited and perhaps manipulated document, originating from Layton and Legh's Visitation. This can be proved in a number of ways.

First of all, the *Compendium Compertorum* is not the same summary of compertes which Blytheman stated 'I have made'.⁸⁸³ They are not in Blytheman's handwriting. Nor are they in the hand of John ap Rice as Gairdner, the editor of LP

⁸⁷⁷ LP, X, 341.

⁸⁷⁸ LP, X, 342.

⁸⁷⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 93r.

⁸⁸⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 91r.

⁸⁸¹ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 32.

⁸⁸² R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

⁸⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 90r (LP, X, 363) - my underlining.

thought, resulting in its general acceptance.⁸⁸⁴ The northern *Compendium Compertorum* is in the handwriting of the notary Robert Warmington,⁸⁸⁵ who was present occasionally with Legh and ap Rice in their Visitation up until October 1535, and whose handwriting is identifiable in the surrender of Marton priory in February 1536. He was in London at the time of the conclusion of Layton and Legh's Visitation.⁸⁸⁶ The deduction that Warmington prepared this document in London is assisted by the fact that, from the abrasions in the original manuscript, the document was filed as a scroll and not as a letter, folded and sealed, which its despatch from Ludlow would otherwise have necessitated. The manuscript also excludes Blytheman's (or any) notarial mark, which he would normally have affixed.⁸⁸⁷ This helps preclude the outside possibility that Blytheman oversaw Warmington's copying up the compertes.

The neatness of the northern *Compendium Compertorum* manuscript further suggests that it was copied up in a stable environment. By contrast, ap Rice's scruffy *Compendium Compertorum* extracts, sent to Cromwell during the Norwich diocese Visitation in November, reflect the indifferent conditions of a Visitor actually in the field. Clearly, Warmington copied the *Compendium Compertorum* from a base document. The entry for Baysdale nunnery identifies a correction under the founder entry – 'Comes Northumbr' has been crossed out and 'Radulphus Evers milet' has been added in. The next entry is Handale nunnery, where the founder is 'Comes

⁸⁸⁴ LP, X, 342, p. 143. I wish to thank Professor Logan for his doggedness in querying this attribution, and motivating me to identify the scribe.

⁸⁸⁵ This has never before been realised. For Warmington's signature and notarial mark from which the proof emerges (D. O. M.), see Linc. A, Bishop's Register XXVI, fo. 210v.

⁸⁸⁶ See Appendix 13.

⁸⁸⁷ see, for example, BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 189r for Blytheman's notarial mark on the abbot of Fountains resignation: 'concordat cum registrar' and also relating to extracts from the Act Book of Furness abbey in PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 79r.

Northumbr'.⁸⁸⁸ It can, therefore, be deduced that in writing up the *Compendium Compertorum*, Warmington accidentally got ahead of himself in noting the founder at Baysdale. A thirty-one sided document, with only this one obvious copying error, reflects an uncommon need for neatness and accuracy.

Perhaps the most stunning piece of evidence that Warmington compiled the *Compendium Compertorum* in London relates to the watermarks in the manuscript. In Appendix 13, the two particular types of snake watermarks used in the folio sheets of the *Compendium Compertorum* are identified. Over a four year period, during which I have analysed, in detail, original manuscripts of the 1530s at over fifty national and regional repositories, I have never seen the snake watermark elsewhere, except in one instance. A draft 'Act' of parliament, seeking monastic reformation, referring to the monastic Visitation and in the handwriting of Robert Warmington also has the same two types of snake watermark.⁸⁸⁹ While only forensic examination would positively identify the paper as from the same stock as the *Compendium Compertorum*, the row of coincidences is too great to be accidental. The draft 'Act' and the *Compendium Compertorum* were written up at the same time. It is inconceivable that Thomas Cromwell was having draft 'Acts' copied up in a draughty chamber in far away Ludlow Castle: the draft 'Act' and the *Compendium Compertorum* were being written up in London under his control.

From these conclusions, it is clear that the *Compendium Compertorum* is not the document sent by Blytheman from Ludlow. It is a document which reflects sifting and editing, consistent with analysis somewhat removed from the original source.

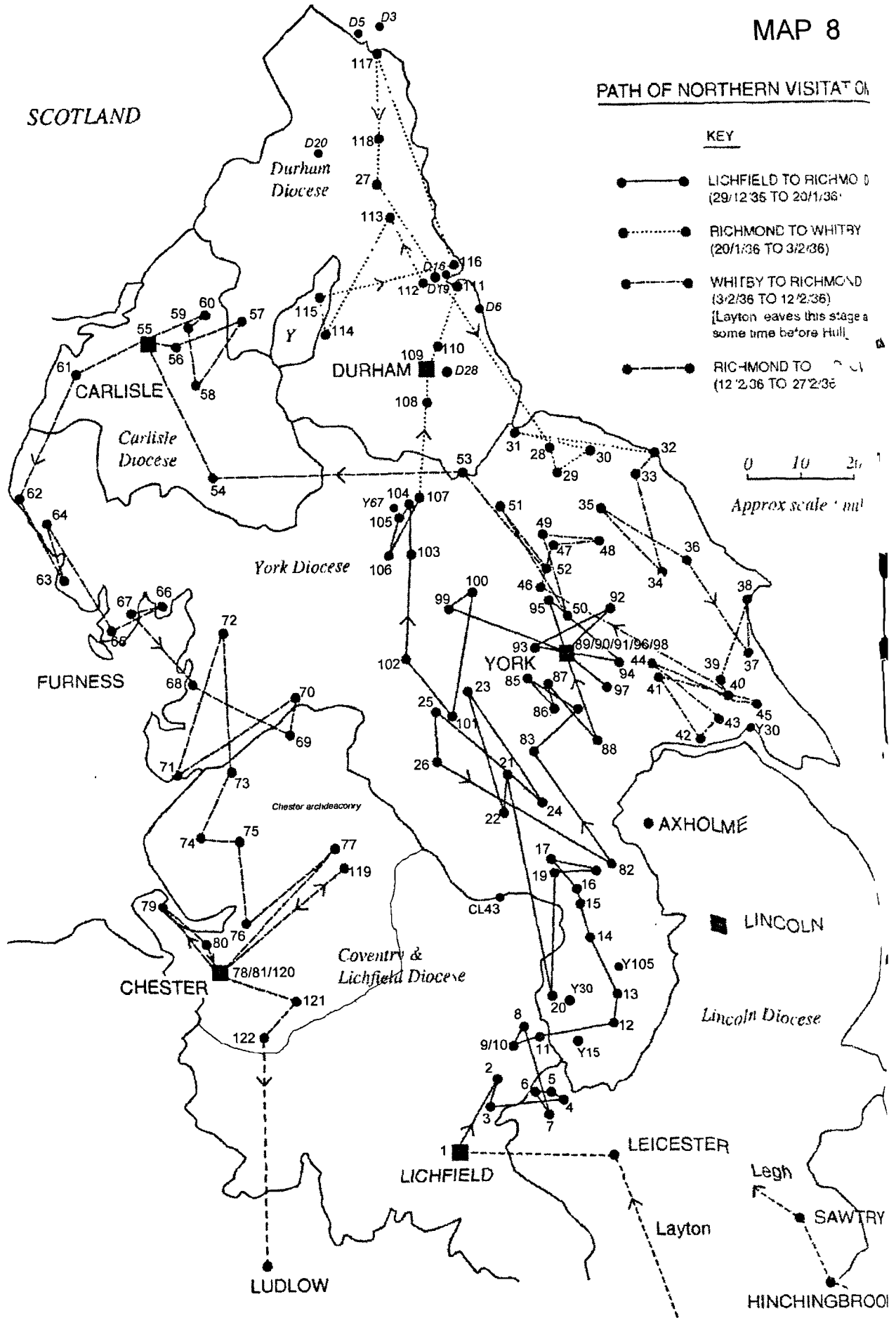
⁸⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 97r.

⁸⁸⁹ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 123r - 127r. This draft Act is discussed in Section 4.3.2.

This will be demonstrated in Section 2.4.2, particularly with the detailed evidence obtained at Furness abbey. In effect, the heading on the vellum cover (in a later hand) which has historically associated the *Compendium Compertorum* with Layton and Legh is incorrect. The contents of the *Compendium Compertorum* represent such an editing of their Visitation Act Book that to link it directly with Layton and Legh is to do them more of an injustice than they deserve.

MAP 8

PATH OF NORTHERN VISITATION



2.4.2 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Layton and Dr Legh in the Northern Visitation

The path of the Visitors, using the corrected ordering, is shown in Map 8.⁸⁹⁰ As has previously been stated, it is not being suggested that the ordering of the *Compendium Compertorum* is the strict order in which houses were visited. What is clear from Map 8 is the momentum and direction of the Visitation. The path of the Visitation can now be better comprehended, allowing a clearer interpretation of associated correspondence. The following section gives some examples of the actions and logistics of the Visitation process that can now be posited or deduced.

Leaving Lichfield on or about 29 December, it is likely the Visitors immediately separated. Legh possibly finished off the remaining houses in north west Leicestershire (Lincoln Diocese)⁸⁹¹ with Layton completing the earlier work of Cave in visiting the remaining houses in the Stafford archdeaconry.⁸⁹² That Cave had already visited Burton on Trent, Tutbury and possibly Darley, explains for the first time, why these obvious gaps appear in the *Compendium Compertorum* listing.

The Visitors then entered the Nottingham archdeaconry of York province. It is possible that here the Visitors again remained divided, with one continuing along Trentside, visiting Shelford (12), Thurgarton (13) and Rufford (14), which were mentioned in the *Compendium Compertorum* and also visiting the unrecorded Lenton

⁸⁹⁰ Hereafter bracketed numbers after religious institutions refer to the map references for Map 8. Appendix 10 also details the map references.

⁸⁹¹ i. e. Garadon (4), Langley (5), Bredon (6) and Grace Dieu (7).

⁸⁹² i. e. Repton (2), Gresley (3), Breadsall (8), St James (9), St Mary (10) and Dale (11).

(Y15) and Southwell College (Y105).⁸⁹³ Meanwhile, the other Visitor could have continued to the west of Nottinghamshire, visiting Felley (20), Welbeck (15), Worksop (16) and Wallingwells (19). This circuit would have passed Beauvale Charterhouse (Y30), which had already been visited by Legh and ap Rice in August when they oversaw the election of the new prior;⁸⁹⁴ this circuit would also have included the Visitation of Beauchief (CL43), on the Yorkshire/Derbyshire border.⁸⁹⁵

Thurgarton priory requires a special mention as there appears to have been an attempt, unknown until now, to close the priory as a result of the Visitation. A battered manuscript lists nine religious houses with their *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income.⁸⁹⁶ All seven of the houses which were suppressed as a result of the Visitation (Marton, Hornby, Bilsington, Dover, Langdon, Folkestone and Tilty) are on the list.⁸⁹⁷ One of the two remaining houses on the list is Horsham St Faith priory, where it has been shown Legh sequestered the assets in November 1535, probably as an attempt at closure.⁸⁹⁸ The other house on the list is Thurgarton.

Supporting evidence on an attempt to close Thurgarton is contained in CCCC MS 111. This large list of houses represents those of less than £200 net income, projected for closure as a result of the Suppression Act. However, one of the four

⁸⁹³ Layton had earlier noted Southwell was on the itinerary, see BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 163r (LP, IX, 1005).

⁸⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

⁸⁹⁵ Previously noted as erroneously included in Bedyll's circuit, CCCC MS 111, fo. 346.

⁸⁹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 239, fo. 249r (LP, Addenda I, 1038).

⁸⁹⁷ LP, IX, 816.

⁸⁹⁸ See Legh's Itinerary, Section 2.3.2.

houses greater than £200 included in the list is Thurgarton,⁸⁹⁹ perhaps suggesting a continued attempt at closure, even though it was outside the confines of the Act.

A possible reason for targeting Thurgarton is identified in the *Compendium Compertorum*, where its Visitation in early January 1536 listed two thirds of its canons guilty of crimes, and eight out of its complement of eighteen requesting to be released from vows. Such is the extensive list of canons identified in the *Compendium Compertorum* that seventeen of the eighteen can be named. With the king noted as founder, it is possible that Layton or Legh attempted to pressurise the house to surrender itself in the same way as the smaller houses of Langdon, Folkestone and Dover had done in November.⁹⁰⁰

Approximately ten days after leaving Lichfield, Legh is positively identified at Roche abbey, where he appears to have remained for a couple of days.⁹⁰¹ His recommendation to the monks of Axeholme, that the election of a new prior should be left to Cromwell, was successful. As a result, the proctor of Axeholme, who Legh saw as the likely candidate for the vacancy, had come to Roche where Legh instructed him to go to London with Legh's own letter.⁹⁰²

After Roche, the Visitors completed the Visitation of the Nottingham archdeaconry and entered the West Riding. At this stage Legh was at Nostell (21)

⁸⁹⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 346: complement noted as eighteen. The others are Titchfield, Robertsbridge and Kirkham. An attempt may also have been made to close Robertsbridge during the Visitation. See *FOR* p. 44.

⁹⁰⁰ In the event, Thurgarton was not surrendered until June 1538.

⁹⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 40 (*LP*, X, 50).

⁹⁰² The proctor of Axeholme in his letter to Cromwell, PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 101 - 102 (*LP*, X, 104), of 15 January, confirmed the contents of Legh's letter and that he had been to see Legh, but had fallen sick and sent on 'master doctors' letters. N.B. the previous prior had been executed on 4 May 1535,

where the ‘prioress and convent’ of Esholt came to see him.⁹⁰³ Legh wrote that, on 11 January, he and Layton were with Archbishop Lee of York according to the instructions of Cromwell ‘to injoin him to preach and teach the word of God’.⁹⁰⁴ The archbishop’s correspondence at this time was all addressed from his palace of Cawood, so we can assume that is where Layton and Legh interviewed him.⁹⁰⁵ Cawood, south of York, was very near Selby (84) and Nun Appleton (86) and so perhaps we can assume they had reached, fo. 104r of the *Compendium Compertorum* by about this time.⁹⁰⁶

Underlining the independent manner of the two Commissioners, both Layton and Legh sent separate letters to Cromwell ‘from York’. Layton commenced his letter stating that ‘here in Yorkshire we find great corruption amongst persons religious, even like as we did in the south so much in the head as in the limbs and worse if worse may be, in kinds of knavery’.⁹⁰⁷ He then gives examples of this ‘knavery’ and describes, in Latin, how religious men and women prevent conception of offspring. Analysis of the *Compendium Compertorum* reveals that no such ‘knavery’ is specifically mentioned. Of the approximately thirty-two institutions recorded in the *Compendium Compertorum*, that had been visited by this stage, about a quarter revealed alleged crimes against the abbot, prior or sub prior, which hardly reflected ‘the head as in the limbs’. However, there are many named claims of

and the issue of submission to the Supremacy can still be seen as a warm one in both Legh’s and the proctor’s correspondence.

⁹⁰³ See G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 32 & 37; PRO, SP5 / 2, fo. 36v. This is ignored by M. C. Cross & N. Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series vol. cl (1995), p. 586, who in their Esholt entry utilise Woodward as a source (and his page number 36/37) yet still ascribe the Visitation at the monastery to ‘Layton and Legh’.

⁹⁰⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 125 (LP, X, 91).

⁹⁰⁵ G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), p. 765 makes this point.

⁹⁰⁶ See Appendix 10.

⁹⁰⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 138 (LP, X, 92) - ‘tam in capite quam in membris’. My underlining.

‘incontinence’, for example, five monks named at Selby, seven at Pontefract, four at St Oswalds and seven at Thurgarton. Of the ten nunneries listed in the *Compendium Compertorum* that would have been visited by the time Layton wrote from York, half had been noted with named nuns having offspring.⁹⁰⁸

In his letter, Layton continued, ‘this day we begin with St Mary’s abbey whereat we suppose to find much evil disposition both in the abbot and the convent whereof, God willing, I shall certify you in my next letter’. Possibly he was already aware, from his interview with Archbishop Lee, that at the archbishop’s Visitation, the abbot’s ‘suspicious intimate company’ had been noted.⁹⁰⁹ In the event, the *Compendium Compertorum* noted no guilt associated with the abbot and, in fact, none of the sixty or so monks identified with sexual incontinence with women. In total, the Visitors found six monks guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones* and one, John Lawson, guilty of sodomy with a boy and *per voluntarias pollutiones*.⁹¹⁰ In the event, therefore, Layton did not find as ‘much evil disposition’ as he had predicted, with only ten per cent of the monks of St Mary’s allegedly guilty of crimes. If Layton had been manufacturing evidence, this example suggests, given his preconceptions regarding the monastery, that he could have done a better job.

The majority of Layton’s letter, however, was more concerned with his attempts to become the dean of York, with Cromwell’s assistance. A *Remembrance of Cromwell*, dated around 17 November 1535 stated, ‘Item to remember Doctor Layton

⁹⁰⁸ For *Compendium Compertorum* statistics, refer to Appendix 10, sheet 1.

⁹⁰⁹ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 34, 35. See also LP, VIII, 964, 965, 966; LP, IX, 158 (1) & (2); also The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York, York Episcopal Register, 28, Lee, 1531- 1544, fos. 96v, 98r; and ‘Visitations in the Diocese of York by Archbishop Edward Lee 1534 - 35’, unsigned article, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xvi (1902), pp. 434, 447.

and the treasurer of York for the deanery'.⁹¹¹ Layton related from York that a supposed agreement between the dean and the treasurer of York regarding the position of dean had broken down. Perhaps this inability of the dean to vacate his position in favour of the treasurer was viewed by Layton as his own opportunity, as, in concluding his report on this matter, Layton wrote in an obsequious manner:

‘Wherefore I shall desire your mastership to continue your good mind towards me and in the meantime you shall be fast assured of my faithful service in all such your affairs as you commit unto me and for no corruption or lucre, from my loyalty to swerve in doing my prince’s commandment for discharge, which hath put your trust and affiance unto me’⁹¹²

This is a fairly clear statement linking the likelihood of Layton’s personal progression with his ‘faithful service’ to Cromwell in any matter. The letter is a testament to Layton’s ambition and its references to the Visitation are a subordinate issue.

Legh’s letter to Cromwell of 13 January is also revealing, as it mentioned nothing at all regarding the monastic Visitation.⁹¹³ The letter identified that on 11 January, Layton and Legh were formally visiting the archbishop of York ‘according to your pleasure and precepts’. The joint Visitors were not here to identify scandal and crimes, but to pressure the archbishop and others ‘here in his jurisdiction’ to ‘preach and teach the word of God ... and also in the knowledge concerning the

⁹¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 104v.

⁹¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 51r (LP, IX, 836). See also PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 152 (LP, IX, 163).

⁹¹² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 138r (LP, X, 92). Layton eventually became dean of York in July 1539, see John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300 - 1541*, vol. 6, Northern Province (IHR, London, 1963), p. 9.

⁹¹³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 125r/v (LP, X, 91).

prerogative power that the kings grace has'. In other words, their visit was primarily focussed on ensuring the Royal Supremacy was widely preached. Its effect appears similar to the letter from the king and Cromwell to, apparently, all bishops, dated 7 January, a few days earlier.⁹¹⁴ Layton and Legh were clearly pursuing the issue of preaching, on Cromwell's behalf, before Lee received his copy of the letters.⁹¹⁵

The Visitors had also told Lee to send Cromwell 'his first, second and third foundations, whereupon he enjoys his office and prerogative power'. This is, of course, the same demand made of religious houses in the concluding part of their Injunctions. Such was the evident fear of this demand that Lee had organised an exhaustive copy of his foundations, donations, bulls, concessions, privileges and rescripts, in a lengthy scroll, by the next day. This scroll details the commission that Layton and Legh had at this time: 'Visitaciones per totum provenciam Eboracu comissarios'.⁹¹⁶ Clearly, this would allow Visitation of any ecclesiastical aspect of York province.

However, it appears from Legh's letter that it had not been previous practice for bishops to be commanded to send their foundation documents to Cromwell. Legh said, 'you will be glad and to think it meet that every bishop were in like wise ordered'. Legh saw the 'many things worthy reformation' contained in the foundations as a means of countering those 'poor ignorant persons, now by blindness and ignorance seduced, thereby be brought to light and knowledge'. The amendments of the foundation are, therefore, a further means of enforcing the Supremacy. Legh

⁹¹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 33r/v (LP, X, 45) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 8r/v (LP, X, 46).

⁹¹⁵ Lee received the formal letters from the king and Cromwell on 23 January, see BL, Cotton Cleo. E V, fo. 301r (LP, X, 172).

⁹¹⁶ PRO, SC 11 / 766 (LP, X, 86), dated 12 January.

was recommending to Cromwell similar Injunctions ‘to be ministered to other bishops as shall be thought to your wisdom most convenient’. This tactic appears a continuation of Legh’s attempts, reflected in the letters, inhibiting the use of bishops’ ordinary powers during the Visitation to emphasise the derivation of authority of the episcopate. Legh clearly felt he had his finger on the pulse regarding the papal sympathies of the bishops: ‘for such has been their juggling heretofore, as the king and you know well enough’.⁹¹⁷ The letter from Legh, therefore, is similar to Layton’s: an underlining of the promotion of the Royal Supremacy.

In analysing archbishop Lee’s letter to Cromwell also on 13 January, it becomes only too evident that the Commissioners gave him a tough time, presumably with the expectation of Cromwell’s approval. Lee wrote that ‘Doctor Layton at his late being with me, as the Visitor by you deputed, examined me very sore and rigorously by the kings commandment, of certain words pretended to be spoken by me, to the general confessor of Syon’.⁹¹⁸ This seems a different topic from that which Legh wrote about concerning Layton’s and his visit of 11 January. At the end of Legh’s letter he told Cromwell, ‘My answer to the said surmise I have made in a letter to his highness which with these I send to your hands’.⁹¹⁹ This letter to the king is, in fact, dated 14 January, the day after the one to Cromwell, and it commences, ‘Please it your highness to understand that Doctor Layton at his and Doctor Legh his being with me as your Visitors the 13 January sore and very strictly examined me of certain words, which be pretended to be spoken by me to the general confessor of Syon’.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 262r (LP, X, 424). See discussion of Bishops’ Inhibition in Section 3.3.

⁹¹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 86r (LP, X, 93).

⁹¹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 86v (LP, X, 93) - my underlining.

⁹²⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 238r (LP, X, 99).

It would, therefore, appear from this series of letters that the Visitors had not one but two interviews with Archbishop Lee, the first on 11 January, at the behest of Cromwell, on the issue of preaching and the second on 13 January, at the command of the king. As the issue related to Syon was not raised on 11 January, it can be deduced that the king's messenger arrived after the 11th to instruct Layton⁹²¹ (and Legh) to quiz Lee on a matter of suspected treason. It is not surprising Lee writes so lengthily and emotionally to defend himself. Perhaps the king's messenger arrived on 13 January, the day of the interview, and interrupted the Visitation because, that morning, Layton had written, 'This day we begin with St Mary's abbey' (91).⁹²²

In York, the Visitors would also have examined St Leonard's hospital (89), York cathedral (90), Holy Trinity (98) and some nearby religious houses – Kirkham (92), Nun Monkton (93), Wilberforce (94), Marton (95), Clementhorpe (96), Thicket (97) – all within a ten-mile radius of York. From later correspondence it is evident that the Visitation of Marton, at this stage (before 19 January), gave Layton the opportunity to press for its closure in February.⁹²³

Moving from the York area, the Visitors' first call was to Fountains (99) at which, on 19 January, they convinced Abbot William Thirsk to resign.⁹²⁴ The resignation of this abbot demonstrates the Visitors were now fully using the powers deputed to them. Up until now, while their commissions enabled them to deprive

⁹²¹ It is not surprising that Archbishop Lee mentions only Layton's name in his letter to Cromwell. Layton would be expected to take the lead in this issue as he had, along with Bedyll, been examining the nuns and priests at Syon immediately before embarking on the Northern Visitation. See BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 152 (LP, IX, 954) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 130 (IX, 986).

⁹²² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 138 (LP, X, 92).

⁹²³ PRO, E 322 / 148 (LP, IX, 816).

⁹²⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 289 (LP, X, 131). Thirsk's annuity/resignation looks like a very rushed document; tightly folded, it was possibly sent to Cromwell enclosed with BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136/7.

‘delinquents of their office’, the Visitors had made recommendations to Cromwell after the Visitation, rather than obtaining resignations themselves during a Visitation.⁹²⁵ It would be naïve to suggest they were accomplishing the resignation of the abbot at such a large house, without some previous instruction from Cromwell. Thirsk may well have fallen out of favour with Cromwell over the Rievaulx election in 1533, a protracted affair in which Legh was actively involved.⁹²⁶ In Layton’s letter informing Cromwell of Thirsk’s resignation, he also referred to the likelihood of obtaining the abbot of Whitby’s ‘deprivation’ when they visit the priory, but this seems prompted by Cromwell.⁹²⁷

Of course, the main incentive for the Crown of obtaining an abbot’s resignation was the ‘first fruits’ arising from the installation of a successor. Layton notes that ‘the first fruits to the king is a £1000’ and a more direct incentive is the 600 marks promised to Cromwell by Marmaduke Bradley if he becomes abbot. It is probably with this sort of financial advantage in mind that Layton underlines the Visitors’ ability to bring about resignations, by telling Cromwell, ‘and we suppose that many other of the best abbots, more after they have communed with your mastership and us, will come to like preferment’.⁹²⁸ This comment suggests that more abbot vacancies are likely to occur, requiring replacement by ‘the best abbots’. Possibly Layton’s view of ‘best abbot’ is reflected in his description of Marmaduke Bradley who, he claimed, was ‘abiding upon’ a prebend of Ripon College, which he had inherited: ‘the wisest monk within England of that coat and well learned, 20 years officer and ruler of all that house [i.e. Fountains] a wealthy fellow’. Overall there appears a note

⁹²⁵ F. D. Logan, ‘Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation’, English Historical Review, 103 (1988), p. 661

⁹²⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1966), pp. 55-57, tells the story.

⁹²⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136r/v (LP, X, 137).

of cynicism about Bradley's credentials and it is money, not monastic reform, which encourages his candidature for the vacancy of abbot.

Gaining Thirsk's resignation appears to have been difficult. Layton lists the Articles of accusation: 'so greatly dilapidated his house, wasted their woods, notoriously keeping 6 whores, defamed here *a toto populo*'. However, it appears it took two days of examination, 'one day denying these articles with many more, the next day following the same, confessing thus manifestly incurring perjury'. Layton stated that Thirsk confessed he had 'committed theft and sacrilege' in selling jewels and plate to 'Warren the Goldsmith'.⁹²⁹ However, the *Compendium Compertorum* noted William Thirsk, 'former abbot', guilty only of incontinence with seven married women, none of the other alleged crimes are revealed.⁹³⁰ A clear difference between the 'six whores' noted in Layton's letter and the seven mentioned in the *Compendium Compertorum* seems a little odd. Perhaps the difference between accusations and the truth are better identified in Thirsk's resignation, signed by Layton, Legh and Blytheman, where no reference is made to resignation through immorality or other crimes. The document is a record of Thirsk agreeing to resign in exchange for an annual pension of one hundred marks.⁹³¹ Thirsk's successor may well have said 'he ruled naughtily', but this was not admitted in the formal resignation.

The Articles referred to by Layton appear to suggest detailed questioning to find examples of Thirsk's misrule. The economic items in the Articles appear a direct reflection of the claims made in the time of Wolsey by certain of the 'convent and

⁹²⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 137v (LP, X, 137) - my underlining.

⁹²⁹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136r (LP, X, 137).

⁹³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 105v, 106r.

⁹³¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 289 (LP, X, 131).

brethren' to the Earl of Northumberland. They had alleged to the earl, 'the abbot there doth not endeavour himself like a discreet father towards the said convent and the profit of the house, but hath against the same as well sold and wasted the great part of all their store in cattle, as also their woods'.⁹³² Cross and Vickers are probably correct in deducing that Thirsk had 'fallen foul of a clique within the abbey'.⁹³³ The thirty-two inmates did not evade scrutiny either, with five in the *Compendium Compertorum*, excluding the 'former abbot', being found guilty of sexual incontinence with women, two guilty of sodomy (Gawin Barwyk with five boys and Thomas Brown with a boy and *per voluntarias pollutiones*).⁹³⁴

The next day, 20 January, Layton was at Richmond (probably Lee's residence there).⁹³⁵ Although the letter is also signed Thomas Legh, it is not his normal signature in the style which he consistently used throughout the Royal Visitation.⁹³⁶ Legh, in every other instance of his signature in Visitational correspondence, writes 'Your ever assured Thomas Legh, Dr' with the 'Dr' being ornately formed. Also, in the Northern Visitation it is quite evident who the senior Commissioner is, because Layton, in all other joint letters, even one written by Legh, places his signature first with Legh's underneath. Many of these conventions disappear in this letter, written by Layton. Layton's signature is followed on the same line (in Legh's hand) by 'and Thomas Legh';⁹³⁷ an inch space exists below Layton's signature, enough for Legh to

⁹³² J. R. Walbran (ed.), *Memorials of the Abbey of Fountains*, vol. 1, Surtees Society, vol. 42 (1863), p. 252. Note: p. 253 identifies a contract note for sale of certain woods.

⁹³³ M. C. Cross & N. Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series vol. cl (1995), p. 117.

⁹³⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 105v.

⁹³⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136, 137 (LP, X, 137).

⁹³⁶ Legh's signature is an interesting study. In the Norwich diocese Visitation he invariably cramps his signature under the final line of the letter. Sometimes there is the hint that he may have signed the letters before ap Rice had finished writing them. Certainly, his own letter from Norwich, PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 69, has the place and date of writing partially over the signature, and to its left hand side.

⁹³⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 137r.

have signed there if he wished. This quirk may help support the broad logic of the ordering in the *Compendium Compertorum*, because between Fountains (99) and St Martin's Richmond (107)⁹³⁸ are the important abbeys of Kirkstall (101), Bolton (102) and Jervaulx (103), as well as the wealthy college of Ripon (100): it seems likely that while Layton made his way immediately to Richmond after visiting Fountains, Legh continued with the Visitation, finishing off these houses in West Yorkshire before (probably) rejoining Layton at Richmond.⁹³⁹ Obviously all these houses, given their geographical location, could not have been visited in a day, which the dating otherwise suggests. It is possible the signature quirk indicates Legh's absence on 20 January and his hurriedly signing the document the day after.

At Richmond, a number of smaller houses were visited: Easby, St Agatha's (104), Ellerton (105), Coverham (106), Marrick (Y67),⁹⁴⁰ another instance where the inmates of these houses probably made their way to Richmond for their Visitation. At this stage, it seems likely that the Visitors were accompanied by John Dakyn, vicar general of the archdeaconry of Richmond. In Layton's Visitation of Chichester diocese and in Legh and ap Rice's stay in Cambridge, there are clues to local ecclesiastical assistance and other support. The widespread nature of the Visitation and its speedy completion required knowledge which the Visitors would be unlikely to possess, despite their claims of intimate knowledge of the north. For example, in their journey north from Lichfield, the river Trent was spanned by few bridges and at the worst time of the year, along muddy, icy and windy trackways, the Visitors would

⁹³⁸ the last entry in Quire 1 of the corrected *Compendium Compertorum*.

⁹³⁹ Legh may alternatively have used his stay at Fountains as a base from which to visit Ripon (100), Kirkstall (101) and Bolton (102).

⁹⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 105v and CCCC MS 111, fo. 347.

need to be certain of the most direct and convenient route. Crossing the treacherous sands in Morecambe Bay, or crossing the Pennines, local guides would be imperative.

Previous knowledge regarding the state and condition of a religious house was also important to the visiting task. The Visitors were moving too speedily to gather extensive evidence from the local gentry regarding the conditions of their local houses and such evidence could not be more than superficial anyway. The *a toto populo* evidence regarding defamation is more likely therefore to have been in the Visitation returns of the local diocesan and his officers. Thus, the presence of a diocesan or archdeaconry official would seem to be a logical subservient assistant to have in the Royal Visitation. He would be able to give guidance on local conditions as well as evidence and rumour regarding religious houses.

John Dakyn probably was such an official in the Richmond archdeaconry, giving guidance to the Visitors to aid the efficiency of their work. Dakyn entertained Layton and Legh at his house in Kirkby Ravensworth, north of Richmond. A few months later, in the Pilgrimage of Grace, Dakyn alleged that it was his contact with Legh, Layton and Blytheman, that marked him as a 'traitor to the commons' and in danger of death.⁹⁴¹

From Richmond, the Visitors made their way northwards the twenty miles to the bishop of Durham's residence at Bishop Auckland, having been met three or four

⁹⁴¹ PRO, SP 1 / 117, fo. 212/213 (LP, XII(1), 788). A positive aspect of Legh's character appears from his association with Dakyn. Legh interceded for Dakyn who was implicated in the Pilgrimage of Grace. (See PRO, SP 1 / 124, fo. 10 (LP, XII(1), 502)). Dakyn's grateful response was to include prayers for the soul of Legh in the foundation statutes of Kirkby Ravensworth School (see T. D. Whitaker, An History of Richmondshire, vol. II (London, 1823), pp. 118/120. C. Clarkson, The

miles from his house with a great company of his servants and horse men'.⁹⁴² The first entry of Quire 2, in the corrected *Compendium Compertorum*, is 'Cuthbert, the bishop of Durham's household' (108). Legh told Cromwell about the hospitality received, 'The highest cheer and welfare that could be gotten in the county, we had, with large rewards both to us our servants and to all our company'.⁹⁴³ This suggests they spent at least one night at Bishop Auckland, either 23/24 or 24/25 January.⁹⁴⁴ As this stage of their journey, from Richmond to Newcastle, has the lowest Visitation rate,⁹⁴⁵ it seems likely their stay at Bishop Auckland and Durham was extended.

Both Layton and Legh, in their separate letters to Cromwell, painted the bishop of Durham, in terms of his hospitality and allegiance to the Royal Supremacy, in glowing terms. Layton thought that such was the bishop's learning on the matter of the Royal Supremacy 'me thought I was the veriest fool within England'.⁹⁴⁶ Legh reported that Tunstal's eloquence was such 'that without doubt I suppose no part of the realm to be so well established in the abolishment of the said usurped power as this quarter'.⁹⁴⁷ Their letters overlap in such extraordinary praise of the bishop that might be seen to reflect the 'large rewards' given to them, undermining Layton's comment only a few days before, 'and for no corruption or lucre from my loyalty to swerve in doing my prince's commandment for your discharge'.⁹⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, Layton and Legh were materially influenced. Layton had 'kinship' with Tunstal and

History and Antiquities of Richmond, (Richmond, 1821), p. 165 states that Dakyn 'had been concerned as a Commissioner to take an account of the religious houses in Richmondshire'.

⁹⁴² PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 193 (LP, X, 182).

⁹⁴³ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 193 (LP, X, 182).

⁹⁴⁴ Because Layton in his letter PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 193 (LP, X, 182) and Legh in his letter PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 195 (LP, X, 183), both of 26 January, started their letters writing enthusiastically about the bishop of Durham, indicating the immediacy of their late visit.

⁹⁴⁵ See Table 1.

⁹⁴⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 195r (LP, X, 183).

⁹⁴⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 193 (LP, X, 182).

⁹⁴⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 138 (LP, X, 92).

had only just been granted the rectory of Sedgfield the previous November.⁹⁴⁹

Similarly, Legh had been appointed to the mastership of Sherborne hospital, a few miles east of Durham, in September⁹⁵⁰ and while not directly a gift of the bishop, it is probable that he could have influenced or delayed the appointment.⁹⁵¹

Whatever 'rewards' Tunstal gave the Visitors, it was for one reason: for their support, to Cromwell, of the bishop's Royal Supremacy credentials. It was, after all, only eighteen months previously that Cromwell had organised a raid at Tunstal's houses at Stockton and Auckland as well as Durham abbey, to identify anti-Supremacy documents, while the bishop was on his journey to London. Even as late as August 1535, the new king's title of 'Supreme Head' was not being included in the bishop's register.⁹⁵² However, by January 1536, such was the continuing pressure of the Royal Supremacy issue that Tunstal needed to make his capitulation clear.

Just how timely was Tunstal's recognition of the threat he was under at that time is shown in correspondence from Cromwell that crossed with Layton and Legh's letters. A few days after the Visitors' departure, Tunstal received a letter from Layton on 28 or 29 January, which the Commissioner must have sent while he was in Northumberland. Layton had been told by Cromwell to write to Tunstal, telling him to 'appear [like the other bishops] before his grace immediately after the feast of the purification next coming to the intent they shall deliver up into his grace's hands all their bulls of confirmation or such other like as they have had from Rome at any

⁹⁴⁹ DUL - ASC, DSR I.2 Register, fo. 22v. C. Sturge, Cuthbert Tunstal: Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator (London, 1938), p. 202.

⁹⁵⁰ DUL - ASC, DSR I.2 Register, fo. 22r.

⁹⁵¹ Discussed later in this Section.

⁹⁵² G. Hinde (ed.), The Registers of Cuthbert Tunstal and James Pilkington, Surtees Society, vol. clxi (1952), pp. 59/60.

time'.⁹⁵³ The request contained in this letter looks very like the suggestion made by Legh on 13 January to Cromwell regarding the obtaining of all bishops' foundation statutes.⁹⁵⁴ Legh had continued to maintain his influence in formulating and implementing Royal Supremacy policy during the Visitation. Tunstal's response to Cromwell reflects the two pillars of Royal Supremacy policy – harassment and fear. Tunstal identified, as no doubt other bishops did, that only a few bulls were left remaining in his hands from earlier demands and pleaded 'that the kings grace will be as good to me ... seeing I had them by him and did renounce all things contained in them contrary to his prerogative royal'.⁹⁵⁵ Tunstal feared for his position: 'If in my age [I] lose my bishopric which I trust his grace of his goodness meaneth not to make me do by demanding of my bulls to be delivered into his hands'.⁹⁵⁶ It would appear, therefore, from Tunstal's point of view, that Layton and Legh's Visitation was principally concerned with implementing the Supremacy.

However, the Visitors did take the opportunity that lay within their commission of examining the lay members of the bishop's household at Auckland. They found Philip Dacre guilty of incest with the daughter of his own wife and Cuthbert Conyers in manifest fornication with a single woman called Layton. Even with these accusations the Visitors excuse the bishop by remarking that 'time and again they have been warned by the bishop, however, thus far they have not desisted but persisted in their sins'.⁹⁵⁷ Nowhere else in the *Compendium Compertorum* is any attempt made to support the head of a religious house over the crimes of any monks,

⁹⁵³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 249r (LP, X, 202).

⁹⁵⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 125r (LP, X, 91).

⁹⁵⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 249v (LP, X, 202).

⁹⁵⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 249/250 (LP, X, 202), dated 29 January. Feast of the Purification is 2 February.

canons or nuns. This very detail in the *Compendium Compertorum*, attempting to protect the bishop, reflects a continued attempt on the Visitors' part to do their duty, which helps support the *Compendium Compertorum* as not a fabrication. The entry under Tunstal's household also notes that there are many Scottish priests here holding a cure.⁹⁵⁸ This entry, in stark contrast to claims of sexual crimes, also suggests a note of truth not obscured by the later editing of the Commissioners' Visitation Act Book.

From Bishop Auckland the Commissioners were escorted by 'a great company of the bishop's servants and horsemen ... conducting us towards Durham abbey, more than half the way' of the ten mile journey.⁹⁵⁹ Layton reported of Durham abbey, 'your Injunctions can take none effect in some things, for there was never yet women within the abbey further than the church, nor they never came within the town'.⁹⁶⁰ This comment is reflected in the *Compendium Compertorum* where no crimes at all are noted in a monastery of some forty monks, excluding cells. The titular abbot of Durham was the bishop and so it is possible 'the rewards' had an effect on the Commissioners' judgement. If Layton and Legh had been instructed to find crime or examples to undermine monastic living, they were clearly not doing that at Durham. Durham abbey had a net income exceeded only by St Mary's, in the whole of York province. It would, therefore, seem unlikely the Visitors would escape notice if they tried to hide the crimes from Cromwell and the king. That the *Compendium Compertorum* reflected Layton's letter demonstrates that, whatever editing might

⁹⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 107v: 'hi sepius per Episcopum moniti ut se corrigant adhuc non disistunt sed in peccatis perseverant'.

⁹⁵⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 107v: 'sunt plures scoti presbyteri gerentes curam'. This entry has a 'nota bene' mark adjacent, which probably is contemporary.

⁹⁵⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 118, fo. 193 (LP, X, 182).

⁹⁶⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 195v.

have been done, no crimes had been subsequently added at such a prestigious monastery.

From Durham, the Visitors went to Finchale (110), Jarrow (111) and Wearmouth (D6), all cells of Durham. At Jarrow, one of the four monks was found guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones*.

At Newcastle they visited the Trinitarian friars at Walkenol (112) as well as the nunnery (D19). On or soon after the 26 January, the Visitors then commenced their tour of all the Northumberland houses.⁹⁶¹ During this stage, they are now known to have “visited” Farne (D3) and Lindisfarne (D5). As it is unlikely the Commissioners would have sailed to Farne or risked delay by the tidal causeway at Lindisfarne, it can be safely assumed these two cells of Durham were called to Bamburgh priory (117) for their Visitation. During this stage, at Tynemouth priory (116), eight of the nineteen monks were noted as guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones*. The listing of the Northumberland houses in the *Compendium Compertorum* suggests that one Visitor tackled the northern area while the other visited the western houses.

The next time the Visitors are heard of is on 3 February when they were both at Whitby (32).⁹⁶² A day or two beforehand they were at Guisborough (28), where the nuns of Baysdale (29) and Handale (30) as well as the two monks of Middlesborough (31) were probably called.⁹⁶³

⁹⁶¹ with the exception of Lambley nunnery, which was more convenient to visit later when they were in the Carlisle diocese.

⁹⁶² PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 242 (LP, X, 238) LP incorrectly states that the letter is only from Legh; Legh wrote it but Layton also signed it (above Legh's signature).

⁹⁶³ Both the *Compendium Compertorum*, fo. 97r and CCCC MS 111, fo. 347 suggest this; the latter manuscript accidentally attached the founders of Guisborough to Middlesborough.

At Guisborough, both Layton and Legh were present and noted that James Cokrell, the prior, was guilty of incontinence with diverse women as well as ‘sodomite: per voluntarias polluciones’.⁹⁶⁴ Probably on these grounds, the Visitors obtained the resignation of the prior, using the same sort of treatment that Layton had described to Cromwell regarding the abbot of Fountains, less than two weeks previously.⁹⁶⁵ Guisborough was one of the most valuable monasteries in the north, having a net income of £674,⁹⁶⁶ a substantial sum of first fruits legally due to the crown on the election of a new prior, and an excellent incentive for removal of its prior. The manner in which Layton and Legh separately announce to Cromwell this important resignation is odd: Layton told Cromwell the prior had resigned in his letter of 7 February and Legh in his letter of 10 February;⁹⁶⁷ both write of it in terms of the news being fresh. Yet a letter from Layton and Legh together is extant, written on 3 February, a day or two after having been at Guisborough, and no mention is made of Guisborough. The news of the prior’s resignation must, therefore, have come to the Visitors separately, a few days after their Visitation of the priory. It would seem the prior, following his tough handling during the Visitation, had reconsidered his position and decided to resign.⁹⁶⁸ This resignation appears to have been gained solely at the instigation of Layton and Legh, displaying the confidence they now had in using the full extent of their Visitatorial powers. Layton reported that the prior, ‘has resigned secretly into our hands’ and the Visitor offered to ‘by the way [to] spy one for it, meet and apt, both for the kings honour and discharge of your conscience,

⁹⁶⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 97r.

⁹⁶⁵ See BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136r/v: ‘and we suppose that many other of the best abbots, more after they have communed with your mastership and us, will come to like preferment’.

⁹⁶⁶ Layton and the treasurer of York call it a house of a ‘thousand marks’, PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271) and PRO, SP 1 / 90, fo. 155 (LP, VIII, 248) which LP dates 20 February 1535, but probably is 1536.

⁹⁶⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271) and PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26 (LP, X, 288).

and also profitable'.⁹⁶⁹ Layton's reforming motives are squarely balanced by the opportunity to make money. Legh in his letter, though at the time geographically distant from Layton, echoed his sentiments: 'I will provide one of such literature, circumspect prudence and wisdom, experience and other qualities as you shall think meet ... and also shall be as profitable unto your mastership'.⁹⁷⁰ Legh took the opportunity, while at Guisborough, to obtain for himself an advowson of the parish church of Barnyngham.⁹⁷¹

Having thus seen the Visitors rigorously questioning the abbot of Fountains and the prior of Guisborough, and obtaining their resignations, a complete contrast is seen at Whitby (32). The Visitors had been two weeks earlier informed by Cromwell 'that the abbot of Whitby has of his letter certified ... that he would resign'. They had, at that time, promised, 'if he be so minded at our coming thither ... or if we find any cause of deprivation' then they would obtain the abbot's resignation.⁹⁷² However, from their examination of the abbot of Whitby on 3 February, 'with all the diligence that might be'⁹⁷³ they did not obtain his resignation. Legh reported that matters were not as Cromwell understood and the abbot was 'not willing now to resign'. It is clear they were not able to 'find any cause of deprivation' either, to make the abbot resign. The *Compendium Compertorum* noted two canons guilty of incontinence with women and three others guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones*, but the abbot was not among them. This example of the treatment of the abbot of Whitby suggests 'fair play' by the Visitors. Before their Visitation, they had been prepared to obtain his resignation

⁹⁶⁸ He obtained a pension of £40 per annum. See M. C. Cross and N. Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series vol. cl (1995), p. 272.

⁹⁶⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

⁹⁷⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26v (LP, X, 288).

⁹⁷¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 193 (LP, X, 439).

and even had Cromwell's 'letters concerning the resignation of Whitby'. However, the Visitors did not force the abbot into resignation and there is no sign from Legh that he felt his interrogative methods had been cheated.⁹⁷⁴ At Whitby it seems likely that Grosmont (33), Yedingham (34) and Rosedale (35) came for their Visitation.

Soon after Whitby the Visitors separated, Layton travelling to York and Legh continuing the Visitation.⁹⁷⁵ The prior of Bridlington (38), in writing to Cromwell in March, referred to a visit by Cromwell's 'Visitors for the province of York', which suggests they were still together at that stage, fifteen miles from Hull.⁹⁷⁶

In the next seven days, Legh visited some sixteen to twenty institutions, mainly single-handedly, travelling down the east coast of Yorkshire to Hull in the East Riding, then north again to the centre of the North Riding. Undoubtedly the inmates of many houses had to make a trip to large houses for their Visitation. The ordering in the *Compendium Compertorum*, for example, around Meaux abbey (40), suggests that Nunburnholme (41), North Ferriby (42), Haltemprice (43), Warter (44) and Swine (45) may have travelled to Meaux. During this period, the Visitation must have become less detailed. The large abbeys of Bridlington (38), Meaux (40), Rievaulx (47), Mount Grace (51) and Byland (52) were included in this stage, as well as the secular college of Beverley (39). The Charterhouse at Hull (Y30), not noted in the *Compendium Compertorum*, was also visited by Legh.⁹⁷⁷ Having earlier visited

⁹⁷² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136v (LP, X, 137).

⁹⁷³ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 242 (LP, X, 238).

⁹⁷⁴ the cynical historian might suspect bribery.

⁹⁷⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18.

⁹⁷⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 227 (LP, X, 501). However, the prior of Bridlington could have been referring to Legh and his entourage as 'Cromwell's Visitors'. If Layton and Legh had split up earlier - at Yedingham (34) for example, which is the nearest point to York on this part of the Visitation, it would reflect the strange inconsistency in ordering in CCCC MS 111, fo. 348.

⁹⁷⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26v 'I have been at Mount Grace and Hull'.

the small Gilbertine house of Mattesey (82)⁹⁷⁸ it would have been strange not to have visited the larger one of Watton (£360 VE) or even Ellerton (£62 VE) which also were in the East Riding: it should not be presumed that they were not visited because of a leniency on Cromwell's part towards the Gilbertine order.⁹⁷⁹

Visiting religious houses, as well as secular colleges, at the rate of two to three a day at this stage of the Northern Visitation, was an extraordinary achievement that must have required some element of formal planning, especially if houses were told to go to a central monastery for their examination.⁹⁸⁰ At the start of the Visitation in August, it seems clear that Visitors were arriving unannounced, as the example of Legh appearing at Bruton demonstrated. Bedyll, in his Visitation of Lincoln archdeaconry in January and February, appeared suddenly at Barling abbey, to the abbot's discomfort. On 7 February, Layton described Legh's activity: 'Dr Legh keeps out our appointments in Visitation'.⁹⁸¹ This statement strongly suggests forward planning and the completeness of the Visitation process contrary to Knowles' suggestion.⁹⁸²

Just what the focus was at this stage of Legh's rapid Visitation is encapsulated in his only reference to this stage: 'and I have been at Mount Grace and Hull and where as in all other places I find them all ready to fulfil the kings highness

⁹⁷⁸ before 11 January, Mattesey £55 per annum *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.

⁹⁷⁹ In the enactment of the Suppression Act, passed a month after Legh was in the East Riding, the Gilbertine order was excluded from its provisions.

⁹⁸⁰ See Table 1.

⁹⁸¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271) - my underlining.

⁹⁸² D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

pleasure'.⁹⁸³ no mention of crimes, the emphasis is on the acceptance of the Royal Supremacy.

While Legh was covering such a large number of religious houses in so short a time, he also took the time for a detour, hitherto unappreciated, back to Durham. Legh's letter from Richmond on 10 February, when he was waiting for Layton to rejoin him after their separation of five to seven days, commenced, 'Right Worshipful Sir, in the heartiest wise that heart can think I commend me unto your mastership advertising you that I have been at the house of Sherburn, whereat I have taken possession'.⁹⁸⁴ This news demonstrates that after visiting Mount Grace (51), Legh re-entered Durham diocese, visited Neasham (53) and then travelled a further twenty miles northwards to Sherburn hospital (D28) east of Durham.⁹⁸⁵ Legh had been confirmed as master of the hospital of SS Lazarus, Martha and Mary, Sherburn on 14 September.⁹⁸⁶ While the deed from Tunstal noted Sherburn to be 'nostrorum patronatus et diocesis', it is clear from Legh's letter to Cromwell who he is thanking for this collation: 'for the which I heartily thank the king's grace of his most gracious goodness and you of your kind heart and mind ever assuredly towards me, with many other your benefits shared and manifestly declared'.⁹⁸⁷ This presentation had, therefore, been given to Legh at the start of the Visitation, in August/early September, and it had been given him by the king, at the recommendation of Cromwell. The extraordinary adulation and thanks that Legh heaps on the king and Cromwell, covering almost one side of his letter, reflects a man at the summit of his joy. Legh

⁹⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26v (LP, X, 288) - my underlining.

⁹⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26r (LP, X, 288).

⁹⁸⁵ The placing of Neasham nunnery at this stage of the Visitation in the *Compendium Compertorum* is confirmed by the ordering of CCCC MS 111, fo. 348.

⁹⁸⁶ DUL - ASC, DSR I. 2 Tunstal Register, fo. 22r, G. Hinde (ed.), The Registers of Cuthbert Tunstal and James Pilkington, Surtees Society, vol. clxi (1952), p. 64.

had been heavily criticised by Cromwell in October, for his conduct of the Visitation, and the content of this letter reflects the obedient, dutiful comments he made in his own defence at that time: ‘desire your mastership to think that I and all that I have or shall ever have to be yours’; ‘I trust so to order myself’; ‘your mastership nor no other my master or friend shall never have cause to think ingratitude in me’. Perhaps, the sudden visit to Sherburn and Legh’s letter reflected the possibility that Legh had recently found himself in clear favour with the king and Cromwell. Perhaps Legh’s earlier Visitation conduct had led to some doubt of the retention of the Sherburn mastership. After all, why had Legh not visited Sherburn to view the hospital when he was only three miles away, at Durham abbey, a fortnight beforehand? To visit Sherburn when he did, meant a seventy mile detour. All this suggests that at the beginning of February, as a result of services rendered, Legh was again fully in favour and the mastership of Sherburn was confirmed. In his letter, Legh is back to his old form. He cannot restrain himself, when in a position of favour, from asking for more. Legh feels confident enough to remind Cromwell that he ‘has said at diverse times that I should be your chancellor’.⁹⁸⁸

While Legh was continuing the Visitation on his own, Layton had been instructed by Cromwell to see the archbishop of York again ‘and has done such things according to your pleasure as your mastership wrote’.⁹⁸⁹ Layton was with the archbishop, probably then at Cawood, on 7 February. Here he delivered Cromwell’s letters and received a presentation document enabling Cromwell to ‘nominate your

⁹⁸⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26r (LP, X, 288). See also PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 205 (LP, IX, 401(1)) which notes that Sherburn had been ‘lately given’ to Cromwell.

⁹⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26r (LP, X, 288).

⁹⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26v (LP, X, 288).

clerk at your pleasure' for the vacancy of prebend at Ripon, currently held by Marmaduke Bradley who was soon to be abbot of Fountains.⁹⁹⁰

That evening, Layton had hoped to be at Fountains abbey (99), 'but that I tarry in York somewhat, to cause a lewd canon and his flock (if I can possible) to surrender up his house into the kings hands'.⁹⁹¹ He was referring to Marton priory (95), which had been visited in the middle of January. The *Compendium Compertorum* does not entirely reflect Layton's comments: the prior is not accused, but four of the remaining canons are accused, one of 'incontinence with diverse women' and three are noted as 'sodomy by *per voluntarias pollutiones*'.⁹⁹² Layton was considerably delayed over this surrender as it was not until two days later on 9 February the surrender document was signed. Layton blamed the delay to 'a little false knave here in York ..., a doggerel of the law and a pursuivant of Westminster Hall'.⁹⁹³ Prior Yodson's defence of his priory collapsed, possibly being made untenable by being of the king's foundation.⁹⁹⁴ The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income of Marton was substantially less than Fountains, Guisborough and Whitby. Nevertheless, Layton identified that financial opportunity was a motive for Marton's closure, it being 'of seven score pounds good lands and but 40 marks of that in spiritual tithes'.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹⁰ It will be recalled the Visitors had earlier forecast Bradley would resign the prebend 'of £40' to Cromwell, 'which you may bestow also upon your friend if you make him Abbot'. See BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 137r. In the event, Bradley denied he had offered to resign, see PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 236 (LP, X, 514).

⁹⁹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

⁹⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 105r. Two canons had earlier been dismissed at the Visitation. See CCCC MS 111, fo. 347.

⁹⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18r (LP, X, 271). It is not known who this is.

⁹⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18r (LP, X, 271), PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 1105r and CCCC MS 111, fo. 347 (corrected).

⁹⁹⁵ The *Compendium Compertorum* notes annual revenue £130, while the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* recorded is £151.

The Marton surrender document is of the same formula and wording as the earlier surrenders of Langdon, Dover and Folkestone.⁹⁹⁶ It notes that the Suppression is a result of ‘the great and heavy debt which oppresses and almost overwhelms us’ with nothing mentioned about a ‘lewd canon and his flock’, from which accusation Layton had initiated the surrender. The king as founder and patron is noted, and the priory is completely surrendered to him.⁹⁹⁷ The document is in the hand of Warmington, who, therefore, was present in the chapter house at Marton at that time. This is the only occasion Warmington has been recognised in the Northern Visitation and suggests that at this time he had been sent up specially by Cromwell, perhaps delivering the letters Layton refers to, which he, in turn, gave to the archbishop.⁹⁹⁸ As well as the five canons and the prior signing the document, Layton signed as ‘chancellor of the king’. It is evident that Layton was not sure he would be able to obtain Marton’s surrender, as he wrote on 7 February, ‘if I can possible’.⁹⁹⁹ This shows a level of independence that the Visitors were allowed in such matters. It can be conjectured that many of the other houses in the *Compendium Compertorum* were put under similar pressure but stood firm.

Following the surrender of Marton priory, Layton moved to Fountains ‘to make the election’ of the new abbot, now Cromwell had agreed to the nomination of Marmaduke Bradley, the favoured financial and academic candidate of the Visitors.¹⁰⁰⁰ Layton conducted the election and issued Injunctions to quondam abbot Thirsk he should ‘make his whole accounts, from the first day of his entry unto the

⁹⁹⁶ PRO, E 322 / 148.

⁹⁹⁷ PRO, E 322 / 148. The description of ‘monasterium sive prioratum’ reflects the all inclusive nature of this pro forma surrender document.

⁹⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

⁹⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

¹⁰⁰⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

abbotship unto the 11th day of February'.¹⁰⁰¹ Legh had expected Layton to rejoin him at Richmond on the evening of 10 February, but clearly the new election had eventually taken place on 11 February.

Only in the last extant letters in the Northern Visitation of Layton and Legh is any sign of a timetable for their work identified. Legh had expected on 11 February 'to go through Carlisle and so from there to return homeward to your mastership with all convenient speed'.¹⁰⁰² Layton had written, when not expecting delay because of the Marton surrender and the Fountains election, that 'eighth of February we make an end of all these quarters and so pass towards Carlisle ... at Shrovetide we trust to see you'.¹⁰⁰³ It would appear their arrival in London on or about Shrove Tuesday (29 February¹⁰⁰⁴) was acceptable to Cromwell, even though the parliamentary session had already commenced on 4 February. Within this knowledge is a clue that Cromwell had no intention of introducing a monastic Bill to parliament until he had received the information from the Northern Visitation.¹⁰⁰⁵

From leaving Richmond for the second time late on 11 or, more likely, 12 February, the Visitors travelled into Carlisle diocese, then south along the west coast to complete the Visitation of York diocese, then crossed the river Ribble into the Chester archdeaconry of Coventry and Lichfield diocese, before heading off to Ludlow where Bishop Rowland Lee resided. This geographically extensive trip resulted in at least thirty-two of the widely dispersed religious houses and secular

¹⁰⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 164r/v (LP, X, 424).

¹⁰⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 26v (LP, X, 288).

¹⁰⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

¹⁰⁰⁴ 1536 was a leap year.

¹⁰⁰⁵ The Suppression Bill does not appear to have been introduced until around 6 March. See Section 5.1.

colleges being visited in fifteen or sixteen days, as well as including an interview with the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.¹⁰⁰⁶ Without doubt, speed was important but, as has been recognised previously, so was coverage of religious institutions: all religious houses in Carlisle diocese, all houses in the Cumberland and Lancashire areas of York diocese and all remaining houses in the Chester archdeaconry were visited.¹⁰⁰⁷ Although the Visitors were in a hurry, they were not cutting corners and missing out abbeys. It clearly was important to visit each institution in the limited time available. While the acquisition of data on sexual crimes appears to have been important, plenty of that data already existed from the earlier months of the Visitation without the need to rush about gaining more. However, what was imperative in visiting each house, even at this late stage of the Royal Visitation, was to receive the oaths and acknowledgement, from both religious houses and secular colleges, of the Royal Supremacy. The lack of extant records regarding earlier acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy is probably not because of the loss of those records, but because it had been, up until the Royal Visitation, indifferently administered.¹⁰⁰⁸ The activity of the Visitors at this late stage of the Royal Visitation supports the view that the principal purpose of the Northern Visitation was to gain adherence to the Royal Supremacy. The collection of crimes and other aspects of the Visitation were secondary to the overall purpose.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁶ See Table 1.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See Table 2.

¹⁰⁰⁸ It will be recalled that acknowledgement of Supremacy in the Canterbury province was widely accomplished by Cranmer's metropolitan Visitation of 1534/1535. Archbishop Lee of York had no such Visitation.

¹⁰⁰⁹ See A. N. Shaw, 'The Northern Visitation of 1535/6: Some New Observations', Downside Review, vol. 116, No. 405 (October 1998).

From Richmond, the Visitors journeyed together to Shap (54), finding none of the twenty inmates guilty of crimes, but three requesting to be released from their religious order.¹⁰¹⁰

At Carlisle (55) the prior is noted as guilty of incontinence with a married woman, two of his twenty-two canons are specified as having been sexually incontinent with women and six others guilty of sodomy by *per voluntarias pollutiones*. The prior, Christopher Slye, may well have been under pressure to resign, given the Visitors' earlier record.¹⁰¹¹ The six houses to the east of Carlisle were then visited, including Lambley nunnery (57), in the Durham diocese, which was located near the Cumberland border. It is likely that some of these houses were visited at a central point.

The Visitors then headed down the coast and were at Furness abbey (65) on 17 February. Advance knowledge of the Visitors' intended visit to Furness was evident from the abbot's letter to Cromwell of 7 January: 'Wherefore it may please you now to direct your high letters unto such as be our Visitors under you, commanding them to be good unto me and our monastery and what soever you shall command me I shall be obedient thereunto'.¹⁰¹² The knowledge that the Visitors were on their way gave the abbot the opportunity to prepare. Robert Legate, the friar placed in Furness after the Visitation to 'read and preach to the brethren' later declared that the abbot warned

¹⁰¹⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286, here considers the Visitors may have parted after Richmond. The ordering of the *Compendium Compertorum* and CCC MS 111, fo. 348 suggests they kept together.

¹⁰¹¹ A transcription of the *Compendium Compertorum*, containing the religious houses of Cumberland and Westmorland is in *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, vol. iv (Kendal, 1880), pp. 88-90.

¹⁰¹² PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 42 (LP, X, 51): the relevance of which was identified in C. Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Chetham Society (Manchester, 1969), p. 94.

his monks the Visitors ‘would ask diverse things of them strictly’. The abbot, therefore, ‘commanded them, by virtue of their obedience, before they [the Visitors] come to the abbey that they [the monks] should tell them nothing at all’. The chief issue in the abbot’s mind was the general murmurings in his abbey regarding acceptance of the Royal Supremacy. The proceedings at Furness after the Pilgrimage of Grace, identify that the abbey was a hot bed of discontent on the Supremacy issue.¹⁰¹³ However, the *Compendium Compertorum* recorded no treason for non-acceptance of the Supremacy oath and the ‘confederation’ planned by the abbot was successful.¹⁰¹⁴ However, the abbey did not evade accusation. The abbot was noted in the *Compendium Compertorum* as guilty of incontinence with two single women; three monks were also recorded as guilty of incontinence with women, one with five women, and one monk of sodomy by *per voluntarias pollutiones*.¹⁰¹⁵

A much wider picture of the work of the Visitation at Furness is afforded by examination of a Duchy of Lancaster legal case, of 1542, between the crown and others versus the Earl of Cumberland.¹⁰¹⁶ This case has been partially transcribed by Beck,¹⁰¹⁷ but no analysis relative to the Royal Visitation has previously been attempted. The examination partially concerned the accusation that ‘one Hugh Brown, late monk of Furness’ falsely applied the convent seal to seven blank parchments and thereby created various forged leases on monastery property, prior to the monastery’s suppression. William Blytheman ‘actuary [i. e. notary] and registrar’

¹⁰¹³ C. Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Chetham Society (Manchester, 1969), pp. 94 - 96, or A. N. Shaw ‘The Involvement of the Religious Orders in the Northern Risings of 1536/7: Compulsion or Desire?’ *Downside Review*, vol. 117, No. 407 (April 1999), pp. 97, 98, 99.

¹⁰¹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 101r.

¹⁰¹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 101r.

¹⁰¹⁶ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fos. 63 - 78, May 1542.

¹⁰¹⁷ T. A. Beck (ed.), *Annales Furnesienses: History and Antiquity of the Abbey of Furness* (London, 1844).

in the Visitation¹⁰¹⁸ was a deponent and his evidence, much in his own hand, reveals some of the inner workings of the Visitation, which have a bearing on its method and depth.

Blytheman confirmed that ‘Richard Layton and Thomas Legh, doctors, Visitors for the king’s highness’ visited Furness and ‘examined the abbot and convent ... of the state of the house and conversation of the brethren’. At the Visitation, ‘Roger Peel, then abbot there among other things did detect and inform the said Commissioners’ about the guilt of Hugh Brown in stealing the blanks and ensealing them; ‘upon which information the said Hugh Brown was called before the Visitors and being sworn to say [the] Truth upon such articles as he should be examined upon. And first examined of the sealing of the said Blanks he said and confessed that he was privy and knew of four Blanks.¹⁰¹⁹ Being further demanded, by the said Commissioner or Visitor, who broke the lock of the chest wherein the common seal of the house remained, he said one Stephen Fisher, smith, broke it by the commandment and procurement of the said Hugh Brown’.

On hearing Brown’s testimony, the Visitor called the abbot ‘declaring unto him the answers of the said Hugh Brown. And the said abbot did maintain and avouch, before the said Hugh Brown, in presence of the said Visitor, that there were 7 Blanks sealed by him [Brown] and his followers ... whereupon diverse leases and patents were written whereunto the whole convent never consented nor knew thereof, which the said Hugh Brown did not greatly deny nor yet confess. But for this his misdemeanour the said doctor Layton did then commit him to ward, there to be safe

¹⁰¹⁸ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 78v.

kept as a prisoner by the said abbot unto such time as further of the kings pleasure were known'.¹⁰²⁰ Blytheman also notes that 'one Akers, clerk to Dr Legh ... wrote the first detectum against Hugh Brown in the Book of the Acts of the said Visitation'.¹⁰²¹

Of course, it might be thought that, after six years, Blytheman's recollection of the events at Furness would have been vague, after all, he had attended over 120 religious houses' Visitations in a two month period. This vagueness is shown in a deposition on this legal case by Layton, by then dean of York. Layton had been 'sworn and examined the 28th day of June' 1542 and, to all but the seventh article, replied 'this deponent knoweth nothing'.¹⁰²² 'To the seventh article this deponent says that he committed a monk of the late house or monastery of Furness to ward for sealing of 6 blanks with the convent seal of the said late monastery but he remembereth [not] the name of the said monk [or] which 6 blanks this deponent cancelled at Furness at the time of the king's Visitation. Then and after this deponent delivered the said 6 blanks, so cancelled to the Earl of Essex'.¹⁰²³

From Layton's statement he evidently cannot remember the incident too clearly – the monk's name for instance, and he talks of six blanks rather than seven – as you would expect, time had dulled his memory.¹⁰²⁴ Blytheman, by contrast, gives a detailed account. However, he did not have to depend on his memory, as he had

¹⁰¹⁹ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77r - my underlining. N.B. the ordering of the manuscript is incorrect. The sequence of Blytheman's testimony is, fo. 78r/78v, fo. 77r/77v, fo. 79r/79v.

¹⁰²⁰ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77r.

¹⁰²¹ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77v.

¹⁰²² PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 75v. The seventeen 'interrogations' are noted in, fo. 63r. Layton, through misnumbering, refers to eighteen articles.

¹⁰²³ This deposition is in Layton's hand, and signed by him. Thomas Cromwell, of course, became earl of Essex in April 1540, before his execution on 28 July 1540.

access to the Act Book of the Visitation. This is proved at the conclusion of his written testimony by an extract taken from the Act Book, effectively confirming his testimony. This extract is titled, ‘In Libro actorum visitacione Regie maiestatis exercit per Ricum Layton et Thoman Leghe legum doctores commissarios domini nostra Regis apud Furness xvij die mensis februari Anno Domini Millimo Quinquagesimo xxxv inter alia sic continetur’.¹⁰²⁵ The extract from the Act Book follows this title and is concluded by Blytheman’s notarial signature and the words ‘concordat cum actis originalibus’.¹⁰²⁶

The evidence of Blytheman’s testimony and the extract from the Visitation Act Book is revealing. First of all, far from just examining sexual crimes, as the *Compendium Compertorum* suggests, the Visitors were looking at a wider definition of crime.¹⁰²⁷ The crime and imprisonment of Hugh Brown are not stated in the *Compendium Compertorum*, even though the fraud was of such a substantial nature. This is one strong piece of evidence that the *Compendium Compertorum* was an edited version of the compertes contained in the Act Book, focussing entirely on sexual crime.¹⁰²⁸

Knowles dismissed the methods of the Royal Visitors in comparison with episcopal and other Visitations. He considered ‘the Visitors were far from following

¹⁰²⁴ Legh did not give evidence in this case, probably because he was involved in the king’s business as a Commissioner of the Borders at the time. See LP, XVII, 880 (fo. 136).

¹⁰²⁵ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77v continued onto, fo. 79r - my underlining denoting ‘among other things so it is contained’.

¹⁰²⁶ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 79r: ‘it corresponds with the original Acts’.

¹⁰²⁷ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 279: ‘the interrogations were directed towards ... eliciting from the individual religious ... statistics of sexual immorality’.

¹⁰²⁸ See analysis of Northern *Compendium* in Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

the ponderous but essentially fair canonical procedure'.¹⁰²⁹ Knowles commented that the Visitors did not acquire *detecta* and then sift these to form the *comperta*. However, Blytheman demonstrates, in noting 'one Akers, clerk to Dr Legh, who wrote the first detectum against Hugh Brown' that some semblance of following episcopal procedure was being followed: the first detectum implying further processing and analysis of the information. It is clear from Blytheman's statement that members of the community were examined singly, from the abbot downwards. It is from the abbot's *detecta* that Hugh Brown is then questioned regarding the blanks. The information given by the abbot has been seen by the Visitors as worthy of examination and so forms the *compertes*.¹⁰³⁰ After Hugh Brown's individual examination, the Visitors called the abbot into the same room and explained Brown's answer to the accusations (or first *detecta*) of the abbot. The abbot then repeated his accusation 'before the said Hugh Brown in the presence of the said Visitor'. This action demonstrates a compression of the typical episcopal Visitation process. The Act book is not one sided and biased, as it states that Hugh Brown, at the end of the proceedings, did not admit outright to the theft and fraud: 'Hugh Brown did not greatly deny nor yet confess'. If the Visitors had been purely superficial and reporting only hearsay, they would not have gone through the procedure.

In another part of Blytheman's testimony, it is revealed that Legh 'was required of the earl of Cumberland's behalf for a confirmation of a lease' and this 'Legh refused so to do'.¹⁰³¹ Given that Legh is accused of 'polling and bribery' in the

¹⁰²⁹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 278/279.

¹⁰³⁰ relating the Royal Visitation action with the procedure outlined in D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1950), p. 82.

¹⁰³¹ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 77v.

Northern Visitation,¹⁰³² the deposition of William Bury, chaplain to the earl of Cumberland, is worthy of reproduction. The earl of Cumberland had claimed that a particular lease had been granted to him by the previous abbot of Furness, abbot Banks, on his death bed, 'Which lease the said earl sent to the said Dr Legh desiring him to move abbot Pyle, successor to the said Banks, and his convent to allow the same, which lease this deponent [i. e. William Bury] delivered to Dr Legh, to which desire and request of the said earl, the said Dr Legh promised this deponent to do as much as it might stand with the said earl his honour and his honesty; which lease the said Dr Legh after redelivered to this deponent saying that the said abbot and convent denied to allow it'.¹⁰³³

This incident reveals that Legh promised to support the claims of the earl, but when the monastery rejected the lease, Legh did not bully them into acceptance. Blytheman stated that Legh refused to confirm the earl's lease. It would seem more in Legh's interest to further the earl's claim, but he did not do so, to his apparent credit.

Another aspect that becomes clear from the testimonies in the duchy of Lancaster case was the lobbying that the Visitors experienced during the Visitation. It has been seen that the earl of Cumberland was aware that the Visitors would be at Furness, and sent his chaplain to intercede on his behalf. Sense can now be made of Layton's comments, when earlier at Fountains abbey. Here, writing to Cromwell, he said of Thirsk's resignation, 'if the earl of Cumberland knew that it were void he would make all labour he could possible for the cellarer there, which I inform you is not meet there for, for such causes as I know you will allow when I shall declare them

¹⁰³² R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

unto you.’¹⁰³⁴ It seems strange that Layton should know of the earl of Cumberland’s wishes, but in the light of Bury’s deposition, it appears that the Visitors had already met Bury when at Fountains. Again the earl was aware of the Visitors’ progress and ensured his chaplain was at hand at Fountains ‘for the preferment of a monk then cellarer of Fountains’.¹⁰³⁵ Bury also admitted that while at Fountains he had first broached the issue of the Furness lease with Dr Legh.

Other suitors at Furness, when the Visitors were there, were the abbot of Shap, Richard Evenwood and a Thomas Blenkinsopp, who was of the earl of Cumberland’s council.¹⁰³⁶ With the abbot of Shap having been visited five days previously, he would have been aware of the Visitors’ movements. William Bury understood the abbot of Shap came to see Layton and Legh regarding a grange belonging to Shap. Perhaps this was related to the abbey’s earlier Visitation.

The evidence of the Visitors at Furness demonstrates a wide range of activity beyond that normally expected. From Furness, the Visitors made their way to Conishead (35) and Cartmel (34). The prior of Conishead may have been preparing for the Visitation by sending away ‘a silver basin and ewer and a bowl of silver and gilt to one Robert Garnet of Kendal’.¹⁰³⁷ Half of the canons were found guilty of

¹⁰³³ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 76r.

¹⁰³⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136r/v (LP, X, 137).

¹⁰³⁵ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 76r. The manuscript here is in a poor state. This article of enquiry, No. 17, is on fo. 63r. Bury refers to the then Abbot of Fountains, William Thirsk, by his alias Perte (see M. C. Cross & N. Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series vol. cl (1995), p. 116).

¹⁰³⁶ PRO, DL 3 / 40, fo. 63r.

¹⁰³⁷ PRO, DL 29 / 158 / 27. R. J. Mason, ‘The Income Administration and Disposal of the Monastic Lands in Lancashire from the Dissolution to c. 1558’ (University of London, Unpublished M. A., 1962), p. 11, incorrectly transcribes ‘twelvemonth’ as ‘twelvenight’.

sexual incontinence with women, George Corneforth with ten women and Christopher Peerson with six.¹⁰³⁸ However, the prior was not noted,¹⁰³⁹

At Cartmel, William Panell was accused of incontinence with diverse women and had six children.¹⁰⁴⁰ Legh and Layton were present and revoked the pension, granted by convent seal, made to Panell.¹⁰⁴¹ Possibly this action was a result of Panell's sexual incontinence, although he was at this time sixty-seven or sixty-eight years old. From Cartmel the Visitors, depending on the tide, would have crossed the sands of Morecambe Bay, with a guide provided by Cartmel priory itself. This would have saved them at least half a day getting to Lancaster.¹⁰⁴²

The Visitors are next identified at Whalley abbey (69), where they took the surrender of Hornby Priory (72).¹⁰⁴³ As the *Compendium Compertorum* noted that the prior of Hornby was guilty of incontinence with three single women, it appears this represented all the grounds for the surrender of this cell of Croxton abbey.¹⁰⁴⁴ However, the wording of the surrender deed was almost exactly the same as at Marton and elsewhere, with, again, the stated reason for surrender being a large debt. The

¹⁰³⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 101v.

¹⁰³⁹ PRO, DL 29 / 158 / 27: on 8 June 1536, the survey Commissioners noted in the Bill of enquiry 'and what disposition the said prior is of and what child he has of his own, by the report of the country'.

¹⁰⁴⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 101r.

¹⁰⁴¹ PRO, DL 43 / 4 / 12 and DL 43 / 5 / 7. See C. Haigh, The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace, Chetham Society (Manchester, 1969), for full account of Cartmel and other Lancashire houses.

¹⁰⁴² Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, vol. iv (Kendal, 1880), pp. 14-19.

¹⁰⁴³ PRO, E 322 / 104 (LP, IX, 816). The seal of the Hornby surrender deed is that of Whalley abbey and suggests the location of the surrender: Haigh thinks my assumptions fair.

¹⁰⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 102r.

presence of Layton and Legh *ac pluribus aliis* was noted, with the document signed by the prior and his two monks and countersigned by Layton.¹⁰⁴⁵

The criss-crossing of Visitor activity in north Lancashire, when examining the *Compendium Compertorum* entries, suggests that Sawley (70)¹⁰⁴⁶ and Lytham (71), as well as Hornby (72), had their Visitations at Whalley. In the next five days the Chester archdeaconry was visited. Both Layton and Legh were at the large Benedictine abbey of Chester (78),¹⁰⁴⁷ but with over three houses being visited per day, it seems likely the Commissioners divided up the work.¹⁰⁴⁸ Even though the Visitors were racing to get to London by Shrovetide, they also took the time to visit three secular colleges.¹⁰⁴⁹ To undertake these excursions at such a time demonstrates that the purpose of the Visitation was largely about ensuring conformity with the Royal Supremacy amongst all bodies of clergy, not just religious.

The last religious house visited in the Northern Visitation was Combermere (122) in Cheshire. Again, if the Commissioners had been primarily concerned with getting the data on monasteries to Cromwell as soon as possible, they would have sped along Watling Street to London. Instead, they headed for Ludlow in South Shropshire, where Rowland Lee, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, was residing, in

¹⁰⁴⁵ PRO, E 322 / 104 (LP, IX, 816). As Hornby was a cell of Croxton, this suppression was later seen as invalid.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The 'Sawley Ballad', attributed to a monk of Sawley and sung by the 'pilgrims' in the Northern Rising later that year, included a reference to both Visitors in the last verse:

'Crim, Crame and Riche
With three ell and the Liche'

Two of the 'three ell's likely to be Layton and Legh. (See M. Bateson (ed.) 'Ballad on the Pilgrimage of Grace' in *English Historical Review* (1890), p. 345.

¹⁰⁴⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 48 (LP, X, 949), in a letter dated 24 March, the abbot of St Werburgh's notes, 'where is you contained in the king's most dread Injunctions to me lately exhibited by the worshipful Doctor Layton and Doctor Legh'.

¹⁰⁴⁸ The *Compendium Compertorum* listing certainly suggests this.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Manchester College (119), St. John Baptists College, Chester (120) and Bunbury College (121). See PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 108r.

his role as president of the Council in the Marches of Wales. As most of the Visitors, during the eight month period of the Royal Visitation, had interviewed bishops, it would appear Lee was the last to be interviewed. No doubt the Royal Supremacy and aspects of its implementation in his diocese were the matters discussed. With Rowland Lee being a staunch adherent of the Royal Supremacy, as well as cousin to Legh, it can have caused him no hardship. The Visitors appear to have been well entertained at Ludlow, suggesting an overnight stay.¹⁰⁵⁰

Blytheman, writing from Ludlow on 28 February, told Cromwell that the Visitation 'in the Province of York' was concluded and Layton and Legh had left for London with a copy of the 'clean book of compertes'.¹⁰⁵¹ It seems likely, therefore, that the Visitors were with Cromwell late on Tuesday 29 February, Shrove Tuesday, and had kept to the timetable Layton had earlier confirmed. After a gruelling two months period, during which the Commissioners had visited over 120 religious houses and secular colleges, as well as three bishops,¹⁰⁵² taken three monasteries' surrenders (and, no doubt, attempted more) and accomplished other missions on behalf of Cromwell, the Northern Visitation was over.

¹⁰⁵⁰ SRRC, LB 8/1/31/3, fo. 2r; 'Item delivered to master Bailiff at the coming in of Dr Legh, 2 gallons of wine, the price 20d'.

¹⁰⁵¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 90 (LP, X, 363).

¹⁰⁵² Possibly four, if John Kite, bishop of Carlisle, was in his diocese.

3. Planning and Implementation of the Royal Visitation

The commission empowering the Visitors to undertake the Royal Visitation is not definitely known.¹⁰⁵³ Logan, however, analysed the letters patent dated 21 January 1535, which appointed Cromwell vicegerent in ecclesiastical affairs.¹⁰⁵⁴ This commission authorised Cromwell to undertake the Visitation of all ecclesiastical institutions, not just monasteries, but also cathedrals, secular colleges, hospitals and so on, without exception. His power over spiritual and temporal enquiry included all ecclesiastical persons, including bishops. Cromwell was able to punish, correct, demand resignations, hold new elections and formulate statutes.¹⁰⁵⁵ Most importantly to this discussion, Cromwell had the power to appoint Deputy Commissioners to conduct the Visitation.

How much of these powers Cromwell delegated to his Commissioners, Layton, Legh and the rest, during the Royal Visitation, can be inferred from the actions they took. Certainly, they had commissions specifying their authority, which they showed to the head of house on arrival.¹⁰⁵⁶ As has been seen, only on one or two occasions did the Visitors have a problem or doubt in enforcing their commission.¹⁰⁵⁷ The smooth acceptance of the Royal Visitation by the heads of religious houses and other ecclesiastical establishments reflects the clear and unquestionable commission which

¹⁰⁵³ G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 1 (London, 1880), p. 137.

¹⁰⁵⁴ PRO, C 82 / 692 (LP, VIII, 75(I)).

¹⁰⁵⁵ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), pp. 660 - 662.

¹⁰⁵⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167) and PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 165 (LP, IX, 159).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Legh at Bruton, because Layton had already visited; Tregonwell at Clattercote where they claimed the Gilbertines had special privileges of Visitation.

they possessed. Unlike the earlier Bishops' Visitations or exempt order Visitations or the recent metropolitan Visitation of Archbishop Cranmer, the Royal Visitation was not dogged by appeals regarding authority. The authority the Royal Commissioners possessed was unquestionable and emanated from the king's supremacy over the English church.

While Cromwell clearly had wide powers, he does not seem to have delegated them entirely to his subordinates. It may have been through wariness of using such power, but it is only late in the Visitation that the Visitors can be seen forcing the resignation of heads of houses. Even then, in no such instances were they appointing successors without Cromwell's permission. From the commencement of the Visitation, it can be seen that they were administering punishment: Legh imprisoned a monk at Worcester and at Furness abbey a monk was imprisoned for fraud, while Layton imprisoned the prior of Dover and the woman found with him. These glimpses of discipline being applied, raise the suspicion that more retribution for serious offences may have occurred than has been previously appreciated.

The Visitors appear initially to have been visiting only religious houses. From September they are regularly noted visiting hospitals, secular colleges, chapters, vicars choral and also the bishops and their establishments, including lay staff. It seems probable, therefore, that the Commissioners, very shortly after the commencement of the Visitation, included the full width of Cromwell's power to visit all ecclesiastical Visitation. This is demonstrated in the Welsh dioceses, where the Commissioners were involved with all aspects of secular and religious ecclesiastical Visitation, even to the extent of operating the ecclesiastical courts. However, limits

can be seen to have been placed on the geographical extent of the Visitors' powers. The argument between Legh and Layton over the Visitation of Bruton abbey demonstrates that particular groups of houses were allocated to Visitors and specified in their commission. After October, as has been shown, the responsibility of the various Visitors is clearly based on diocese or archdeaconry boundaries. The Visitation, therefore, was undertaken within the confines of ecclesiastical geography,¹⁰⁵⁸ while the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey and the Suppression Commissioners' survey mainly related to county boundaries.

The Commissioners' ability to alter ecclesiastical statutes was demonstrated by Tregonwell at Wells cathedral and Salisbury cathedral and their willingness to add to the monastic Injunctions to achieve reform, will be proved. On a number of occasions it has been seen that the assets of a religious house, or indeed, in the case of the bishop of Llandaff, a bishopric, have been sequestered. In all, the power Cromwell delegated to his Commissioners was extensive, and adequate to enable individuals, who were mainly laymen, to visit any ecclesiastical institution.

How the Visitors used their commission and the manner in which their instructions changed during the Visitation is worthy of exploration. Analysis of the *Articles of Enquiry* and the *Injunctions* the Commissioners are purported to have utilised gives some gauge for the depth of enquiry expected of the Visitors. Also, the Commissioners' counsel with the king and Cromwell at Winchester in September suggests definite changes in the content and direction of the Visitation thereafter.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Maps 1 to 8 demonstrate this.

Knowles stated that the Royal Visitors carried with them two documents, one of which was 'a list of "instructions" which was, in fact, a long questionnaire to be administered to each of the religious' and the other 'a set of Injunctions to be issued at the end of the Visitation'.¹⁰⁵⁹ These two sets of documents, both 'cunningly scraped together',¹⁰⁶⁰ by Cotton¹⁰⁶¹ and published by Wilkins¹⁰⁶² are assumed by historians to have been used by the Visitors. Both documents are extensive, with the 'Instructions' or 'Articles of Enquiry' consisting of eighty-six headings and the 'Injunctions' containing some twenty-seven clauses.

The use of these two documents has coloured historians' views on the style and effectiveness of the Visitation. Baskerville accepted the questions were asked and dismissed the objection that the Visitors' haste undermined the process by alleging that 'they were no more hasty than those of a bishop'.¹⁰⁶³ Youings accepted the Articles and felt that 'if plied with patience they could have provided much useful information and a basis upon which to plan a programme of necessary reform' and that the Injunctions were 'prepared in advance for universal application'.¹⁰⁶⁴ Knowles also stated the Injunctions were universally applied and 'were carried round by the Visitors, presumably on a printed broadsheet, and served on all the communities before the Visitor left'. However, while Knowles felt the Visitors had the 'long questionnaire' with them he stated 'there is no evidence that they employed it in all,

¹⁰⁵⁹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 274.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Thomas Wilson, first Keeper of State Papers quoted in C. G. C. Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton* (London, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁰⁶¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13 (Instructions) and fo. 21 (General Injunctions).

¹⁰⁶² D. Wilkins (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 786 (Instructions), p. 789 (General Injunctions).

¹⁰⁶³ G. Baskerville, *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London, 1937), pp. 131, 132.

¹⁰⁶⁴ J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 38.

or indeed, in any, cases'.¹⁰⁶⁵ Historians have, therefore, accepted that these Articles influenced the questioning of the religious and that the Injunctions were the Visitors' standard reform document during the seven months of the Royal Visitation.¹⁰⁶⁶

However, these assumptions should be examined, given the impact they have on the thoroughness, purpose and truthfulness of the Visitation. Both documents, therefore, need closer examination to determine their validity.

¹⁰⁶⁵ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 279.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Also G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), p. 137, P. Hughes, The Reformation in England, vol. 1, The King's Proceedings (London, 1956), pp. 285, 291.

3.1 Instructions or Articles of Enquiry for the Royal Visitation

Examination of the Articles in Cleopatra E IV reveals a neat contemporary manuscript, principally in English, but with a Latin introduction, *Articuli Regie Inquisicionis*, and some Latin headings.¹⁰⁶⁷ In his index, Cotton has roughly noted against this item, 'Articles are corrected in Layton's own hand'. In fact, Layton not so much corrected the manuscript as added short extensions to certain of the eighty-six questions in the space remaining. Layton, in total, added to only four questions.¹⁰⁶⁸ While all the questions otherwise are in one, unknown hand, the short concluding part is in Layton's own hand and, although the document was not signed by him, this confirms the document had been drafted under his supervision.¹⁰⁶⁹

Cotton bound a letter from Layton to Cromwell dated 4 June 1535 almost immediately before the Articles.¹⁰⁷⁰ In this letter, Layton was seeking a joint commission with Thomas Legh for the Visitation of the north in which he asked Cromwell 'to overlook the book of Articles that I made for your Visitation this time 12 months and to make every sundry interrogations therein written'.¹⁰⁷¹ Doubtless Cotton, in his acquisition of manuscripts, considered the 'Articles' referred to in this letter as the 'Articuli' already noted to have been the work of Layton. Hence, he had the manuscripts bound in close proximity. Cotton's deduction seems appropriate: the

¹⁰⁶⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 15r - 21v.

¹⁰⁶⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 15v (questions 7 and 10), fo. 16v (question 19), fo. 18v (question 48).

¹⁰⁶⁹ Layton also inserted 'et alia' in the instruction at the end of question 10 in fo. 15v.

¹⁰⁷⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13r/v (LP, VIII, 822). The two manuscripts are separated by fo. 14, some monastic Injunctions, again seemingly in Layton's hand - more about this document in Section 3.2 on Injunctions.

¹⁰⁷¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13v. This letter affords a good example of Layton's Latin handwriting and relating it to the Latin conclusion of the 'Instructions' on fo. 21v (note particularly the style of the 'que' abbreviation mark).

Articles can seemingly be dated to June 1534, well over a year before the Royal Visitation commenced.¹⁰⁷²

The issue of whether the Articles were those drafted by Layton in June 1534 is important. Given the passing of the all powerful Royal Supremacy and Treason Acts in November 1534, is it likely that these Articles would be utilised, in the summer of 1535, unchanged after the elapse of 12 months? It is highly unlikely that Cromwell's vision of a monastic Visitation in 1534 would be enacted unaltered, given his extensive power as vicar general delegated to him by the king in January 1535.

In fact, examining the questionnaire identifies it was slanted towards enquiry at religious houses exempt from diocesan jurisdiction. The opening heading noted: 'The articles of the King's enquiry into the monastic way of life to be set forth and especially upon those exempt from diocesan jurisdiction' That the examination was of exempt monasteries becomes clearer in question 8: 'Item. Wherefore for what causes and considerations, you were exempt from your diocesan and what was your suggestion and motive, at the obtaining of your said exemption', and in question 10 regarding the statutes of the house 'whether they were made other [than] by your founders before your exemption'.¹⁰⁷³ This questioning of only 'exempt' houses, added to the fact there are no questions related to the Royal Supremacy, again helps date the Instructions to 1534.¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁷² J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 38. Professor Youings notes, "the questions, apparently drafted in the previous year by Dr Richard Layton".

¹⁰⁷³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 15v - my underlining.

¹⁰⁷⁴ The Royal Supremacy Act was passed in November 1534.

The emphasis on exempt houses would be surprising in a series of questions to be addressed to monasteries in the summer of 1535. The distinction between exempt and non-exempt houses became legally irrelevant in the Royal Supremacy Act of November 1534, with the king thereafter possessing all the dignity and jurisdiction of the Church in England, including Visitation.¹⁰⁷⁵ The ability of the ‘exempt’ orders, like the Cistercians and Praemonstratensians, to continue their practice of organising Visitations within their orders had legally ceased at the passing of the Act in Restraint of Appeals in April 1533.¹⁰⁷⁶ However, the Dispensations Act, passed in March 1534, gave the Crown clear authority to visit exempt monastic houses.¹⁰⁷⁷ The instructions could, therefore, be related to the consequences of the Dispensations Act, given the Crown’s ability to now visit exempt houses. The compilation by Layton of a set of Visitation Articles in or about June 1534 would, therefore, seem in timely response to this new Act.¹⁰⁷⁸

From April 1534, Archbishop Cranmer was involved in his metropolitan Visitation of non-exempt houses, with the king’s authority;¹⁰⁷⁹ the principal purpose of this Visitation was to administer the oath of Succession, and to ensure political and religious conformity.¹⁰⁸⁰ With a commission issued in April enabling the houses of

¹⁰⁷⁵ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 202.

¹⁰⁷⁶ 24 Henry VIII, c. 12.

¹⁰⁷⁷ 25 Henry VIII, c. 21.

¹⁰⁷⁸ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 192. Intriguingly, the Act gave the king power to abrogate the Act at any time before 24th June 1534.

¹⁰⁷⁹ CCA, Ch. An. A21 Writ of Henry VIII dated 27 April 1534 requiring co-operation with Cranmer’s Visitation.

¹⁰⁸⁰ P. Ayris (ed.), ‘Thomas Cranmer and the metropolitan visitation of Canterbury province 1533 - 1535’ in S. Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 15 - 18.

friars to be visited,¹⁰⁸¹ the evident gap in ensuring complete adherence to the government's programme would appear to have been the exempt houses.

However, the draft royal commissions for Visitation of Cistercian houses noted in LP and placed in January 1535 are likely to relate to the April 1534 period.¹⁰⁸² Both of these draft commissions omit the 'Supreme Head' formula of the king's title, instituted as a result of the November 1534 Royal Supremacy Act and, therefore, were certainly composed before that Act.¹⁰⁸³ In fact, the draft giving power to Thomas Calne, abbot of Stanley, to visit a wide range of named exempt Cistercian monasteries and a few Cistercian nunneries specifically mentioned the Dispensations Act giving the Crown power to visit exempt houses.¹⁰⁸⁴

It is possible that neither of these draft Visitation commissions were issued. After all, of the 105 extant Supremacy Acknowledgements, that of Valle Crucis, in Wales, is the only exempt house recorded.¹⁰⁸⁵ However, later in November 1535, John Elphin, the commendator of Welbeck abbey, reminded Cromwell 'that the King's grace has given to me and unto the poor monastery of Welbeck (in perpetuity) under his broad seal for all elections, of all the order of Praemonstratensians within this realm and Wales'.¹⁰⁸⁶ Later, in January 1536, Elphin reminded Cromwell, 'Sir, in the King's grace's Visitation ... as you do know right well I have a grant under his

¹⁰⁸¹ P. Ayris (ed.), 'Thomas Cranmer and the metropolitical visitation of Canterbury province 1533 - 1535' in S. Taylor (ed.), From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 65.

¹⁰⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 89, fos. 49v - 51v (LP, VIII, 74(1)) and PRO, SP 2 / R, fos. 3 - 5 (LP, VIII, 74(2)).

¹⁰⁸³ The new title was formalised on 15 January 1535, see LP, X, 50.

¹⁰⁸⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 89, fo. 50r.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix II (London, 1846).

¹⁰⁸⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 53r (LP, IX, 745).

grace's broad seal.'¹⁰⁸⁷ Perhaps also Elphin was referring to a special commission given to him in 1534, which appears to have included the Visitation of his exempt order. It is also highly unlikely that the king or Cromwell would have omitted gaining as universal as possible an acknowledgement of the Royal Supremacy, even though the legality of the oath was doubtful at this stage.¹⁰⁸⁸

It would, therefore, appear that Layton's Articles, composed in June 1534, relate to a wider conception of Visitation than Cranmer's and the presumed exempt Visitations at that time. This is reflected in Cromwell's *Remembrance* of June 1534. 'Item touching the Visitation of the religious houses'.¹⁰⁸⁹ But the emphasis in Layton's Articles suggests this new Visitation, as being formulated in mid 1534, was principally directed towards exempt houses.

Logan identified a draft royal commission for Visitation, which he dated to late May or early June 1534.¹⁰⁹⁰ The commission to 'A, B, C' is specifically for the Visitation of exempt houses and refers to the Dispensation Act's giving the Crown these powers.¹⁰⁹¹ It seems clear that Layton's Articles, preserved by Cotton, in fact relate to this draft commission and the projected Visitation of exempt houses by the Crown in June 1534.¹⁰⁹² This identification can, however, be weakened by reference

¹⁰⁸⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 106 (LP, X, 110).

¹⁰⁸⁸ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 203; F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 76: the religious were tendered a more stringent oath than secular persons. N.B. 'Legality' here is related to English Statute law only.

¹⁰⁸⁹ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 46r (LP, VII, 924, which dates the manuscript to June 1534).

¹⁰⁹⁰ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), p. 659.

¹⁰⁹¹ PRO, E 36 / 116, fos. 12r - 17v (LP, VIII, 76(1)).

¹⁰⁹² F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), p. 659 notes the link between Layton's Articles and the draft commission, but not that the Articles are directed towards 'exempt' houses.

to an undated letter from Layton to Cromwell.¹⁰⁹³ In addressing the advisability of visiting the York Province, Layton reminded Cromwell, ‘the book of Articles is clean written and in the custody of Bartlett your clerk and a commission also ready drawn for the same’.¹⁰⁹⁴ Gairdner, the editor of LP, calendared this letter at the end of June 1535, and Cunich, in the draft of his Layton Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry accepts it was written around the time Layton was interrogating Fisher and More in June 1535.¹⁰⁹⁵ If this letter was of June 1535, then the inference of ‘the book of Articles is clean written’ is that the Articles of Enquiry had been formally and neatly written up on the eve of the Visitation. This suggests the Articles were prepared for specific use in the Royal Visitation.

However, the dating of the letter is questionable. If the letter was written around June 1535, it is strange that there is no reference to it in Layton’s letter to Cromwell of Friday 4 June, which opens ‘please it you [to] understand that whereas you intend shortly to visit’.¹⁰⁹⁶ The letter in question was clearly before this one because it was encouraging Cromwell to embark on a Visitation of the York Province and promoting Layton and Legh’s involvement; whereas in the 4 June letter decisions have been made and the Royal Visitation is imminent. The two letters largely rehearsed the same content, the suitability of Legh and Layton to undertake the Visitation of the northern dioceses, which is odd if the letters were only a few weeks apart.

¹⁰⁹³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 56, 57r (LP, VIII, 955).

¹⁰⁹⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 56v.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (forthcoming), entry for Layton by P. Cunich.

¹⁰⁹⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13r (LP, VIII, 822).

At the end of the undated letter, Layton told Cromwell, ‘you shall never know what I can do neither what my serviceable mind is towards you till you have had some experiment thereof’.¹⁰⁹⁷ This reads as if Layton had not worked for Cromwell before, again demonstrating that the letter was earlier as in June he was active in examining Fisher and More in the Tower of London; hardly an insignificant role.¹⁰⁹⁸

The date ordering of the letters is important as the later letter, that of 4 June, asked Cromwell, in preparation for the Visitation, ‘to overlook the book of articles that I made for your Visitation this time 12 months’. Evidently a new set of Articles had not been prepared by Layton, which a later dating of the undated letter would have otherwise suggested; the Articles of Enquiry that he is proposing, on the eve of the Visitation, are those of a year earlier.¹⁰⁹⁹

The Articles of Enquiry, which historians have closely analysed as the basis of understanding the questioning process of the Royal Visitation can, therefore, be dismissed. At least the Articles give a view of how Layton thought a Visitation of monasteries, mainly (if not all) exempt, would proceed. This view may not, of course, reflect that of Cromwell, when he penned his *Remembrance* in June 1534 ‘touching the Visitation of the religious houses’¹¹⁰⁰ at the time Layton drafted his Articles.

¹⁰⁹⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 56v (LP, VIII, 955).

¹⁰⁹⁸ LP, VIII, 858 and 867.

¹⁰⁹⁹ The dating of BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 56r - 57r cannot be earlier than March 1535 if the LP dating of Cranmer’s recommendation to Cromwell of re-employing his secretary Thomas Bartlett is accepted: see PRO, SP 1 / 91, fo. 2r (LP, VIII, 306 dated 1st March). The first extant letter in LP which demonstrates Layton is working for Cromwell is PRO, SP 1 / 91, fo. 177 (LP, VIII, 484), dated Thursday 1st April [1535]. However, the reference to ‘Doctor Legh at his return’ suggests Thomas Legh was on a lengthy but unrecorded assignment when the letter was written. Perhaps it was the occasion Legh and ap Rice were at Coventry Charterhouse to elect a new prior (see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

¹¹⁰⁰ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 46r (LP, VII, 924).

Layton may, however, have tried to amend his June 1534 Articles, to make them more suitable to the post Supremacy Act powers of Royal Visitation over all ecclesiastical possessions, not just monasteries. At the end of the Articles, on the otherwise neat history of the eighty-six questions of enquiry, Layton personally added the footnote: 'Restat pro ecclesis collegiatis, hospitalibus, ecclesiis chathedralibus, parochialibus ecclesiis, episcopo, et archiepiscopo, per ordine Jerosolamitarum'¹¹⁰¹ This means that the Articles would need to be extended for the Visitation of colleges, hospitals and so on. Layton, in adding this footnote, had realised that the king's Visitation powers post November 1534 were greater than that understood when his Articles were originally penned in June 1534.

While there is, therefore, no reason to think that Layton's Articles were used in the Royal Visitation, some Articles of one form or another were used as the basis of enquiry. This is clear from Ellis Price, the Visitation Commissioner for Bangor diocese, who, in writing to Cromwell in November 1535, told him he has done nothing 'contrary to the commission, your honourable instructions, articles, Injunctions committed and given unto us'.¹¹⁰² Legh, in October, also referred to 'the Articles and Injunctions' prescribed by Cromwell. Certainly, at least by October 1535, there was a formality in the Articles and Injunctions being used in the Royal Visitation.

Possible Articles to be used in the Royal Visitation are included in the manuscript BL Harley 791. This manuscript principally consists of questions to be posed to various monastic and ecclesiastical groups, namely: thirty-nine questions for

¹¹⁰¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 21v : "it remains for ...".

¹¹⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 63 (LP, IX, 843) - my underlining.

abbots, priors and presidents,¹¹⁰³ thirty-six questions for male inmates,¹¹⁰⁴ twenty-four questions for abbesses and prioresses¹¹⁰⁵, twenty-two questions for nuns,¹¹⁰⁶ nineteen questions on the state of every house,¹¹⁰⁷ twelve questions for ‘exempt’ houses,¹¹⁰⁸ three questions for Cistercian and Praemonstratensian houses,¹¹⁰⁹ twenty-one questions for hospitals,¹¹¹⁰ thirty-two questions for cathedral churches or colleges,¹¹¹¹ fourteen questions for bishops and archbishops,¹¹¹² ten questions ‘touching the king’s highness to be proposed to every religious person’.¹¹¹³

It can be seen that the extensive range of questions related not just to religious houses, but to hospitals, *cathedral colleges, secular colleges, vicars choral and* diocesan officials. They are all in the same hand but not as neatly written as Layton’s Articles. *They show a small number of additions and amendments.*¹¹¹⁴ The manuscript is in a single unknown hand with additions principally in the same script.¹¹¹⁵ However, one small insert can be recognised as in the hand of John ap Rice.¹¹¹⁶ Clearly, the Articles of Enquiry are relevant to the Royal Visitation but do they post-date the Layton Articles and were they utilised in the Visitation itself, or were they earlier drafts?

¹¹⁰³ BL, Harley 791, fos. 18r - 19r.

¹¹⁰⁴ BL, Harley 791, fos. 19r - 20r.

¹¹⁰⁵ BL, Harley 791, fo. 20r/v.

¹¹⁰⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 21r /v.

¹¹⁰⁷ BL, Harley 791, fos. 21r - 22r.

¹¹⁰⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 22r /v.

¹¹⁰⁹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 23r.

¹¹¹⁰ BL, Harley 791, fo. 23r /v.

¹¹¹¹ BL, Harley 791, fos. 23r - 24r /v.

¹¹¹² BL, Harley 791, fos. 24r - 25r /v.

¹¹¹³ BL, Harley 791, fos. 25v - 26r.

¹¹¹⁴ e. g. in PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 15v, an article is crossed out concerning whether the abbot has given any new fees or corrodies since being appointed; in fo. 20r, an addition appears to have been made concerning the existence of an inventory, known to all members of the house, concerning jewels, etc; some gaps for a word or words appear to have been left in fo. 21r and inserts made, as in fo. 24r.

¹¹¹⁵ The capital ‘I’ is of such a particular style the hand could possibly be traced.

An important dating feature which ensures they post-date the Layton Articles is the reference to the Royal Supremacy Act and Treason Acts of November/December 1534. Another important dating clue is contained in the article:

‘Item, whether they know and believe or heard say that there is such an Act or statute of parliament also late made by the which among other things is enacted, ordained and established that if any person or persons after the first day of February last passed do maliciously wish will or desire by word or writing or by craft, imagine, invent, practice or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the kings most royal person’.¹¹¹⁷

This reference to 1 February ‘last passed’ places the Articles after February 1535.¹¹¹⁸ The expression ‘last passed’ does not convey a sense that the Articles have been drawn up immediately after February. Possibly, these Articles were drafted in the Spring/Summer of 1535, on the eve of the Visitation. Harley placed this manuscript immediately after his contemporary copy of the instructions for the ‘*Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey’¹¹¹⁹ which perhaps underlines his dating of the Articles as post January 1535.

These Articles are evidently extensive, with categories of monastic and ecclesiastical institutions being specifically addressed in the seventeen sides of manuscript paper. The writing is not neat, unlike the Layton Articles, and they therefore may represent a pool of questions to be posed in a general ecclesiastical Visitation, probably mainly culled from Articles used in episcopal Visitations. There

¹¹¹⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 20r: the ap Rice addition is the Article numbered 36.

¹¹¹⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 25v - my underlining.

¹¹¹⁸ The Treason Act of 1534 (26 Henry VIII, c. 13) was enacted from 1 February 1535, see P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. 1, *The King's Proceedings* (London, 1956), p. 279.

seems plenty of overlap between these Articles and those of Layton; for example, ten of the eleven Articles relating to the Visitation of nunneries in the Layton Articles are almost word for word included in the Harley selection.¹¹²⁰ The Harley 'Articles to be set forth to exempts' also bear resemblance to the Layton Articles and headings number 6 to 10.¹¹²¹ Indeed, with some word for word comparisons in the two documents, there is a strong suggestion that the two sets of Articles share some common root. If it had not been for the section, 'Articles touching the kings highness to be proposed to every religious person', with its post February 1535 dating, the Harley document could easily have been mistaken as a source for the Layton Articles.¹¹²²

The Harley Articles, within the religious categories, demonstrate no particular, extreme lines of questioning beyond that which may have been expected for an episcopal or an 'exempt' Visitation. The president, for example, was quizzed whether the Injunctions of the last Visitation have been fulfilled,¹¹²³ whether 'he be of sufficient literature able to instruct his brethren', whether 'he doth come to divine service daily' and 'whether he do keep and find a schoolmaster to teach his novices ... their grammar'.¹¹²⁴ The monks or nuns were examined on the Rule they profess and 'at what age'.¹¹²⁵ Nuns were asked 'whether any sister of this house be or hath been at any time heretofore defamed, noted, suspected or convict of Incontinence,

¹¹¹⁹ BL, Harley 791, fos. 5r - 17r. (LP dates its reference to the commission for first fruits and tenths to 30 January 1535. (see LP, 129)). Confusingly on Harley 791, fo. 17v, at the end of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* booklet, in another hand, appears 21 July Anno 36 (H.VIII 36 means 1544).

¹¹²⁰ Compare BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 21r/v with BL, Harley 791, fo. 21r/v.

¹¹²¹ Compare BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 15r/v with BL, Harley 791, fo. 22r/v.

¹¹²² So much so that some blank entries in the Harley articles can be completed by reference to Layton's, e. g. BL, Harley 791, fo. 21r: "Item whether any of them write any letters of love or () to any persons ...". The missing words are "lascivious fashion" found in BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV; fo. 21r, article 83.

¹¹²³ BL, Harley 791, fos. 18r - 20r.

¹¹²⁴ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18r/v.

how long ago and with whom or hath used ... any medicaments or means to oppress children conceived or to sett conception'.¹¹²⁶ Questions on the existence of pilgrimages and relics occur and 'how they know the same relics to be true relics and how they were brought hither' and 'whether they declare and manifest the said relics to pilgrims when they come thither and to what intent'.¹¹²⁷ The privileges of sanctuary were also questioned and 'whether they abuse those sanctuary maintaining such therein as goeth out of the same to rob abroad and come in again or rob within the sanctuary'.¹¹²⁸ The issue of protection in sanctuary for law breakers was a persistent concern for Cromwell.¹¹²⁹ The interrogations for cathedrals or secular colleges questioned the keeping of divine service, the fulfilment of foundation statutes and customs, satisfactory preaching, the 'number of vicars, deacons, choristers and other ministers to be continually maintained in this church as it ought to be',¹¹³⁰ and so on, are reminiscent of Tregonwell's statutes at Salisbury cathedral.¹¹³¹

It is interesting to note that the Harley Articles included within them many of the Injunctions which, as will be seen later, were delivered to religious houses. Thus, having a boy lying with a monk,¹¹³² the provision of annual accounts,¹¹³³ destruction of woods,¹¹³⁴ provision and care of the sick,¹¹³⁵ fairs or markets in the precincts,¹¹³⁶ monks at university,¹¹³⁷ and the distribution of doles according to the foundation

¹¹²⁵ BL, Harley 791, fos. 19v, 21r.

¹¹²⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 21r.

¹¹²⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 22v; similarly at hospitals, fo. 23v.

¹¹²⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 22v.

¹¹²⁹ G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation England 1509 - 1558* (London, 1977), p. 201.

¹¹³⁰ BL, Harley 791, fo. 24r.

¹¹³¹ Wilts & Swin, D1/1/4, fos. 65r - 68r.

¹¹³² BL, Harley 791, fo. 19r.

¹¹³³ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18r.

¹¹³⁴ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18v.

¹¹³⁵ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18v.

¹¹³⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 19r.

¹¹³⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18v.

statutes¹¹³⁸ were all referred to. Entrance into the monastery, pilgrimages and relics, and also the presence of women were mentioned in the Harley Articles, but not in such a prescriptive manner as the Injunctions required. It is possible to see that the ‘Articles touching the king’s highness to be proposed to every religious person’, concerning the Succession, Supreme Headship and the bishop of Rome’s jurisdiction and its abolition from books form the basis of the second and third Injunctions.

The Harley Articles therefore appear part of one critical or early discussion and build up to the implementation of the Royal Visitation in spring / early summer 1535 and formed some basis for the investigation and Injunctions. However, it is clear that they could not form the Articles applied during the Royal Visitation due to their extraordinary detail and length. Further, in examining the eventual material amassed by the Visitation, it is evident that such a scale of questions was not applied. Questions to the religious houses, at the least, included: the order of religious, the number professed, the founder’s name, the annual income, the current debt, the existence of pilgrimage and relics and the sexual crimes, treason or apostasy of the inmates.¹¹³⁹ Many of these questions are beyond the Harley 791 or Layton articles. Clearly, therefore, the Articles that the Royal Commissioners possessed were of a different and more compact form than those in Harley 791.

Immediately after the General Articles in Harley’s collection are a series of Articles for specific locations and two general enquiries about the regulation of houses.¹¹⁴⁰ Here the handwriting is identifiable: the article concerning

¹¹³⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 18r.

¹¹³⁹ CCCC MS III and the *Compendium Compertorum* represent answers to these questions, posed during the Royal Visitation.

¹¹⁴⁰ BL, Harley 791, fos. 27r - 34r.

Walsingham,¹¹⁴¹ the Cambridge colleges of St John's¹¹⁴² and Peterhouse,¹¹⁴³ the Savoy hospital¹¹⁴⁴ and the general enquiries¹¹⁴⁵ are written by ap Rice; the Articles for King Hall¹¹⁴⁶ are principally in Warmington's hand and the 'General Articles in all colleges and fellows'¹¹⁴⁷ of Cambridge University are jointly written by ap Rice and Warmington.

These named locations were visited, under Thomas Legh's commission, in the period October to mid November 1535, with ap Rice assisting throughout and Warmington involved until the beginning of November. With ap Rice and Warmington's proven joint involvement in writing the Articles of Enquiry at Cambridge, and with the knowledge that they were both at Cambridge in the period 21 to 29 October 1535, it seems fair to deduce that these additional Articles relate to the Royal Visitation of 1535.¹¹⁴⁸ These Articles are exciting because they demonstrate a direct link with the Royal Visitation itself. They reflect a response to the concerns about particular houses that the Visitors expected to have immediately prior to the Visitational process.

These specialised Articles were written on eight individual manuscript sheets.¹¹⁴⁹ In selecting and binding the manuscript pages, Harley cut the full folio

¹¹⁴¹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27r/v.

¹¹⁴² BL, Harley 791, fo. 30r.

¹¹⁴³ BL, Harley 791, fo. 30v.

¹¹⁴⁴ BL, Harley 791, fos. 32r/v - 33r/v.

¹¹⁴⁵ BL, Harley 791, fos. 28r, 34r.

¹¹⁴⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 29r/v: sixteen of the nineteen articles are in Warmington's hand, the heading is in ap Rice's hand.

¹¹⁴⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 31r; the first ten are in ap Rice's hand, the last three are in Warmington's.

¹¹⁴⁸ For ap Rice and Warmington's movements see Section 2.3.2 on Legh's Visitation.

¹¹⁴⁹ BL, Harley 791, fos. 27r - 34v.

pages into two halves, one having the papermark, the other not.¹¹⁵⁰ This has obscured the fact that these sheets formed part of an inter-connected booklet. But by identifying the papermarks and knowing the order in which the houses were visited, it is possible to reconstruct the booklet.¹¹⁵¹ This, of course, suggests that these Articles are from a memo book of the Visitation registrar, ap Rice may have compiled at the commencement or during the Visitation.¹¹⁵²

The questions to be posed to the Savoy hospital are in two sections: the first headed 'Touching the chaplains and other ministers of the Savoy'¹¹⁵³ and the second titled 'Articles of inquisition touching the Savoy'.¹¹⁵⁴

The Savoy hospital was a recent foundation, with the first master appointed in 1517.¹¹⁵⁵ The questions demonstrate a knowledge of the foundation statutes: 'Item: whether the hospitaller and subhospitaller do their duty in ministration of the poor without carnal affection or partiality according to the foundation'. Many of the questions seem directed to ensuring the physical and spiritual welfare of the inmates is satisfactorily provided: 'Item. whether the 2 chaplains under him, one between 7 and 8 in the morning and the other between 5 and 6 in the evening do visit all the poor and see that none of them lack the sacraments or other ghostly comfort'.¹¹⁵⁶

¹¹⁵⁰ The papermark is the standard hand/gauntlet surmounted by a five pointed star, connected by a 'stalk'.

¹¹⁵¹ Furthermore, fo. 28v, a blank side, shows severe fold marks and identification that it was the back of the booklet. The ordering of the booklet appears: fo. 33r/v, fo. 32r/v, fo. 31r/v, fo. 30r/v, fo. 29r/v, (possibly, fo. 27r/v, fo. 34r/v), fo. 28r/v (The full folio sheets being, fo. 33/fo. 28, fo. 32/fo. 29, fo. 31/fo. 30, with, fo. 27 and, fo. 34 being separate cut sheets).

¹¹⁵² It is not possible to definitely state that the general articles, previously discussed in Harley 791, fos. 18r - 26r are also part of ap Rice's memo book. However, it should be recalled that an addition does occur in ap Rice's handwriting.

¹¹⁵³ BL, Harley 791, fo. 33r/v.

¹¹⁵⁴ BL, Harley 791, fo. 32r/v.

¹¹⁵⁵ D. Knowles & R. N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales (Harlow, 1971), p. 373.

¹¹⁵⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 33r.

Questions regarding absence of the chaplains, whether the vestments and ornaments are well kept and whether the ‘confessor do his duty in visiting the poor and comforting them spiritually’ suggest a sensitivity by the Visitors in examining the hospital according to spiritual standards.

Of the seventeen questions in the first section, ten deal with the foundation and physical and spiritual requirements of the hospital, and seven concern the morality and quality of the hospital staff, men and women. The Visitors certainly are interested whether ‘any of them hath been at any time defamed, suspected or convict of incontinence, buggery, felony or any notable crime’, which reflects the line of questioning which enabled the *Compendium Compertorum* to be constructed. However, the quantity of questions addressing the physical and spiritual welfare of the inmates reflects a concern which is not normally associated with the character of the Visitors.

The second section of the Savoy Articles deals principally with questions to the Master. Again the foundation statutes are referred to with a question checking whether the specified officers, servants and twelve ‘honest women’ occupy their positions. The Visitors ask, ‘Item. Whether he [the Master] be merciful, benign and loving to the poor and not ‘skoymys’ or lothesome to visit them or to be amongst them’.¹¹⁵⁷ The emphasis appears to be on checking the management and conduct of the Master rather than to identify sordid material. This is underlined in the article, ‘Item whether he [the Master] or his ministers by his sufferance do take in such as

¹¹⁵⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 32r. ‘Skoymys’ means ‘squeamish’.

they reckon most clean of the poor and repel them that they reckon most sore or diseased for avoiding of their own loathsomeness or contagion'.¹¹⁵⁸

A few questions reflect the style normally expected of Legh – whether the Master 'be or has been' suspected of incontinence and 'whether any woods have been sold without the consent of the chaplains'. The question 'Item whether the word of God be preached here and how often in the year'¹¹⁵⁹ reflects the 'new spiritual outlook' of the Royal Visitation contained within much of its administration.¹¹⁶⁰

While these questions were apparently addressed to the master and officers at the Savoy hospital, it is evident they were supplementary questions. Questions on the value of the hospital, its debts, pilgrimages and relics are not noted in the Savoy Articles. A few weeks later, ap Rice told Cromwell, 'Sir the master of the Savoy had need to be looked upon by you for he observes not the Kings ordinances in many things as you may see by the compertes ...'.¹¹⁶¹ This suggests lines of questions of the master concerning the Supremacy and other Acts which must have been included in a standard list of questions that went beyond the supplementary articles.

The four sets of Articles concerning the Visitation of Cambridge colleges allow a direct insight into the Visitation of the university. Logan identified that the purpose of the Visitation of Oxford and Cambridge Universities was to gain their allegiance to the king as 'Supreme Head' and to 'champion aspects of the New Learning'.¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 32v.

¹¹⁵⁹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 32v.

¹¹⁶⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 276.

¹¹⁶¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56v (LP, IX, 661).

¹¹⁶² F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), p. 865.

Logan also considered that the Commissioners' visits to the universities were 'diversions or detours from the main business in hand', that is, a diversion from monastic Visitation. However, closer examination of the Cambridge Visitation Articles reveals a process which reflects a continuation of the same methods and line of questions as used at monasteries.

Examining the General Articles to be administered to all colleges gives a feeling of an attempt to improve standards of learning.¹¹⁶³ The first two Articles question 'whether the number of scholars and fellows be complete' and 'whether all the lectures done or accustomed be kept'. The next two statutes concerned favouritism and factions in choosing fellows and the relations between 'one country and of another'.¹¹⁶⁴ Ap Rice, in his letter to Cromwell announcing the end of the Visitation of the university, referred to redressing the 'partiality of countries in choosing fellows'.¹¹⁶⁵

Standard sorts of questions which appear in these Articles were asked at monasteries: 'whether they know anything worthy reforming in the house', 'whether the house be in debt and how much', 'whether there be any dilapidation in this house', 'who was first founder and who is now', can be recognised as the sort of material the Visitors were asking on their travels and which were included in the summary compertes. The question 'whether the master and other officers or ministers of this house do give accounts according to the [college] statutes' was also reflected in the similar monastic Injunction. The question concerning appropriated benefices 'and

¹¹⁶³ BL, Harley 791, fo. 31r.

¹¹⁶⁴ 'country' meant county or region.

¹¹⁶⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r (LP, IX, 167).

what be of their gift' was also addressed at the Savoy hospital and may reflect a policy option.

The remaining three questions, which are in Warmington's handwriting, resume the opening line of questions relating to the statutes: 'whether they choose certain to the faculties of law and other sciences according to their statute', 'whether the scholars of this house who have no friends or exhibition have a certain portion limited to them according to the statute', and 'whether the common chest be well ordered where the scholars, when they need, may borrow for a time a certain sum of money'.¹¹⁶⁶ These questions appear honest attempts to ensure colleges were fairly administered with a wider agenda than purely pursuing the Royal Supremacy or moral failure.

The specific Articles to be addressed to St John's College,¹¹⁶⁷ Peterhouse¹¹⁶⁸ and Kings Hall¹¹⁶⁹ appear to continue the emphasis on ensuring statutes were complied with and excellent learning was provided. At St John's, the college was questioned whether lectures were maintained according to the 'ordinances of their founder or by the last wills of any other benefactor'. With the statutes drawn up and revised by John Fisher,¹¹⁷⁰ executed only three months previously, the Visitors must have been aware of the paradox of a leading humanist educator being also a condemned traitor. Ap Rice demonstrated prior knowledge of the college, as he

¹¹⁶⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 31r.

¹¹⁶⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 30r.

¹¹⁶⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 30v.

¹¹⁶⁹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 29r/v.

¹¹⁷⁰ J. K. McConica, English Humanists and Reformation Politics (Oxford, 1968), p. 79.

expected to find about forty fellows and also he was aware of problems with the current lecturer of physics, a position established by 'Mr Linacre'.¹¹⁷¹

All three colleges were examined regarding the complement of fellows and the provision of annual accounts, reinforcing the initial enquiry of the General Articles. Peterhouse was questioned 'whether there are any bursaries' and had it 'two poor scholars'. The scholars of Kings Hall were examined on their attendance at Common Table and whether they all spoke Latin at meals as the statutes demanded. Many of these college Articles can, therefore, be seen as ensuring the educational standard and statutes are upheld.

However, the moral standard of fellows was not forgotten about. At Peterhouse it was questioned 'whether any of the fellows be riotous, "out by night", or of ill name or conversation'. Links with the line of questioning at monastic houses is also reflected in quizzing on 'whether there be an inventory always kept of the goods and jewels of this house', 'whether the muniments of this house be well kept' and 'whether they know anything to be reformed in this house'. The line of questions on benefices possessed by fellows and their value is consistent for all three colleges. This appears to represent a check on the misuse of plurality and residence which had been statutorily controlled by the Act of 1529.¹¹⁷²

What may appear surprising in these sets of Articles for Cambridge and its colleges is that there is no mention of the Royal Supremacy issue, no definitive pushing of the Latin and Greek, the languages of humanism and the New Learning,

¹¹⁷¹ Thomas Linacre, a leading early humanist.

¹¹⁷² S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 93.

and no reference to the teaching of theology. However, there was no need since the Articles of Enquiry dovetail perfectly into the Cambridge University Injunctions given to each college.¹¹⁷³ Logan noted that Cromwell was in total control of the university Visitations and the five Injunctions were his work.¹¹⁷⁴ It can be conjectured, given the elemental detail of the articles, that the Visitors themselves were left to compile questions for each Cambridge college.¹¹⁷⁵

The questions undoubtedly record a knowledge of organisation and problems at the colleges, which is unlikely to have been known outside Cambridge itself. It seems safe, therefore, to assume these Articles were compiled during the Visitation of Cambridge, from information hurriedly obtained from local sources immediately prior to each college's Visitation. They are in ap Rice and Warmington's handwriting, but Legh, the only commissioned deputy Visitor in this circuit, was a Cambridge man and could be expected to take a direct interest in his own university,¹¹⁷⁶ so may have had a hand in their compilation. In the process of issuing Cromwell's Injunctions to the whole university, Legh issued seven additional Injunctions on 22 October, a day after arrival at Cambridge, as his commission allowed him,¹¹⁷⁷ two of which overlap with the college Articles of Enquiry. Thus the Injunctions that no money is accepted for admission to the university and that factions within the university must cease with

¹¹⁷³ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 864-869.

¹¹⁷⁴ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 865.

¹¹⁷⁵ and no doubt similarly for Layton and Tregonwell's Visitation of Oxford University the previous month where Warmington was also in attendance.

¹¹⁷⁶ Legh had graduated BCL and DCL perhaps at St Nicholas' Hostel, Cambridge. (See Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (forthcoming) entry for Legh by A. N. Shaw) The Old Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885) entry suggests Legh may have been educated at Kings College, but this is incorrect and results from confusion with another Thomas Legh.

¹¹⁷⁷ F. D. Logan, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 880.

elections to posts on merit, are readily identified in each of the extant Articles.

Perhaps Legh's own experience at Cambridge prompted the probing on these issues.

The last specific set of Articles relate to Walsingham priory, all of which question the existence of relics, miracles and jewels.¹¹⁷⁸ These Articles of Enquiry first appear to have been noted by Nichols and thereafter are referred to by analysts of Erasmus' Colloquia.¹¹⁷⁹ Nichols suggests that these Articles relate to a Visitation of the priory in 1536 and Richard Southwell's letter to Cromwell of 25 July 1536 is used to support this claim.¹¹⁸⁰ However, Southwell's letter clearly related that the 'sequesters' have been to Walsingham and seized money, plate and jewels¹¹⁸¹ whereas the Articles of Enquiry clearly asked whether inventories existed and whether any jewels or plate had been 'alienated sold or pledged'. There is, therefore, a clear difference in approach: the Articles were seeking lists of jewels, while the Southwell sequestrations were identifying and taking the jewels. The articles, therefore, came from a period before July 1536 and my identification that these are in the hand of John ap Rice, the registrar at the Visitation of Walsingham in mid November 1535 clearly dates their compilation.¹¹⁸²

The Walsingham Articles list nineteen questions, the first three dealing with the jewels and the remaining sixteen dealing with the miracles and relics at the shrine. It

¹¹⁷⁸ B L Harley 791, fo. 27r/v.

¹¹⁷⁹ e. g. C. R. Thompson, Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 40, Colloquies (London, 1997), p. 657/658.

¹¹⁸⁰ J. G. Nichols (ed.), Pilgrimages to St. Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury by Desiderius Erasmus (London, 1849), p. 205.

¹¹⁸¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 275r.

¹¹⁸² P. Marshall, 'Forgery and Miracles in the Reign of Henry VIII', Past & Present, 178 (February 2003) p. 51, assumes the articles were related to the Royal Visitation. H. De Vocht (ed.), The Earliest English Translation of Erasmus' Colloquia, 1536 - 1566, Humanistica Lovaniensia, 2 (Louvain, 1928) p. l, li deduces that the Articles post-date the first translation which, from the preface to the first English edition, clearly is written at the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, at the end of 1536.

seems likely that another page of the whole folio sheet is missing from Harley 791, suggested by the tightness of the script in filling extant sides of fo. 27r and fo. 27v.¹¹⁸³ As de Vocht noted, there are many emendations and additions to the list which he noted as compiled by the author, not a copyist.¹¹⁸⁴ While, of course, these Articles may never have been posed as they stand, they do confirm the thinking of the Royal Commissioners. There can be no doubt that these questions were influenced directly by a reading of Erasmus' 'Peregrinatio Religionis Ergo' as Nichols, de Vocht, Marshall and other writers have appreciated. De Vocht deduced that eleven of the sixteen 'relic' Articles were formulated from Erasmus' description in the 'Peregrinatio'.¹¹⁸⁵ For example, Article 6 commences, 'Item in how many places of this house were the said relics showed and which were in which?' and to this ap Rice inserted and extended 'and whether the keeper [of] the same did not bring about tables to men of their offering as though [they] would exact money of them or make them ashamed except they did offer?'.¹¹⁸⁶ This addition is clearly a reference to Erasmus' own experience related in 'Peregrinatio', 'a certain pious embarrassment impels some to give when a person stands by',¹¹⁸⁷ and 'the custodian approached us, quite silent but holding out a board'.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸³ This claim is supported by, fo. 27r/v not having a water mark and no tandem page in this collection of articles exists with a watermark. Of course, this will be because Harley had the folio sheets sliced for mounting in his collection 791, the other page would be thrown away because it was blank.

¹¹⁸⁴ H. De Vocht (ed.), *The Earliest English Translation of Erasmus' Colloquia, 1536 - 1566*, *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 2 (Louvain, 1928), pp. xlvi, xlvii, xlviii). As I have identified, the whole page is written and amended by ap Rice.

¹¹⁸⁵ H. De Vocht (ed.), *The Earliest English Translation of Erasmus' Colloquia, 1536 - 1566*, *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 2 (Louvain, 1928), pp. xlvi, xlvii, xlviii.

¹¹⁸⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27r.

¹¹⁸⁷ C. R. Thompson, *Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 40, Colloquies* (London, 1997), p. 630, lines 18, 19.

¹¹⁸⁸ C. R. Thompson, *Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 40, Colloquies* (London, 1997), p. 633 lines 19, 20.

The 14th Article states, ‘Item what is the saying of the building of Our Lady Chapel and of the first invention of the image of Our Lady there and what of the house where the bear skin is’ (here ap Rice has inserted ‘and of the knight’) ‘and what of the other wonders that be there and what proofs be thereof?’¹¹⁸⁹ Here again are clear connections with ‘Peregrinatio’ where the knight’s escape was told by Erasmus’ guide as an example of a miracle, the ‘worn out bearskin’ was used to demonstrate the age of Our Lady’s house, and the ‘secrets of the Virgin’ were related to the image the chapel contained and additional miracles were identified with the finger joint of St Peter.¹¹⁹⁰

The Articles of Enquiry having, therefore, a firm basis in Erasmus’ Colloquy, undoubtedly suggest a reform tone in the questioning. Erasmus mocked the paraphernalia and money associated with pilgrimage, miracles and relics, but he did not seek to destroy the focus of devotion to Our Lady as his devout Prayer to the ‘Virgin Mother’ reveals.¹¹⁹¹ Erasmus himself was constantly questioning the authenticity of the Walsingham miracles and relics: as he explained, ‘I had wanted to see the ‘record’ to which the guides had referred’, ‘I was ashamed of having doubted, so clearly was the whole thing set before my eyes – the name, the place, the story, told in order’.¹¹⁹² He was expressing the need for validation and proof of stories, miracles and relics associated with the shrine, and revulsion at the apparent duping of pilgrims by the canons of the priory. This is reflected by ap Rice in his supplementary Articles thus: ‘5 Item What probation or argument have they to show that [the] same are true

¹¹⁸⁹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27v .

¹¹⁹⁰ C. R. Thompson, Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 40, Colloquies (London, 1997), pp. 630, 631; p. 632 lines 10, 11; p. 639 lines 3, 4; p. 631 lines 21 - 29.

¹¹⁹¹ C. R. Thompson, Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 40, Colloquies (London, 1997), p. 634 lines 10 - 16; Used today at Walsingham in guide books, e. g. E. R. Obbard, The History and Spirituality of Walsingham (Norwich, 1995), p. 55.

relics’, ‘9 Item if the said relics be now laid aside how long [ago] and for what cause they were so?’, ‘(11) Item whether then (if the facts be well proved) the case might not happen by some natural mean, not contrary to reason or possibility of nature’, ‘(12) Item if that be proved also whether the same might not proceed of the immediate help of God? And why the success of that case should be imputed to Our Lady and yet that to the image of Our Lady in this house more than another?’¹¹⁹³

These questions were seeking proof regarding the authenticity of relics. While Erasmus defensively asked such questions during his visit, for fear of being branded sacrilegious or a heretic, the Royal Visitation could aggressively ask such questions and seek to undermine the naïve or unscrupulous promotion of such items by the priory.

Not all the questions directly emanate from Erasmus’ ‘Peregrinatio’. Question 13, which ap Rice later inserted, stated: ‘Item whether the miracles were wont to be declared in pulpit heretofore and for what cause they were so? () a Whitsun Mondays the same time they were wont to be opened’.¹¹⁹⁴ The addition of Whit Monday evidently demonstrates another source of custom at the shrine. Question 19 sought to identify ‘who was the Sexton upon a 10 years ago or thereabout and let him be exactly examined whether he hath not renewed that they call Our Lady’s milk when it was like to be dried up’.¹¹⁹⁵ This suggests some rumour that the sexton was interfering with relics in the mid 1520s, many years after Erasmus’ visit.

¹¹⁹² C. R. Thompson, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 40, *Colloquies* (London, 1997), p. 634 lines 30 - 31 and 36 - 37.

¹¹⁹³ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27r/v.

¹¹⁹⁴ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27v. The brackets indicate a space left for a later insertion.

The Articles on pilgrimage, relics and miracles, prepared as they appear to have been immediately before the Visitation of Walsingham, are, in tone, no different from the general draft material being prepared for the Visitation. The mass of General Articles already examined shows a clear overlap with the specific case of Walsingham. In the general articles, for instance, item 17, ‘How they knew the same relics to be true relics and how they were brought hither’,¹¹⁹⁶ agrees closely with the Walsingham article, ‘5 Item what probation or argument have they to show that same are true relics’.¹¹⁹⁷ The General Articles show further reflection in the Walsingham enquiries: ‘16. Item what miracles are noted to be done by the same [relics] and [what] other approve is made for the same pilgrimage or relics here to be visited’¹¹⁹⁸ is seen at Walsingham in ‘4. Item what relics be in this house that be or hath [been] most in the estimation of the people’¹¹⁹⁹ and ‘(10) Item ... what proofs they have of the facts or of the narration thereof’.¹²⁰⁰ Clearly from the existence of the General Articles before the start of the Visitation, it was intended to question the value of relics and pilgrimage from the outset. The issue of relics, miracles and pilgrimages is seen at Walsingham to have a severe, Erasmian flavour.

The anti-relic atmosphere is also seen in the entry in the Norwich *Compendium Compertorum* extracts ap Rice sent Cromwell in late November 1535. The entry for Walsingham had the usual catalogue of incontinence claims against various canons at the priory and then ap Rice continued with the entries for Binham Priory and other Norfolk religious houses. Before sending the document to Cromwell, ap Rice added,

¹¹⁹⁵ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27v.

¹¹⁹⁶ BL, Harley 791, fo. 22r.

¹¹⁹⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27r.

¹¹⁹⁸ BL, Harley 791, fo. 22r.

¹¹⁹⁹ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27r.

¹²⁰⁰ BL, Harley 791, fo. 27v.

‘hic multa apparuit superstitio in fictis reliquiis’ at the foot of the Walsingham entry,¹²⁰¹ partially obscuring the ‘Bynham’ title of the next entry. Further, he then added ‘et miraculis’.¹²⁰² These additions strongly suggest that ap Rice felt it necessary to report the finding of relics and miracles to Cromwell: he was feeding back to Cromwell what Cromwell wanted to hear and did not dare to omit a note to this effect.¹²⁰³

While all of the Articles of Enquiry in Harley 791 specific to particular houses have now been reviewed, there exist two sets of brief Articles interwoven between them. The manner of their placing amongst the small selection of Articles for named institutions, such as the Savoy, Walsingham or the Cambridge colleges, suggests that these two sets of brief Articles were prepared for a specific, albeit unnamed, use. Both sets would provide the sort of feedback that has already been seen in the Visitors’ correspondence. They are both in the hand of ap Rice, which points to their authenticity. As neither has been previously reproduced and because they may reflect more accurately the sorts of questions the Visitors were actually asking, they are detailed below.

The first set was evidently directed towards an abbey, rather than a priory or nunnery:

‘(1) first whether they know anything worthy [of] reformation or amendment in the father Abbot of this house and what is the same and how it might be better amended

¹²⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 111v, ‘Here appear much superstition in feigned relics’.

¹²⁰² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 111v, ‘and in miracles’. This is written in a different alignment from the previous addition.

(2) Item whether they know, believe, suspect, or ever heard say that any of their brethren were or is defamed, noted, punished or convict of any notable crime as Adultery, fornication, buggery, apostasy, felony, treason, murder, conspiracy, perjury, drunkenship, or such, And what they be

(3) Item whether all alms and distributions due or accust[omed] to be done in this house be observed and fulfilled or no

(4) Item what relics and pilgrimages are in this ho[use] that be in the estimation amongst the people. And what the effects be of the same by the common opinion of the people

(5) Item whether they know *any manner of thing either in the head or in the* brethren of this house worthy of redress, reformation or amendment. And let the same [be] opened and declared by every one by the virtue of his o[ath] and under the pain of the king's indignation. And (...) he will discharge the king's conscience before God and (...) charge their own.¹²⁰⁴

The second set of brief Articles is even shorter:

‘ Circa statum domus

(1) first what treasure and store they have to supply all necessities and chances that may be incident to this house

(2) Item whether the buildings, tenements and lands be well and conveniently kept and repaired

(3) Item what benefices be of the gift or disposition of the master of this house

¹²⁰³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 111v. Of the twenty-three religious houses referred to in this document (LP, X, 364(2)) only one other, Broomholm, mentions ‘superstitiones’, fo. 112r.

(4) Item what pilgrimage is here used and what profit comes to the house thereby,¹²⁰⁵

Both these sets of brief Articles encapsulated a large part of the information obtained by the Royal Visitation, as reflected by their correspondence and the *Compendium Compertorum*. Interestingly, the only issue in which they overlapped was the question regarding pilgrimage.

In comparing the first set of these brief Articles with various other evidence, it is possible to view them as working documents for the short time available to the Visitors when at a religious house. The first article was asking the religious about the conduct of their abbot. This can be identified in Layton's Visitation in the Chichester diocese, where he was regularly referring to Cromwell the ability and morality of the master of the house. At Durford, Layton considered the abbot 'hath done right well',¹²⁰⁶ and at Waverley the abbot was 'honest but lacked authority over his monks'.¹²⁰⁷ At Shulbred priory the canons appear to have told Layton that the prior 'hath for himself but seven [whores]',¹²⁰⁸ and at Boxgrove abbey the prior 'has only two women'.¹²⁰⁹

In Legh and ap Rice's Visitation circuit, similar responses of both good and bad are obtained regarding the Master. At Stanley abbey the monks had perhaps claimed their abbot was guilty of 'incontinence with 4 or 5 women' and, when

¹²⁰⁴ BL, Harley 791, fo. 28r. Brackets indicate damage to the manuscript.

¹²⁰⁵ BL, Harley 791, fo. 34r (fo. 34v is blank). 'As regards the state of the house': a similar Latin title was used in the earlier extensive General Articles of Enquiry. See, fos. 21v/22r.

¹²⁰⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

¹²⁰⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 29 (LP, IX, 452).

¹²⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 115v (LP, IX, 533).

confronted with the information, the abbot confessed to this claim but stated 'before he was abbot'.¹²¹⁰

The second question perhaps holds the key to the accusations in the *Compendium Compertorum*. In asking 'whether they know, believe, suspect or ever heard say' that fellow religious were guilty of specified crimes leaves open a range of answers from rumours to facts. This is compounded by the addition 'or is defamed, noted, punished or convict of any notable crime'. The possible answers to this question can be expected to vary enormously and include past crimes atoned for, whether before entering the religious life or after. This style of questioning can be seen reflected in ap Rice's compertes from the Norwich diocese *Compendium Compertorum*.

At Bury St Edmunds, the compertes noted nine monks 'are defamed of Incontinence for excessive frequency of women'.¹²¹¹ These nine named monks were accused by 'common fame' (that is, by the servants or opinion outside the monastery)¹²¹² because 'the abbot and convent were previously confederate [i. e. leagued together] that they would not report anything against themselves'.¹²¹³ This report from the compertes was confirmed by ap Rice's letter sent from Bury St Edmunds to Cromwell during the Visitation of that monastery: 'As touching the convent we could get little or no compertes amongst them although we did use much diligence in our examination and thereby with some arguments gathered of their

¹²⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 509).

¹²¹⁰ BL, Harley 604, fo. 65 (LP, IX, 138).

¹²¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113, 'sunt diffamat de Incontinentia ob nimiam frequentiam mulierum'.

¹²¹² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113v, 'communi fama'.

¹²¹³ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113v, 'Abbas et conventus erant prius confederate ne aliquid contra se detegerent'.

examinations I firmly believe and suppose that they had confedered and compacted before our coming that they should disclose nothing'.¹²¹⁴

He further went on to say that although he 'could get little or no compertes' from the monks, such was his diligence he was able to obtain some information from others. 'And yet it is confessed and proved that there was here such frequence of women coming and resorting to this monastery as to no place more'.¹²¹⁵

The compertes at Bury can then be seen for what they were. The nine monks were defamed by others, for alleged incontinence, but it was not proved. The individual monks, including the prior, were named, but the incontinence allegations were evidently not proved as the Visitors could not specify details of how many times and with whom, and no monk would confess or accuse another monk.

The Articles of Enquiry had, therefore, elucidated information regarding a defamation claim at Bury which was too general to be proved. However, ap Rice and Legh have not told a lie in their claim. The individual monks probably were named by servants or others who, as ap Rice stated to Cromwell, 'confessed' and they did add the weak explanation in the compertes that this defamation was due to the frequency of women coming and going at the abbey. Clearly in an episcopal Visitation this claim would have provided the *detecta* which would have subsequently been examined and checked to provide true compertes. However, Legh and ap Rice were in a hurry. The claims against the nine were vague and such was their determination to establish a basis for crimes, this material was reported. To the credit

¹²¹⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145r (LP, IX, 772).

¹²¹⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145r (LP, IX, 772).

of Legh and ap Rice, it was reported in a manner whereby its insecure basis can be seen and judged.

This defamation claim can be contrasted in the Bury compertes with the next entry where:

INCONTINENCE { 'Robert Lavenham confessed adultery
John Osmunde, John Cambridge, they confessed *per voluntarias pollutiones*'¹²¹⁶

There is no vagueness here, these individuals were said to have confessed¹²¹⁷ to these crimes. Of course, we do not know whether the crimes were committed recently, or before entering religion or had already been noted and chastised – the first set of brief Articles of Enquiry, as has been seen, did not distinguish between these categories. In the extract of the Norwich diocese compertes, for example, there is only one instance listing a nun at Shouldham priory having a child before entering religion.¹²¹⁸ The next entry also noted a nun having a child (by a priest), but does not say 'before entering religion', so the assumption is that it occurred while she was professed.¹²¹⁹

In conclusion, it can be identified that the Layton Articles of Enquiry, normally associated by historians with the Royal Visitation, are unlikely to have been used. A larger collection of General Articles exists which post-date Layton's earlier version and are applicable both to monasteries and other ecclesiastical institutions. However, while these Articles clearly represent preparation for the Royal Visitation, they are too

¹²¹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113r (LP, X, 364(3)).

¹²¹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113r (LP, X, 364(3)), 'fatentur'.

¹²¹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 111r, 'pepint ante intoitum in religionem' - my underlining.

¹²¹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 111r (LP, X, 364(3)), 'peperint semel ex presbytero'.

unwieldy for practical application. The personalised Articles for the Savoy, Walsingham and the Cambridge colleges reflect realistic preparation for their Visitation, identifying clear attempts at redress and reform.

The two sets of brief, general monastic Articles probably hold the key to the Articles used by the Visitors in the Visitation. The wide ranging questions, seeking response on a variety of crime, appear in the ideal form to generate the response identified in the *Compendium Compertorum* extracts.

3.2 Visitational Injunctions

In the same way that previous historians' perceptions of the use of the 'Articles of Enquiry' in the Visitation have been proved to be faulty, the view of the content and use of the Visitational Injunctions needs to be modified. The monastic Injunctions are particularly important because they are the outline of reform expected to be implemented by the religious once the Royal Visitors had gone. It will be shown, contrary to current understanding, that as the Royal Visitation progressed, the Injunctions were amended and the Visitors made a personal input into the core Injunctions, which has never before been appreciated.

The monastic Injunctions titled: 'General Injunctions to be given on the king's highness behalf in all monasteries and other houses of what so ever order or religion they be' identified in BL Cotton Cleo. E IV¹²²⁰ are those typically referred to by historians as the standard set of Injunctions issued to every house.¹²²¹ The acceptance of these Injunctions will be questioned and modified.

It is clear from correspondence that, at the start of the Visitation in July, these Injunctions were not issued and probably, at that time, had not yet been formulated. This is identified as a result of a wrongly dated letter in LP, which, up to now, has confused the manner in which the Injunctions have been seen to have emerged.

¹²²⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 22, printed in D. Wilkins (ed.), Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 789 - 791 and G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxi - lxiii.

¹²²¹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 274; G. Baskerville, English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries (London, 1937), p. 132; J. Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 38.

On Wednesday 11 August, after perhaps two weeks of visiting religious houses, Layton received a letter from Cromwell, who was at Berkeley Heron at the time, telling him the king had said the Injunctions he was issuing were not satisfactory.¹²²² In his response, Layton writes, ‘As touching the Injunctions which your mastership do take to be very slender it may please you to understand that they be not given for Injunctions but only for summary monitions and rules to be observed until the Injunctions shall hereafter come to every place under the king’s seal ... for upon the summary rules the Injunctions must be devised and extended at length. Where in I do think it expedient first to commence a formal book or minute and afterwards to consult with you at your convenient leisure upon the same before I would proceed to the giving of Injunctions which should stand forever’.¹²²³

Evidently Injunctions were not being issued at this time. Indeed Layton’s suggestion appears similar to the normal approach at episcopal Visitation – the ‘formal book or minute’ effectively containing the *detecta*, being sifted to provide the *comperta* and the remedying Injunctions. Layton even said he had ‘declared in every place’ that ‘the Visitation is continued until the 8th day of August’ (effectively a year hence) giving time in which Injunctions could be tailored and issued.¹²²⁴ Again, this reflects the normal episcopal approach to Visitation. It also suggests that Layton believed he was involved in a reforming exercise, otherwise why talk about the Visitation process at each house lasting up to a year?

¹²²² PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225 (LP, VIII, 1127). LP dates this letter as 28 July, apparently at the start of the Visitation. However, the reference to the Court being at Berkeley corrects the date to ‘Wednesday at midnight’ 11 August. See Appendix 12 for schedule of ‘King Henry VIII’s Giest, 1535’.

¹²²³ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225 (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹²²⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225 (LP, VIII, 1127).

It is possible that the ‘summary monitions’ Layton referred to during the initial weeks of the Visitation are those tucked away in BL Cotton Cleo. E IV.¹²²⁵ Cotton observes that these two sides of manuscript are in Layton’s hand (which is correct). However, Cotton indexes this separate manuscript within Layton’s Articles of Enquiry and so they have been somewhat overlooked.¹²²⁶ LP places this manuscript in May 1534 and considers it instructions to be given to friars when obtaining their Succession oath.¹²²⁷ However, a more specific set of articles dealing with the General Visitation of the friars in 1534 has been discovered.¹²²⁸ The difference between the clauses in each set is small, but where they do differ it suggests those in Layton’s hand are later and for general religious application, not just for friars. The friars’ articles reflect the pro-supremacy claims that all religious were forced to swear to in 1534 and were equally valid for 1535. It is, therefore, possible Layton slightly amended the earlier document to provide a basis for the monastic Visitation of 1535.

Table 3 summarises this manuscript written by Layton.

¹²²⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 14r/v.

¹²²⁶ They are helpfully translated in J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials (London, 1721), vol. 1, pp: 207

- 208.

¹²²⁷ LP, VII, 590.

¹²²⁸ Guildhall library, MS 1231, fos. 1, 2.

TABLE 3 Layton's 'Rules' – A Summary

(BL Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 14r/v)

1. Every member be assembled in Chapter House.
2. Separately each to be examined.
3. Examination of loyalty to the king.
4. Everyone bound by oath to obey king and the royal succession.
5. By oath obliged to preach aforesaid to people.
6. Royal Supremacy confirmed by convocation of clergy and parliament.
7. Bishop of Rome no special dignity.
8. None preach of the bishop of Rome as pope.
9. Do not preach of the Holy Scripture in another sense.
10. How many preachers in every monastery? All sermons severely examined to ensure 'catholic and orthodox'.
11. Those preachers in prayer, first to commend to God, the king as supreme head, then queen Anne with her issue, then archbishop of Canterbury, and so on.
12. Any gold or silver plate or any other valuable goods to be produced and accounted for.
13. All by conscience and oath in the chapter house, agree to observe all things aforesaid.

These initial Injunctions being composed by Layton were, therefore, at the very least, a draft compiled in preparation for a forthcoming monastic Visitation. However, there are elements which suggest they may well be Layton's 'summary monitions'.

First of all, five of the thirteen items relate to the importance of preaching.¹²²⁹ On 25 June 1535, the king commenced a concerted campaign to press the clergy of the realm to preach. He sent a circular letter rehearsing that the Royal Supremacy had been agreed to by 'the bishops and clergy' and 'court of parliament', the clergy should 'preach unto our subjects the very true word of God, ... and declare the immensible enormities and abuses which the said bishop of Rome as well in title and style as also in authority and jurisdiction ... hath usurped'. The king also tells the bishops that they are to give 'like warning, monition and charge to all abbots, priors, deans ... within their diocese'.¹²³⁰ The king's letter was also addressed to Justices of the Peace, to ensure 'the said bishops and clergy' enacted his demand and 'certify us and our council' if they did not. They were told to remind the people of the 'treason committed ... by the late bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More ... and of certain others which lately suffered'.¹²³¹ The fear occasioned by the king's circular letter was reflected in the prompt responses from bishops detailing their obedience to the preaching instructions.¹²³²

¹²²⁹ See Table 3.

¹²³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 93, fo. 169; fo. 171r bears Henry's signet mark.

¹²³¹ PRO, SP 1 / 93, fo. 169r/v. Fisher had been executed on 22 June; More's trial had not yet commenced.

¹²³² BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 272 (LP, VIII, 922), 25 June, bishop of Lincoln; BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 160 (LP, VIII, 933), 27 June, bishop of Ely; BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 269 (LP, VIII, 941), 28 June, bishop of Chichester; PRO, SP 1 / 93, fo. 201 (LP, VIII, 953), 30 June, bishop of St Asaph; BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fos. 248 – 249 (LP, VIII, 963), 1 July, archbishop of York; BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fos. 252 – 253 (LP, VIII, 1082), 21 July, Bishop Tunstal.

Bedyll's letter to Cromwell dated 5 August¹²³³ demonstrates that the emphasis on preaching was being sharpened even further. Here Bedyll revealed that a *pro-forma* for preaching had been created and he and Edward Fox had recommended certain alterations. Strype thought that this preaching treatise was connected with the Visitation, and the Visitors carried copies with them.¹²³⁴ Clearly, Strype identified a link between Layton's manuscript and preaching, which may have been included within the initial objectives of the Visitation. Certainly, the coincidence of events and timing suggests the possibility that Layton's Injunctions were written on the eve of the Visitation, in July 1535.

To support the validity of these early 'monitions', the earliest letter from Layton on the Visitation was from Evesham, where he told Cromwell, 'we must take Tewkesbury in our way this day and there survey, peruse and see the inventory, appropriations and other muniments of the house.'¹²³⁵ This emphasis on goods and documents was reflected in the twelfth of Layton's articles, 'whatsoever gold or silver made into plate and engraved and whatsoever other moveable goods of any kind ... they [the monastery] be compelled to produce and show it and deliver a true and faithful account and Bill of all and singular the things'.¹²³⁶

The king told Cromwell that Layton's Injunctions were 'very slender'¹²³⁷ and this can be seen from the extant Injunctions. Looking at all thirteen reveals that the majority are, in reality, to do with the process of Visitation and the questions to be asked, rather than Injunctions to be implemented once the Visitor had left. For

¹²³³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 263 (LP, IX, 29).

¹²³⁴ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (London, 1721), vol. 1, p. 194.

¹²³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 4 (LP, IX, 3).

¹²³⁶ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (London, 1721), vol. 1, p. 208.

example, the third of Layton's 'monitions' states, 'That an inquisition be made and everyone compelled to give an account of his fealty and obedience towards our king, Henry VIII of that name'.¹²³⁸ Such a statement could only lead to vague and exaggerated responses. The item, 'then separately and by themselves, each to be examined upon things as should be thought convenient' is also vague and lacks any impetus to reveal serious misdemeanour in the religious house. If the emphasis was to identify and correct sexual incontinence, at this stage of the Visitation, then Layton might well be criticised by the king.

Without doubt, these Injunctions of Layton, even if they were produced before the Visitation, demonstrate that the purpose of Visitation, as far as he saw it, was to enforce the Royal Supremacy and identify monastic assets, rather than identify crimes.

On 12 August, Layton expected to be back with Cromwell and the court at Berkeley Heron. Here, it is clear from his letter, Layton had to make representation to Cromwell how the Injunctions should henceforth be given. Legh and ap Rice would also have been at Berkeley Heron, having returned from their journey to oversee the election at Vale Royal.¹²³⁹ There was probably very little discussion. Layton's view was 'I think it nowise expedient to give Injunctions forthwith¹²⁴⁰ but 'viva voce' or else by some note in writing some what to do for a rule and order until the Injunctions

¹²³⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225r (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹²³⁸ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (London, 1721), vol. 1, p. 207. BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 14r: Ut fiat inquisitio atque ut singuli rationem reddere cogantur suae erga Regem nostrum Henricum eius nominis octavum fidei et obedientiae'.

¹²³⁹ See Section 2.3.2 on Legh's and ap Rice's Visitation.

¹²⁴⁰ Presumably meaning at the end of each monastic Visitation.

shall come out under seal'.¹²⁴¹ Clearly Layton was pushing his original idea of a two stage approach: initially issuing 'summary monitions and rules to be observed' and then following up with Injunctions 'devised and extended at length' from the 'same summary rules'. However, what resulted from Berkeley Heron was a set of Injunctions for issue to all religious houses.

Three sets of contemporary Injunctions exist, each headed 'General Injunctions'. Superficially, each set appears the same. Table 4 provides a summary.

¹²⁴¹ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225r (LP, VIII, 1127).

TABLE 4 GENERAL INJUNCTIONS – A Summary

Ap Rice¹²⁴² Other¹²⁴³
(core)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | 1. Royal Supremacy and Royal Succession to be taught and upheld. |
| 2 | 2. Abbot and brethren released from papal vows. |
| 3 | 3. No monk can leave precinct. |
| 4 | 4. Women utterly excluded. |
| 5 | 5. Only one entrance to monastery and a porter appointed to guard it. |
| 6 | 6. Monks eat together / reading of New or Old Testament during refectio. |
| 7 | 7. Abbot eats with guests. No over-sumptuous dishes. |
| 8 | 8. Distribute leavings to poor people (not to valiant beggars). |
| 9 | 9. Foundation alms or distributions maintained. |
| 10 | 10. Wood and fuel sufficient for fire in refectory, from 31 Oct to Good Friday. |
| 11 | 11. All healthy monks sleep in separate beds in dormitory. |
| 12 | 12. No brother or monk to have children with them. |
| 13 | 13. Infirmary for ill and looked after. |
| 14 | Hospitality for the wayfarer. |
| 15 | Master to teach the novices grammar. |
| 16 | 14. One or two for Oxford or Cambridge. On return teach the word of God. |
| 17 | 15. One hour of Holy Scripture to be read. All to attend. |
| 18 | 16. After divine service hear / read Holy Scripture or laudable activity. |
| 19 | 17. Abbot every day relate Rule to Christ's doctrine. True religion not in ceremonies but cleanness of mind, pureness of living and true honouring of God. |
| 20 | 18. Annual accounts written in a Great Book. |
| 21 | 19. No waste of woods / leases to be agreed by convent. |
| 22 | 20. Register proceedings of dealings under convent seal. |
| 23 | 21. No one professed or he be 24 years complete. No enticements. |
| 24 | 22. No relics or feigned miracles for increase of lucre. Pilgrims to be exhorted to give to the poor instead. |
| 25 | 23. No fair or market within precincts. |
| 26 | 24. Monks to say Mass for soul of founder and estate of king and queen. |
| 27 | 25. Any appeal regarding Injunctions to be financed by abbot. |
| 28 | 26. Visitors can add special Injunctions according to the compertes. |
| 29 | 27. Power to give more Injunctions in the future and reform those convict of any notable crime. To dispose of papistical writings to Thomas Cromwell. |
| 30 | Penalties for non - observance of Injunctions. |

¹²⁴² PRO, E 36 / 116, fos. 19 - 22 (LP, VIII, 76(4)).

¹²⁴³ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fos. 65 - 71 (LP, VIII, 76(3) ?) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 22 - 25 (LP, VIII, 76(3) ?). Both of these manuscripts have been given the same LP reference.

The first of the three sets of Injunctions is the standard version used and referred to by historians, extracted from BL Cotton Cleo. E IV.¹²⁴⁴ This is not in a recognisable hand and contains mistakes and crossing out. It can be shown to have been copied out from another document.¹²⁴⁵ This set demonstrates a somewhat scruffy handwriting style. It contains twenty-seven Injunctions or clauses. The second set is in Robert Warmington's hand, neatly written, with a few corrections by Thomas Cromwell.¹²⁴⁶ It also contains twenty-seven Injunctions or clauses, with the wording being, in most instances, the same as the previous standard version. Both the first set and second set of Injunctions are included as 'Other' in Table 4. The third set is in ap Rice's hand, and is in Latin.¹²⁴⁷ This set contains two additional Injunctions to those in the other versions. The first addition defines the requirements of hospitality for strangers. The second addition requires the abbot to provide a master to teach the juniors and novices their grammar.¹²⁴⁸ Other than the two additions, the ordering of the Injunction clauses is the same in all three sets. However, the Latin Injunctions conclude, which the other two do not, with an outline of the penalties to be incurred if the Injunctions are not upheld.¹²⁴⁹

While the phrasing of the first two sets of Injunctions is almost the same, the ap Rice set, when translated, has notable embellishments and differences. Certainly, in

¹²⁴⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 22r to 25v and copied in D. Wilkins (ed.), Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. iii (London, 1737), pp. 789 - 791, and G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxi - lxxiii, and which, in turn, have been used to provide most modern references, e. g. D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 274 - 277.

¹²⁴⁵ e. g. BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 24r where words are repeated in the nineteenth Injunction, or similar in, fo. 22v. on, fo. 25v, the word 'Jurisdictionis' was read for 'injunctionis' and then corrected.

¹²⁴⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 65r -, fo. 71v (LP, VIII, 76(3)). My thanks to Mrs Sarah Tyacke, Keeper, and Dr Amanda Bevan of the PRO for discovering the location of this manuscript whose reference in LP is miscatalogued.

¹²⁴⁷ PRO, E 36 / 116, fos. 18r - 22v (LP, VIII, 76(4)). This third set is marked 'Ap Rice (core)' in Table 4.

¹²⁴⁸ PRO, E 36 / 116, fos. 21r and 22v.

¹²⁴⁹ PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 22r.

having the same ordering of Injunctions and largely the same wording, they all demonstrate they share the same root. It is important to identify which set of Injunctions was implemented if any analysis of their motivation and purpose is to be undertaken.

Through examining the appeals from monastic houses regarding the implementation of the Injunctions given or sent to them in late August, it is clear the 'ap Rice' version was the set used at that time. The proof will also demonstrate that religious houses visited before mid August, in the period when 'monitions' only were being issued, were later sent the 'ap Rice' Injunctions.

Layton can have spent only a day or two at Berkeley Heron with Cromwell and other members of the Visitation team, as on Monday 16 August he was at the cathedral priory at Bath, having completed its Visitation and having, a day or two before, visited Monkton Farleigh.¹²⁵⁰ But it was over a month later, on 24 September, that the prior of Bath wrote to Cromwell requesting licence for the cellarer and himself to evade the Latin Injunction forbidding exit from the monastery which he had received as a result of the Visitation: 'Quod nullis huius cenobii monachus sive confrater septis huius cenobii quovismodo egrediatur'.¹²⁵¹ This Injunction is almost a word for word reproduction from the ap Rice set of Injunctions.¹²⁵² The prior of Bath's letter also included a request in English that he have some latitude on the Injunction 'that no woman shall come within the septa or precincts of my monastery';

¹²⁵⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42) - wrongly dated in LP to 9 August.

¹²⁵¹ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42) 'that no monk or brother of this monastery by any means go forth of the precincts of the same'.

¹²⁵² For the same Injunction, PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 19v reads, 'Quod nullus huius monasterii monarchus sive confrater septis huius monasterii quovismodo egrediatur'.

he explains that a woman was the plaintiff in a court case he had to deal with.¹²⁵³

This Injunction is also included in all the sets of Injunctions.

This example suggests that Layton had left Berkeley Heron so promptly that copies of the new Injunctions could not be immediately distributed, hence the Injunctions arrived over a month after Layton's visit. This conclusion is reinforced by the manner in which Winchcombe abbey received its Injunctions. Winchcombe was probably visited at the time the court and Cromwell were staying there or at nearby Sudeley Castle, between 23 and 26 July.¹²⁵⁴ From comments made by a monk of Winchcombe later in the year, Layton may have been the Visitor.¹²⁵⁵ Evidently they were visited at the time when Layton was issuing only 'summary monitions', because on 8 September the abbot of Winchcombe wrote to Cromwell, telling him he had fairly recently 'received certain Injunctions'.¹²⁵⁶ In his next letter, the following day, he makes it clear how he received them: 'on Thursday last past [2 September] I declared with my brethren the Injunctions sent unto us'.¹²⁵⁷ Although the Visitation took place over a month before these letters, the Injunctions were not sent until the beginning of September. That they were the ap Rice Injunctions is proved by an attachment to his letter of 8 September, which specifies the five items (in Latin).¹²⁵⁸ These five Injunctions are each exact copies of ap Rice's set of Injunctions.¹²⁵⁹ Indeed the abbot was writing to Cromwell on 9 September only because his community was threatening to complain that the recently received Injunction

¹²⁵³ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 232 (LP, IX, 426).

¹²⁵⁴ See Appendix 12.

¹²⁵⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 723). Cromwell also went to Winchcombe (see PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 127 (LP, IX, 321)) and 'declared the efficacy of our 3 vows in which we trust too much' - perhaps he was the Visitor.

¹²⁵⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 108 (LP, IX, 303).

¹²⁵⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 121r (LP, IX, 314) - my underlining.

¹²⁵⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 139r/v (LP, IX, 1170) contains the five items of Injunction requiring licence and appears to be the attachment referred to in LP, IX, 303.

requiring the abbot to preach daily on how their rule related to Holy Scripture was not being complied with.

Glastonbury was visited by Layton on 22/23 August.¹²⁶⁰ Shortly afterwards, on 2 September, Sir John Fitzjames, Lord Chief Justice and steward of Glastonbury, wrote to Cromwell saying, 'I have spoken with my lord abbot of Glastonbury concerning such Injunctions as were given him and his convent by your deputy at the last Visitation there'.¹²⁶¹ These four Latin Injunctions were again, exact extracts from the ap Rice set of Injunctions.¹²⁶² Further, a reference to 'the king's Injunction is not observed touching a house for poor wayfaring men', noted in Bishop Clerk's Visitation two and a half years later, demonstrates Injunction 14 was given to Glastonbury. This Injunction is included only in the ap Rice set of Injunctions.¹²⁶³ Evidently, by this stage the Injunctions were being given out by the Visitors, and the Injunctions issued were the Latin ap Rice version.

Similarly, the hospital of St Marks in Bristol (called the Gaunts) was visited by Layton on 24 August, two days after Glastonbury.¹²⁶⁴ Thirteen days later, the owner of a corrody, Jane Guildford, wrote to Cromwell complaining about the Injunctions 'given to the master of the Gaunts' regarding the demand 'that no women shall come within the precincts'.¹²⁶⁵ The next day the master of the Gaunts himself wrote stating, 'I have received the king's highness Injunctions, and yours, the contents whereof I

¹²⁵⁹ These refer to the ap Rice Injunctions numbers 3, 4, 5, 19 and 23. See Table 4.

¹²⁶⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 380r/v (LP, IX, 168).

¹²⁶¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 47 (LP, IX, 253) - my underlining..

¹²⁶² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 253(2)).

¹²⁶³ SRS, vol. 56, p. 160; SRO, Taunton, D/D/Ca - 10a, p. 24.

¹²⁶⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 580r/v (LP, IX, 168).

¹²⁶⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 93 (LP, IX, 289).

have groundelye considered'.¹²⁶⁶ Thus it would appear that after having been given the Injunctions, reflected on their effect in restricting all monks to the precinct and somehow communicated with Jane Guildford (he could not talk to her) regarding the impact it would have on her presence in the precincts, he wrote to request a dispensation.

It, therefore, seems likely that for the first two to three weeks of the Visitation, from the end of July until mid August 1535, the Commissioners were not 'armed with ... a list of Injunctions'.¹²⁶⁷ They initially depended on producing 'summary monitions' to abbots at the conclusion of each Visitation. Thereafter, they can be shown to be using the ap Rice set of Injunctions and not the standard version generally accepted by historians.

Evidently, a different set of Injunctions was being used from those that historians normally consider relevant. However, the other two versions should not be dismissed. They are, effectively, copies translated into English of the ap Rice version, but with two Injunctions and the prescribed penalties for non-observance missing. Perhaps they were developed for those houses where understanding of Latin might present an obstacle, although the reason some items were missing is not easily explained. Certainly, that the penalties for non-observance are missing might suggest they represent an earlier draft of what was eventually to become the ap Rice version. Although there are differences, all three sets are clearly linked and rooted to the definition of the Injunctions from the Berkeley Heron meeting.

¹²⁶⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 97 (LP, IX, 296).

¹²⁶⁷ G. H. Cook, Letters to Cromwell on the Suppression of the Monasteries (London, 1965), p. 37.

What is fortunate is that from the Warmington version we can see, in Cromwell's amendments, what he would have liked to have seen in the Injunctions. That none of these additions are in the (Latin) ap Rice version, demonstrates that the king must have had a hand in agreeing their format. Looking at each of the amendments reveals a practical as well as a Lutheran element in Cromwell's thoughts.

In the fourth Injunction, 'Also that women of what state or degree so ever they be, be utterly excluded from entering in to the limits or circuit of this monastery or place'. To this has been included Cromwell's addition, 'unless they first obtain licence of the king's highness or his Visitor'.¹²⁶⁸ In this instance, it would appear, Cromwell appreciated, as an afterthought, that problems might occur with wives of the nobility or the wife of the founder unable to take hospitality at a monastery in the time honoured manner. This would have become particularly apparent as, during the kings giest, queen Anne and her ladies may have been staying in the 'circuit' of Winchcombe abbey and certainly at Gloucester abbey and Hailes abbey. However, Cromwell either thought better of this or was overruled, because the ap Rice version reverts to the cold original.¹²⁶⁹ Cromwell had been told by the king he wanted the Injunctions absolutely applied, which demonstrates, in the ap Rice version, that the king's will prevailed.¹²⁷⁰

Cromwell's other two additions are: in the second 'general Injunction' the word 'potentate' has been inserted to deny further any recognition of supremacy to 'any

¹²⁶⁸ Comparing BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 22v with PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 65v.

¹²⁶⁹ PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 19v: 'Item quod femine cuius cumque condicionis ab ingressu infru septa sive clausum huius monasterii penitus arceantur et excludantur'.

¹²⁷⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225 (LP, VIII, 1127).

foreign power, potentate person, or place'.¹²⁷¹ This again is not included in the ap Rice version.¹²⁷²

To the twelfth Injunction, 'Also that no brother or monk of this house have any child or boy living or privily accompanying with him'¹²⁷³ has been added 'or otherwise haunting unto him other than to help him to Mass'. Again this latitude appears a piece of common sense by Cromwell, to ensure the Mass is celebrated, in the time honoured manner, with the assistance of altar boys. The ap Rice version again retains the original sense and again demonstrates an 'absolute' application of the Injunctions.¹²⁷⁴

However, there is a revealing amendment of Cromwell's which is again not utilised in the final Injunctions. The original Warmington version read: 'Also that every brother of this house that is a priest shall say a Mass for the founder's soul and for the most happy and most prosperous estate of our sovereign lord the king and his most noble and lawful wife Queen Anne'.¹²⁷⁵ Clearly in this original version, each monk who was also a priest was being required to offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the intention of the founder, the king and the queen. Whether this was daily, weekly or monthly is not specified. Cromwell diluted these orthodox Catholic sentiments by initially amending the draft to read, 'also that every brother of this house that is a priest shall every day in his Mass pray for the most happy and most prosperous estate

¹²⁷¹ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 65v - my underlining.

¹²⁷² PRO, SP36/116, fo. 19v 'aut alicuius extere potestatis [sive] persone aut loci'.

¹²⁷³ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 69r.

¹²⁷⁴ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 20v 'quod nullus confrater sive monachus huius domus habeat aliquis puerum secum cubantem aut secreto conversantem'.

¹²⁷⁵ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v. The Latin version in PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 22r says effectively the same.

of our sovereign lord the king and his most noble and lawful wife Queen Anne (and the lady Elizabeth princess their)'.¹²⁷⁶

This amendment appears to display a Lutheran sentiment of Cromwell. Altering 'say a Mass for' to 'in his Mass pray for' can be seen as undermining the concept of offering the sacrifice of the Mass for a particular intention. The difference is a major attempt to undermine Catholic orthodoxy by turning the intention into no more than ancillary 'bidding prayers'. This amendment is clearly not Erasmian, as Erasmus held 'what is more solemn than the Mass' and focussed his attack on the 'sacreddest of mysteries' being sold for money.¹²⁷⁷ In offering the Mass for the king and queen, there is no trace of the corruption Erasmus refers to: 'In England at this present time there is neither house nor tavern ... where the sacrifice of the Mass is not offered and money paid for it'.¹²⁷⁸ Further, Cromwell strikes out 'the founder's soul', which suggests his questioning of the doctrine of purgatory, and again reflects Lutheran sentiments rather than Erasmian. Cromwell's own addition 'and the Lady Elizabeth Princess their' is cut off in mid sentence and then crossed out. Perhaps Cromwell realised the addition would also require some reference to future royal offspring making the whole prayer too lengthy. It is possible that the amendments of Cromwell were attempts later in the Visitation to alter the style of the Injunctions, based on experience and personal conviction.

In the case of the Injunction banning women from the precincts, it can be seen in Bedyll's Injunction at Spalding, dated 27 January 1536 that this had been, by this

¹²⁷⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v - my underlining denotes alterations. The underlined item in brackets, Cromwell added then crossed out.

¹²⁷⁷ J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (London, 1899), p. 373.

¹²⁷⁸ J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (London, 1899), p. 345.

time, considerably watered down to allow mothers and sisters of monks to visit.¹²⁷⁹ However, the amendment reducing the offering of Mass for the souls of founders, etc. into saying prayers, was not adopted. At St Cross hospital Winchester, the priests were required to offer a Mass for the soul of the founder of the house and for the happy state of the king and queen within a month of Legh's visit on 20 September.¹²⁸⁰ At Spalding on 27 January, the monks were told to offer the 'altaris sacrificium' for similar intentions according to the manner and form prescribed by its benefactors'.¹²⁸¹

From mid August, it is, therefore, evident that the Visitors were issuing the core ap Rice Injunctions. From the king's interest in the content of the Injunctions, expressed to Cromwell,¹²⁸² it seems fair to believe he had sight of them at Berkeley Heron and approved them.

The king or Anne Boleyn may also have a direct input in the manner in which the Injunctions regarding relics and miracles was formulated and enacted at Berkeley Heron. Anne Boleyn's chaplain (William Latymer), it will be recalled, wrote a chronicle of her life.¹²⁸³ Within it he wrote of incidents occurring on the progress of 1535,¹²⁸⁴ demonstrating her involvement in undermining the abuses that had 'crept into the church of Christ'.¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁷⁹ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 150v, Injunction 18.

¹²⁸⁰ HRO, 111 M 94 W C5/1, fo. 2v ('11').

¹²⁸¹ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 153r, Injunction 42. 'The sacrifice of the altar' could hardly be more orthodox.

¹²⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 94, fo. 225r/v (LP, VIII, 1127).

¹²⁸³ M. Downing, 'William Latymer's Chronickille of Anne Bulleyne' in *Camden Miscellany XXX*, 4th series vol. 39 (London, 1990), pp. 46 - 65.

¹²⁸⁴ E. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford, 1986). Ives dates it (pp. 308/309).

¹²⁸⁵ M. Dowling, 'William Latymer's Chronickille of Anne Bulleyne' in *Camden Miscellany XXX*, 4th series vol. 39 (London, 1990), p. 60.

‘... being in progress at Winchcombe a place next adjacent to an abbey sometime called the abbey of Hailes, wherein was a marvellous abominable pilgrimage to blood (surmised the blood of Christ); mistrusting that which afterwards she approved to be true, sent thither certain of her chaplains and others, straightly commanding them truly and faithfully to view, search and examine by all possible means the truth of this abominable abuse. Who executing their charge perceived, partly by their industry but especially by examination of certain that knew the convent thereof, that it was nothing else but the blood of some duck, or as some say, red wax. Whereupon her highness being thoroughly informed never stayed, but made means to the King his majesty that this idolatrous abuse might be taken away. And she obtained so that he caused the same immediately to be plucked down, to the great comfort of the ignorant and weak Christians which otherwise must needs have perished through the inordinate worshipping of what devilish invention.’¹²⁸⁶

This incident, therefore, occurred whilst the court was at Winchcombe – which was in the period 23 to 26 July.¹²⁸⁷ Cromwell was probably in attendance as he had just arrived at court at this time and definitely visited Hailes.¹²⁸⁸ The visit to Hailes by Anne Boleyn and the king, therefore, occurred at a time when the Injunctions were not yet finalised. With no previous precedent for the removal of relics it is intriguing to see the twenty-fourth monastic Injunction emanating from the influence that Anne Boleyn had with the king:

¹²⁸⁶ M. Dowling, ‘William Latymer’s Chronickille of Anne Bulleyne’ in *Camden Miscellany XXX*, 4th series vol. 39 (London, 1990), p. 61. E. Ives *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford, 1986) Ives suggests the relic was removed temporarily (pp. 308 - 309).

¹²⁸⁷ See Appendix 12. E. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford, 1986), p. 308 says third week of July.

¹²⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 203 (*LP*, X, 192).

‘Item: that they shall not show no relics or feigned miracles for increase of lucre. But that they exhort pilgrims and strangers to give that to the poor that they thought to offer to their images or reliques.’¹²⁸⁹

Perhaps it is more than coincidence that an attack on ‘superstitious’ images and relics was contained in Layton’s first letter after he had been with Cromwell formulating the ap Rice Injunctions. From Bath, on Monday 16 August, Layton told Cromwell:¹²⁹⁰

‘by this bringer my servant I send you vincula sancti petri which women of this country used always to send for in tempore partus to put about them to have thereby short delivery and without peril, a great relic here counted because the patron of the church is St Peter. Judge you what you like but I suppose the thing to be a very mockery and a great abuse that the prior on Lammas day¹²⁹¹ should carry the said chain in a basin of silver in procession and every monk to kiss the same post evangelium with great solemnity and reverence having thereof no manner thing to show how they came first unto it, neither having thereof in writing. You shall also receive a great comb called Mary Magdalen’s comb, Saint Dorothy’s comb, Saint Margaret’s comb the least. They cannot tell how they came by them, neither hath anything to show in writing¹²⁹² that they be relics. Whether you will send them again or not I have referred it to your judgement and to the King’s pleasure.’

¹²⁸⁹ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v. See Table 4.

¹²⁹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44 (LP, IX, 42).

¹²⁹¹ Lammas day, 1 August, the feast of Petrus ad Vincula.

¹²⁹² ‘to show in writing’: this seems to be the test upon which the legitimacy of relics is being judged.

This letter bears strong resemblance to the Hailes story – relics of doubtful authenticity are being derided, taken away from their location and their return is dependent on Cromwell’s ‘judgement to the King’s pleasure’.¹²⁹³

Similarly, a week later, in Layton’s next extant letter, he is sending back to Cromwell, collected from Maiden Bradley priory, ‘bag of relics wherein you shall see strangest things, as shall appear by the scripture, as God’s coat, Our Lady’s smock, part of God’s supper in cena domini, pars petre super qua natus erat¹²⁹⁴ Jesus in Bethlehem.’

And from Bruton abbey he sends ‘Our Lady’s girdle of Bruton, red silk which is a solemn relique sent to women travelling which shall not miscarry in partu [labour]. I send you also Mary Magdalen’s girdle and it is wrapped and covered with white, sent also with great reverence to women travailing’.¹²⁹⁵

Again this sudden outburst on this topic of relics reflects the receptive audience Layton expected from Cromwell and apparently the king. There appears every reason to believe that Anne Boleyn and hence the king was responsible for the particular Injunction on ‘reliques’.

The Visitors were also adding their own Injunctions, as Clause 28 of the core Injunctions allowed. This is suggested, at Glastonbury, where the numbering sequence of the Injunctions issued by Layton is displaced compared to the standard

¹²⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 44r (LP, IX, 42).

¹²⁹⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 249 (LP, IX, 168) ‘on the Lord’s table, part of the stone on which was born’.

¹²⁹⁵ BL, Cotton Cleo. EIV, fo. 249 (LP, IX, 168).

Injunctions. The seventeenth Glastonbury Article ‘of the kings Injunctions’ concerns hospitality for travellers. This is the fourteenth of the ap Rice Injunctions,¹²⁹⁶ suggesting at least an extra three were prescribed by Layton.

It was as a result of the Injunctions being applied ‘absolutely’ that so many heads of religious houses appealed to Cromwell. On 20 August, Legh, in writing to Cromwell from Lacock abbey, reported that he had ‘restrained as well the heads and masters of the same place as the brethren from going forth of the precincts’.¹²⁹⁷ He had done this ‘to my instructions and to the kings graces pleasure and yours’. This action ‘grieves the heads, not a little’. Cromwell’s *Remembrance* written a few days after this, partially repeats Legh’s comment: ‘Item: of the Visitation and how little¹²⁹⁸ much it grieves the heads to be kept within their monasteries’.¹²⁹⁹

Ap Rice also wrote from Lacock, at the same time as Legh, but commented that the Injunctions were ‘over straight’ in restraining the heads from leaving the precinct and not allowing women, of whatever state, to enter.¹³⁰⁰ While Legh kept to the letter of the Injunctions, Layton reputedly was licensing the heads of houses to leave the precincts.¹³⁰¹ Within a week, therefore, of the ap Rice core Injunctions being formulated, they were under pressure to be clarified or modified.

Cromwell’s *Remembrances* often represent issues for discussion with the king and so it is possible the issue of strict application of the Injunctions was discussed.

¹²⁹⁶ SRO, D/D/Ca - 10a, pp. 2 - 30, or SRS, vol. 56 (1941), p. 160. Many of ap Rice’s Injunctions can be identified here.

¹²⁹⁷ BL, Harley 791, fo. 65r (LP, IX, 138).

¹²⁹⁸ The word ‘little’ is crossed out.

¹²⁹⁹ PRO, E 36 / 143, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 498(1)).

¹³⁰⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 139 (LP, IX, 139).

What is certain is that by 3 September Legh was given authority to ‘licence the heads ... to go forth of their monasteries’.¹³⁰² Because of his view that the Injunctions should not easily be diluted and, at the least, the king and Cromwell should profit from it, Legh intended ‘to release none’.¹³⁰³

Within a fortnight of the core Injunctions being issued, the rigid application of monastic enclosure is identified as having been modified. Cromwell can be seen granting licences for travelling outside the precincts throughout the Visitation.¹³⁰⁴ Knowles did not recognise the realism and latitude being applied so early in the Visitation. He laboured at length the uncanonical nature of the total restriction of the religious, and then, when Cromwell allowed later dispensations, saw this as illogical if the intention had been to reduce the religious to a ‘primitive discipline’.¹³⁰⁵ Surely the prompt change of mind over the Injunctions reflected the acceptance that the original Injunction, an attempt to improve discipline, was unworkable. If it had really been created as a means of undermining monasticism, the Injunction would have been upheld and no licences issued.¹³⁰⁶ In reality, the use of licensing represented a method, as in the case of the bishops, of ensuring religious houses appreciated where authority lay – not with St Benedict, not with the Pope, but with the king, the Supreme Head of the Church.

¹³⁰¹ BL, Harley 604, fo. 65 (LP, IX, 138). Legh repeats this complaint in his next letter four days later, see PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

¹³⁰² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 265).

¹³⁰³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 265). Legh continued to have a tough view of issuing licences for the heads, see PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 222).

¹³⁰⁴ At Hyde, Winchester: BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 63r (LP, IX, 724) (c. mid September), where officers and brethren were allowed egress, given certain conditions. At St Mary’s York: BL, Lansdowne 973, fo. 52r (c. January/February 1536) the abbot could decide who left the precinct. At Whalley abbey: BL, Lansdowne 973, fo. 47v (c. February/March 1536) again the abbot could decide who left the precinct.

¹³⁰⁵ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), 277/278.

¹³⁰⁶ Knowles accepts this. See D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 278.

Knowles' claims that Layton was not applying the Injunctions restricting egress from the monastery, and was granting dispensations are untrue.¹³⁰⁷ This finding is based on Legh's hearsay accusations to Cromwell. Layton certainly was implementing this Injunction, as well as the others, as can be seen at Bath in August,¹³⁰⁸ at St Augustine's, Bristol¹³⁰⁹ also in August and Abingdon in September.¹³¹⁰ There is, therefore, no reason to believe that the various Visitors were failing to work in a broadly cohesive manner, or were being slack in the manner they enacted the Injunctions. Appendix 17 identifies, from a wide range of Visitors, the time lag between the Visitation of a particular house and an appeal for licence. It is quite clear that after the initial delay in formulating the core Injunctions, religious houses were typically appealing, especially regarding forced enclosure, within a few days.¹³¹¹

In their concentration on the general Injunctions specified in BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, historians have seen the Injunctions as pre-specified and unchanging.¹³¹² Knowles has influenced the current understanding of the role of the Visitors and their Injunctions in his comment: 'As for the Injunctions, these were not framed after the Visitation to meet the individual case, but were carried round by the Visitors,

¹³⁰⁷ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 278, 281.

¹³⁰⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 232 (LP, IX, 426).

¹³⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 305 (LP, IX, 215).

¹³¹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 34 (LP, IX, 455).

¹³¹¹ Most of the appeals in Appendix 17 concern licences to go outside the precincts.

¹³¹² See D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 274 - 277, or P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. 1, *The King's Proceedings* (London, 1956), pp. 291 - 292, or Baskerville, *Monks and the Suppression*, p. 132, or J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 38. Only with the Injunction regarding dismissal on age grounds (see later) has variation been identified, see for example, F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', pp. 214 - 215.

presumably on a printed broadsheet, and served on all communities before the Visitors left – only a few hours, it might be, after his arrival’.¹³¹³

Knowles, however, was unaware of two contemporary sets of Injunctions, from St Cross hospital, Winchester and Spalding abbey, which I have discovered, that demonstrate the Visitors were taking time and trouble in providing reforming Injunctions.¹³¹⁴

The St Cross hospital, Winchester Injunctions were handwritten as a result of the Visitation on 20 September, 1535. Whether or not they were sent to the hospital after the Visitation is difficult to specify. However, they are signed by Legh and have the notarial mark of ap Rice in his position as registrar. The Injunctions consist of thirteen clauses, one of which has been crossed out by Legh. Eight of the thirteen clauses are exactly, or almost exactly, the same as the ap Rice core Injunctions.

The Spalding abbey set comes from very near the end of the Royal Visitation and is dated 27 January 1536. This set is extensive, containing fifty-two clauses. Its introduction notes that the Injunctions were as a result of Thomas Bedyll’s Visitation to Spalding. Of the fifty-two Injunctions, fourteen represent close copies, or copies with additions, of the ap Rice core Injunctions. A further nine of Bedyll’s Injunctions show some relationship with the ap Rice Injunctions. It is noticeable that Bedyll

¹³¹³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 279.

¹³¹⁴ HRO, III M 94W C5/1 (St Cross hospital, Winchester). This original Latin manuscript has been noted by local historians, e. g. W. T. Warren (ed.), *St Cross Hospital, near Winchester*, (London, 1899), pp. 83 - 85, or P. Hopewell, *Saint Cross: England’s Oldest Almshouse* (Chichester, 1995), pp. 72 - 73, but is incorrectly analysed and not compared with the national picture. This manuscript is signed by Legh and ap Rice. The hand is not recognised. Also, Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, (Spalding abbey), fo. 148 to, fo. 155. I have found no analysis of Spalding abbey referring to this original manuscript. This Latin manuscript is not signed and appears a file copy. The hand is not recognised.

included, from the ap Rice set, the two Injunctions that were not specified in the BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV standard version.

Both sets of Injunctions open, word for word, with the first clause of the ap Rice Injunctions: ‘that the abbot, prior or president and other brethren of the place ... truly and heartily keep and observe ... as well in the oath of the kings highness succession ... and in a certain profession lately sealed ... Also they shall observe ... the statutes of the realm ... for the extirpation and taking away of the usurped and pretended jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome ... etc’.¹³¹⁵ The emphasis on eradication of papal influence and loyalty appears manifestly throughout the Visitation. However, while the second of the ap Rice Injunctions, releasing the abbot and brethren from any previous papal vows, is present as the second clause of the Spalding Injunctions, this item surprisingly does not appear in those of St Cross.

However, given the nature of St Cross as a hospital whose emphasis was on the support of thirteen poor brethren and the provision of daily alms and hospitality to the ‘Hundred Hall poor’, it is not surprising that not all of the ap Rice Injunctions were considered appropriate. Clearly the absence of blanket application of all the core Injunctions undermines Knowles’ claim that they were mass produced.

The five clauses Legh included within St Cross’ Injunctions reflect particular reforms required at the hospital. The Injunctions indicate inspection of the statutes and foundation documents of the hospital, concerning the treatment of the poor. The second and third clauses relate to the ‘thirteen paupers’ housed at the hospital and

¹³¹⁵ Translation taken from PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 65r.

remind the master of the will of the founder regarding the type of paupers to be maintained and the food and clothes they are to have.¹³¹⁶ The fourth clause seeks to tighten up the daily feeding of the ‘Hundred Hall poor’; a laxity had been identified in that these individuals had been fed at the gates, when the founder specifically stated they should be fed ‘infra hanc domus’.¹³¹⁷ Legh cleverly intertwined this specific Injunction with the ap Rice Injunction concerning the leavings from the tables not being given to ‘valiant, mighty and idle beggars’.

St Cross Injunction 5 commands the teaching to the paupers of the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostles’ Creed in English, to be recited in the church before dinner. Here, again, was an attempted reform, to ensure the poor had an understanding of what was previously said in Latin. This clause can be seen as emerging from the ap Rice Injunction commanding the abbot to explain daily, in English, a certain part of the religious rule.¹³¹⁸

An item concerning provision of a library, which Legh crossed out in the St Cross Injunctions and marked ‘Vacet’,¹³¹⁹ demonstrates an apparent early addition to the ap Rice core Injunctions. The requirement of an adequate library can be recognised in the Injunctions issued in late August to Glastonbury,¹³²⁰ as well as in the Spalding Injunctions¹³²¹ and the Injunctions issued to Oxford and Cambridge

¹³¹⁶ HRO, III M 94W C5/1, fo. 1v.

¹³¹⁷ HRO, III M 94W C5/1, fo. 1v.

¹³¹⁸ ap Rice set of Injunctions, number 17.

¹³¹⁹ HRO, III M 94W C5/1, fo. 2r.

¹³²⁰ *SRS*, vol. 56, pp. 159 - 164, Glastonbury Visitation of July 1538. It is clear Bishop Clerke used the king’s Injunctions issued by Layton as the major part of his Visitation Articles. The comments from the brethren all reflect ap Rice’s Injunctions except for, ‘the convent has no library nor books to resort unto’.

¹³²¹ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 149v (Injunctions 11 and 12).

universities.¹³²² Perhaps Legh crossed out the entry because, in a hospital, the clause was irrelevant: ‘That they shall have in this house a library in which, besides other necessary books, shall be placed printed volumes of the New and Old Testaments, the works of Jerome, Augustine, Theophilus and others of the most ancient fathers of a similar genre’.¹³²³ Further, in the eleventh Spalding Injunction the brethren were exhorted to study the sacred literature of the Old and New Testaments as well as Jerome, Augustine, Cyprian, Ambrose, Gregory, Hilary, Origen, Theophilus, Chrysostom, etc. ‘by what the maximum comfort and quiet conscience will be discovered’.¹³²⁴ Evidently the required reading matter noted by both Legh and Bedyll was similar. While, at the universities, the speculative theology of Lombard, Aquinas and Scotus was eliminated and certain works forbidden,¹³²⁵ there are no references in the two monastic Injunctions to a reading blacklist. The reading list clearly was directed towards the bible and the early doctors, reflecting the humanist direction of reform in England.¹³²⁶ The majority of the authors can also be recognised in the support they were seen to give in Henry’s earlier quest for a divorce.¹³²⁷ Erasmus’ opinion can also be detected in this list of authors. He had already corrected and published Jerome’s writings, calling him the greatest of Latin theologians,¹³²⁸ and Origen, he noted, ‘opens out new fountains of thought and furnishes a complete key to theology’.¹³²⁹

¹³²² F. D. Logan, ‘The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535’, English Historical Review, 106 (1991), pp. 866 - 869.

¹³²³ HRO, III M 94W C5/1, fo. 2r.

¹³²⁴ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 149v, ‘per quos maximum consolacionis et conscientie quietam reperit et consequentur’.

¹³²⁵ F. D. Logan, ‘The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535’, English Historical Review, 106 (1991), p. 866.

¹³²⁶ T. F. Mayer (ed.), Thomas Starkey: A dialogue between Pole and Lupset, Camden Fourth Series, vol. 37 (R. H. S., London, 1989), p. 91.

¹³²⁷ J. J. Scarisbrick, Henry VIII (London, 1968), pp. 164, 165.

¹³²⁸ J. A. Froude, Life and Letters of Erasmus (London, 1899), p. 191.

This previously undiscovered Injunction can now be related to the action of some abbots after the Visitors had left. The abbot of Bath sent Cromwell the work of Anselm which had been found in his library,¹³³⁰ and the prior of Christchurch, Twynham, sent up Bede's 'Ecclesiasticus'.¹³³¹ The attempt to direct learning and thought in monastic institutions is clear. The suggestions on literature were an attempt to both eliminate references to the bishop of Rome, and step back to the learning of the early Fathers.

That Bedyll, at his Spalding Visitation, added so many Injunctions of his own beyond the core Injunctions, demonstrates his attempts at specific reform in that abbey. His additional Injunctions reflect an analysis of the deficiencies he had found.

Bedyll seems to have been particularly worried about monks being in contact with boys at Spalding. Spalding Injunction 8 adds to the core ap Rice Injunction, regarding the provision of a teacher for the juniors and novices, by noting that the boys should be taught by a teacher, but not by any of the monks.¹³³² Injunction 25 stops boys under age eighteen, from having contact with monks, with the punishment of the monk being locked in a cell for ten days.¹³³³

Spalding appears to have been in debt and Bedyll, in Injunction 14, commanded frugality by fasting and abstaining from meat.¹³³⁴ The abbey was commanded not to lodge anybody sumptuously, especially noblemen, or to fodder their horses; only the

¹³²⁹ J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (London, 1899), p. 93.

¹³³⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 232 (LP, IX, 426).

¹³³¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 112 (LP, IX, 529).

¹³³² Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 149r.

¹³³³ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 151r.

¹³³⁴ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 149v.

king's messengers and those arriving at the monastery for legitimate or spiritual purposes should be received favourably.¹³³⁵

In terms of the spiritual aspects of the monastery, Bedyll noted that a number of the offices and hours should be contracted and more time spent in the study of sacred literature.¹³³⁶ The brethren were told that within a year and a half, each must be able to know by heart one of the four gospels and one of four specified letters of St Paul, and to recite them before the prior or other official.¹³³⁷

The background of potential recruits to the monastery must be diligently enquired. If the reason for wanting to join was parental poverty or the number of children in the family, or flight from some calamity, or a bad character, or immaturity or fraudulent marriage, then the individual wishing to join should be driven away.¹³³⁸ Recruits should understand the religious rule before embracing it and they should be aware of the severity of religion.¹³³⁹ Monks should not be ordained unless they exhibit sufficient knowledge of the Holy Scriptures to preach.¹³⁴⁰

Bedyll even instituted rules for the running of the daily chapter. Only three voices should be heard: the proclimant, the respondant and the judge. The president of the chapter should speak only to issue corporal and temporal penances. If anybody maliciously undermined a fellow monk's reputation, he should be disciplined for three

¹³³⁵ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 150r, Injunction 15.

¹³³⁶ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fos. 151v/152r, Injunction 30.

¹³³⁷ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 152r, Injunction 31.

¹³³⁸ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 152v, Injunction 35.

¹³³⁹ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 152v, Injunctions 36 & 37.

¹³⁴⁰ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 153r, Injunction 38.

days.¹³⁴¹ Nobody should accuse another of an offence unless he could defend and maintain it before the prior.¹³⁴²

Bedyll commanded the monks not to indulge in astrology,¹³⁴³ not to use obscene words,¹³⁴⁴ nor to play dice or cards.¹³⁴⁵ Those who swore by the Precious Blood or by the holy Mass were to be convicted and placed on bread and water the following day.¹³⁴⁶ This fast on bread and water was the penalty for anyone disobeying Bedyll's Injunctions, the length of time being dependent on the gravity of the offence. If the individual continued to offend, the fast continued until he swore an oath to observe all the Injunctions.¹³⁴⁷ In comparison, the last ap Rice Injunction specified the removal from office, or loss of stipend or benefice, or expulsion from the house, or incarceration, for those who failed to keep the Injunctions.¹³⁴⁸ Bedyll was clearly more down to earth with his punishment: continuous bread and water would, he felt, be sufficient to reform a recalcitrant monk.

Bedyll's Injunctions demonstrate his ideas on improvements and reform. He was not attempting to destroy monasticism, but cure it of vanity, improve the quality of the monks, and encourage learning and understanding. It is not surprising that, at the conclusion of his Visitation, he could write to the bishop of Lincoln, 'I have visited lately ... the priory of Spalding and substantially reformed such things as were there to be reformed as I have to show you by the Injunctions which were given'.¹³⁴⁹

¹³⁴¹ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 154r, Injunction 50.

¹³⁴² Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 154r/v, Injunction 51.

¹³⁴³ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 150v, Injunction 20.

¹³⁴⁴ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 150v, Injunction 21.

¹³⁴⁵ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 151v, Injunction 26.

¹³⁴⁶ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 154r, Injunction 48.

¹³⁴⁷ Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 154v, Injunction 52.

¹³⁴⁸ PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 22v.

¹³⁴⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 227 (LP, X, 218). Draft written by Bedyll on Cromwell's behalf.

The ability to add Injunctions in this way suggests that the Visitors must have had extensive assistance to undertake the paperwork involved. To be meaningful, a copy of the Injunctions given or sent to each house as a result of the Visitation would need to be kept. Perhaps to accomplish the administration of the issue of Injunctions the Visitors used scribes from each monastic house; this would explain why the handwriting in both original sets of Visitors' Injunctions cannot be recognised. Possibly, the reason Knowles deduced the Injunctions were standard and printed was the difficulty for the Visitors of coping with the volume of writing required while hurrying around the country. Giving a personal touch to the Injunctions would make it even more difficult. The administrative team must have been large enough to issue the Injunctions, in most instances, before they left the monastery. Otherwise a backlog would have resulted which, from the evidence of the quickness of Injunction appeals, did not occur.

There are two identifiable instances where Injunctions were sent to monasteries before the Visitors arrived. Canterbury cathedral priory received some Injunctions, including the commandment to keep within the precincts, over three weeks before Layton's Visitation.¹³⁵⁰ Similarly, Buckenham priory, in Norfolk, were appealing against some Injunctions a few days before Legh arrived.¹³⁵¹ That this was not the regular procedure is clear from Appendix 17 where the many appeals can be recognised as triggered by the Visitors' arrival.

In the case of Canterbury, Christchurch priory, a week after Layton had visited, the prior wrote to Cromwell saying, 'Master doctor Layton the kings Visitor was here

¹³⁵⁰ BL, Harley 604, fo. 71 (LP, IX, 550).

¹³⁵¹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 30 (LP, IX, 800).

with our Visitation and after his departing from hence he sent to me and to my brethren diverse Injunctions'.¹³⁵² Clearly Layton in this instance sent the Injunctions to the prior, demonstrating that they were not mass produced – otherwise he could have given them at the conclusion of his visit.

From the prior's appeal, Layton's Injunctions were extensive and went well beyond the earlier Injunctions sent to him before Layton's arrival. The prior has helpfully noted, in most instances, the number of the Injunction. It can be deduced that Layton used the ap Rice set of Injunctions up to number 16, the clause detailing the numbers to be sent to Oxford.¹³⁵³ Thereafter, the numbering differs, with the appeal requesting the reinstatement of fairs in the precincts being number 34, while the ap Rice equivalent is number 25.¹³⁵⁴ From the prior's appeals, numbered 20 and 21, it seems Layton had given some detailed Injunctions in the way the divine office should be conducted. Layton had condemned the practice of singing the night offices in the darkness and had commanded candles to be henceforth used. Also he had demanded that books be provided for singing the psalms, for novices and professed monks.¹³⁵⁵ Given the fairly universal opprobrium from historians regarding Layton's character, it seems at odds that he should take such interest in the effectiveness of the monastic office.¹³⁵⁶

It is unfortunate more feedback does not exist by means of records of appeals to the Injunctions distributed by Layton and Legh in the Northern Visitation. With this

¹³⁵² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 109 (LP, IX, 707).

¹³⁵³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 6r (LP, IX, 784). Layton has commanded eight or nine of the priory should be at Oxford (five were there already) as opposed to the ap Rice Injunction saying two or three.

¹³⁵⁴ See Table 4.

¹³⁵⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 6v (LP, IX, 784).

Visitation taking place at an average of two houses per day, it seems likely that the process of distributing Injunctions would be amended. The high likelihood that clusters of smaller houses were called to a central house for their Visitation, as for the nuns of Esholt,¹³⁵⁷ has already been noted.¹³⁵⁸ In these instances, the opportunity to tailor Injunctions would appear very limited. However, from Legh's actions regarding Little Dunmow in December, when the prior and house were called to Coggeshall for their Visitation, they certainly were given Injunctions.¹³⁵⁹

At Whitby, on 3 February, the abbot reported that Layton and Legh 'did deliver unto us certain Injunctions to be observed'.¹³⁶⁰ The abbot made the normal appeal for himself and his officers 'to go abroad' on business and to say Mass at certain chapels. However, there is a glimpse of the Visitors making amendments to the core ap Rice Injunctions. Layton and Legh had decreed that Whitby is 'bound by one said Injunction to have one sermon preached once in the week or at least once in the fortnight'.¹³⁶¹ The equivalent original core Injunction, number 19, instructed the abbot to 'expound as plainly as may be in English a certain part of the rule that they have professed' and number 15, which required, 'every day by the space of one hour, a lesson of holy scripture to be kept'.¹³⁶² Perhaps by this stage in the Visitation, the inability of the religious houses to conform with the original Injunction had resulted in substantial modification.

¹³⁵⁶ See, for example, D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 271 - 272.

¹³⁵⁷ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 32, 37.

¹³⁵⁸ See Section 2.4 on Northern Visitation.

¹³⁵⁹ BL, Add. MS 20,022.

¹³⁶⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 244 (LP, X, 239).

¹³⁶¹ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 244 (LP, X, 239).

¹³⁶² Translation from PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 69r/v.

Unfortunately, there is no feedback regarding the Injunctions from smaller monasteries in the Northern Visitation to test whether Legh had the same attention to detail as at St Cross, Winchester. However, at the other extreme, at St Mary's, York, the largest abbey in the north, Cromwell issued eleven clauses of relaxation to the Injunctions presented by the Visitors.¹³⁶³ Layton and Legh visited St Mary's abbey on 13 January 1536 and Cromwell's licence reflected the issue of Injunctions from the ap Rice set. Thus, the Injunctions can be clearly seen to have included enclosure for all within the precincts, only one entrance to the monastery, the abbot to eat with guests, the hour of Holy Scripture to be read, the abbot to preach, the sleeping in one dormitory, the age to be professed and the penalties for non-observance.¹³⁶⁴ Cromwell's relaxation, however, does show traces of additional Injunctions. For example, the abbey appears to have been told by Layton and Legh to cease its accustomed distribution of alms to certain scholars and the abbot was allowed to preach only once a month. Further, a financial restriction appears to have been placed on the abbey in the manner in which it was allowed to pledge plate or jewels. An Injunction stopping visiting tradesmen selling 'cloth and other necessaries' also seems to have been introduced by the Visitors.¹³⁶⁵

Cromwell's relaxation of Injunctions at Whalley abbey, visited by Layton and Legh in the last week of the Northern Visitation, reflects only the core ap Rice Injunctions.¹³⁶⁶ It would however be unsafe to assume this meant only the issue of

¹³⁶³ BL, Lansdowne 973, fos. 52 - 53 (LP, X, 219). This is a copy from an original document.

¹³⁶⁴ BL, Lansdowne 973, fos. 52 - 53 (LP, X, 219). Ap Rice Injunctions numbered 3, 5, 7, 11, 19, 23 and 30. (See Table 4).

¹³⁶⁵ However, something similar was in the Spalding Injunction 40, see Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo.

153r.

¹³⁶⁶ BL, Lansdowne 973, fos. 47v - 48r.

standard Injunctions to the abbey, resulting from the Visitors' great rush to return to London.

The Injunction that can now be shown to have had the most direct effect on all religious houses was the requirement, 'that no man be suffered to profess or wear the habit of religion in this house or he be 24 years of age complete'.¹³⁶⁷ This Injunction is reminiscent of an item in 'A Little Treatise' published 'cum privilegio' in 1531 which queried 'Whether the Parliament may enact that no religious persons, under a certain pain, shall receive into the habit of their religion any child under a certain age to be appointed, by the parliament'.¹³⁶⁸ Such a query may have been made by Cromwell, if not the king. Knowles stated that this Injunction was Erasmian in origin.¹³⁶⁹ Certainly the concluding clause of the Injunction, 'and that they entice no one with persuasions and flattery into religion',¹³⁷⁰ reflects Erasmus' view on how he was tricked into religion.¹³⁷¹ Logan has recently suggested that the age of twenty-four complete may have been used because it was fixed by Pope Clement V as the canonical age for ordination to the priesthood.¹³⁷² Examination of the dispensations granted for under age ordination by the Faculty office identify that this canon law requirement, of at least 25 years of age, was maintained.¹³⁷³ Certainly the use of this cut off point would reduce the probability that an ordained monk might be dismissed. This Injunction was not an attack on priestly orders.

¹³⁶⁷ Translation from PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71r. This is the third of the ap Rice set of Injunctions. '24 years of age complete', of course, means the age of 25.

¹³⁶⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. F II, fo. 238r. Another addition asks what authority the parliament has concerning Visitations. Attributed to Christopher St German, see J. Guy, Thomas More (London, 2000), p. 171.

¹³⁶⁹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 276/277.

¹³⁷⁰ PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 43r, 'neminem quod suasionibus aut blandiciis in religionem pelliciant'.

¹³⁷¹ J. A. Froude, Life and Letters of Erasmus (London, 1899), pp. 11 - 19.

¹³⁷² F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', p. 215.

¹³⁷³ See FOR, pp. 1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 22, 25, 32, 36, 45, 46, 59, 62 & 77.

The application of this Injunction has been confusing to historians because its application is seen to vary. As Knowles and Logan note, the Injunction, on the face of it, concerns future monastic professions.¹³⁷⁴ However, it is accepted by historians that, from the outset of the Visitation, religious aged twenty-four or less were being dismissed by the Visitors.¹³⁷⁵ Logan further identified the confusion about the meaning of the Injunction: how it related to women, what happened to those professed under twenty-four who were still under twenty-four, and what should be done with those older than twenty-four who wanted to leave.¹³⁷⁶ He also noted the different interpretations the Visitors placed on these Injunctions with different dismissal policies being implemented by the various Visitors.¹³⁷⁷

Identifying how many religious were dismissed at this time can be undertaken by use of the newly discovered material.¹³⁷⁸ Appendix 15 compares, by month the number of religious in the house, as recorded by the Visitors, with the number noted at the suppression survey, typically completed midway through 1536. The difference between these figures is a good estimate of the religious dismissed during the course of the Visitation. The figures exclude the head of the house. Caveats with the Suppression survey figures include the possibility of death, or dispensation, or new recruits, which could make the figures not strictly comparable. However, the occurrence of deaths and new recruits would tend to cancel each other out. With

¹³⁷⁴ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 277 and F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', pp. 214/215.

¹³⁷⁵ C. Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors from A. D. 1485 to 1559*, Camden Society, New Series xi (London, 1875), p. 31, the Visitors 'took out of every religious house all religious persons from the age of 24 and under'.

¹³⁷⁶ F. D. Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England c. 1240 - 1540* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 160, 161.

¹³⁷⁷ F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', p. 215.

¹³⁷⁸ CCCC MS III, fos. 339 - 349.

regard to dispensations, none of relevance appear in the Faculty office, the court under Thomas Cranmer established to replace the papal dispensation system.¹³⁷⁹

The Appendix identifies that using fairly reasonable samples, around six per cent of visited religious were dismissed in August, this dramatically increased to twenty-one per cent in September, reduced slightly to fourteen per cent in October, before increasing to around twenty to thirty per cent for the remaining four months of the Visitation. The overall average, based on the sample in the Appendix, indicates that during the Visitation around one in five of the religious were dismissed from their religious vows. This statistic may be biased by the sample containing small religious houses, with a net income of less than £200 per annum, with the exception of Bury St Edmunds. However, for the first time it identifies the massive diminution in the complement of religious houses as a result of the Visitors' activity and the implementation of dismissal Injunctions. It demonstrates that even before the passing of the Suppression Act in March 1536, perhaps some 1,700 of the estimated 8,500 to 9,000 religious¹³⁸⁰ in 1534 could have been dismissed.

This dramatic figure enables Chapuys' claims in the autumn of 1535 regarding the dismissal of religious, not to be viewed as exaggerations. On 25 September, Chapuys wrote to king Charles V that Cromwell was dismissing all 'who had professed before reaching the age of 25',¹³⁸¹ and on 13 October re-emphasised the expulsions which were continuing.¹³⁸²

¹³⁷⁹ See *FOR*, pp. xx, xxii, xlii. F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', pp. 217, 218 explores this issue.

¹³⁸⁰ D. Knowles & R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (Harlow, 1971), p. 494, estimate excludes friars.

¹³⁸¹ *SSP* vol. 5, part 1, p. 542.

¹³⁸² *SSP* vol. 5, part 1, p. 550.

While the eventual number of dismissals on age grounds were, therefore, large, it will be argued that, at the commencement of the Visitation, no such policy or plan had been formulated; the dismissal of religious on age grounds was another example of Injunctions being altered and extended as the Visitation continued. Looking again at Appendix 15 identifies the lowest rate of dismissal in the month of August, at only six per cent. The difference in the later rates of dismissal suggests some change in direction at that time.

Reproducing Layton and Legh's entries from the Appendix, the following table can be produced.

TABLE 5 Houses Visited By Layton And Legh In August 1535

<u>House</u>	<u>Visitor</u>	<u>COMPLEMENT</u>	
		<u>At Visitation</u> <u>August 1535</u>	<u>Suppression Commissioners</u> <u>c. July 1536</u>
St Oswald's, Gloucester	?	7	7
Maiden Bradley	Layton	8	8 including 2 novices
Monkton Farleigh	Layton	6	6
Lacock	Legh	18	17 including 3 novices
Kington St Michael	Legh	3	4
Stanley	Legh	13	10 including 1 novice

It will be noted from Table 5 that none were dismissed from St Oswald's, but this is not surprising as it was visited in early August, before the ap Rice set of Injunctions had been formulated. It would also appear from this Table that Layton had not dismissed any from Maiden Bradley or Monkton Farleigh, which he visited about 19 August.

On 24 August, Legh wrote from Bruton priory telling Cromwell, 'Doctor Layton has not divested such as be under the age of 24 years from their religion'.¹³⁸³ Layton's view of the Injunctions can, therefore, be seen to reflect what its wording suggests: it is to be applied to future monastic profession. As he had formulated the Injunctions, it would appear he was implementing them in the manner he expected them to be interpreted. In the case of Legh, although the table shows a small sample, it suggests he was dismissing religious.¹³⁸⁴

However, this requires qualification from correspondence at that time. In the first mention of dismissal, ap Rice was writing from Edington on 23 August.¹³⁸⁵ He noted that a few days before, at Kington St Michael, 'we found 2 convict of incontinence: the one whereof, because she was under age of 24 and not very desirous to continue in religion, ~~we ha[ve]~~ Mr Doctor [Legh] has discharged'. This suggests that, if the young nun had desired 'to continue in religion', she would have

¹³⁸³ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 174 (LP, IX, 167).

¹³⁸⁴ The example of Kington St Michael needs explaining: on arrival Legh found three nuns and no abbess. Before his departure, he removed one nun. Soon after, a new prioress arrived from Lacock. Perhaps she brought with her, or recruited, two additional nuns, bringing the complement to four, as reported by the Suppression Commissioners. See PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160).

¹³⁸⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 95, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 160).

been allowed. Ap Rice is pointing out that Legh has taken, on his own authority, responsibility for dismissing the nun.¹³⁸⁶

Another similar example occurs in the same letter. At Edington, 'we found also one of the youngest that confessed buggery which, partly for lack of age and partly for want of good will to continue in religion, is also discharged of his coat'. Here again, a widening of the meaning of the Injunction is being consciously made: it is because the monk is guilty of crime and wants to leave that the 'lack of age' is used as an excuse. However, ap Rice's qualification of the reason the religious were dismissed suggests Legh was adapting the Injunction to his own meaning. Legh's complaint that Layton was not dismissing those under the age of twenty-four could, therefore, be seen as an attempt to pressurise Cromwell into adopting Legh's own wider interpretation. It is, of course, possible that Legh was aware of Cromwell's own inclinations regarding the dismissal of religious, and began putting into effect his master's veiled directions.

From Legh's correspondence to Cromwell, it is plain that he was annoyed that Layton had apparently greater authority than himself.¹³⁸⁷ This friction from Legh was, no doubt, because of Layton's leading role in the Visitation. With Layton comparatively new to Cromwell's service, it is likely that Legh did not enjoy having a junior role.

¹³⁸⁶ Logan noted that ap Rice instigated the dismissals, see F. D. Logan, Runaway Religious in Medieval England c. 1240 - 1540 (Cambridge, 1996), p. 161. The crossing out indicates ap Rice was distancing himself from Legh's action.

¹³⁸⁷ See BL, Harley 604, fo. 65r (LP, IX, 160).

By the time Legh's complaints regarding Layton's use of the Injunctions, dated 24 August, reached Cromwell, Layton was back with the vicar general. From Legh's letter dated 3 September, he acknowledged receipt of Cromwell's letter giving him permission, at his own discretion, to 'licence the heads for their necessary business and affairs to go forth of their monasteries'.¹³⁸⁸ Perhaps it was in this letter from Cromwell, after his meeting with Layton, that the vicar general agreed to widen the meaning of divestment contained in the Injunction. From ap Rice's later comments to Cromwell, it appears this instruction specified all male religious less than twenty-two years old should be dismissed and those 'that were 22 years old and between that and 24 they should choose whether they will tarry or go abroad'.¹³⁸⁹ However, all nuns below 24 years complete (ie below 25) were to be dismissed and it was not until the end of September that Cromwell allowed nuns the same age conditions as monks.¹³⁹⁰

Proof that during September the Injunctions to dismiss all nuns was being implemented is shown by Legh's visit to Shaftesbury. At Shaftesbury, Legh dismissed those nuns who were less than twenty-four years complete.¹³⁹¹

This new approach becomes clear as, from September, Legh's restraint in dismissing religious disappears. From Appendix 16, it is seen that overall Legh removed about thirty per cent (in a large sample) of the religious he encountered during the seven months of Visitation. That Legh's rate of dismissing was much higher than anyone else's (Layton's was only five per cent, Cave's fifteen per cent) is

¹³⁸⁸ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 265).

¹³⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423), and PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

¹³⁹⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 230 (LP, IX, 423).

supported by correspondence. Ap Rice warned Cromwell on 16 October that Legh was going beyond the authority given to him: ‘also he [Legh] sets a clause in his Injunctions that all they that would, of what age so ever they be, may go abroad, which I heard not of your instructions’.¹³⁹²

Legh denied the accusation. In Legh’s reply dated 21 October to Cromwell’s complaint about his use of the Injunctions he wrote: ‘where you will me to follow the Articles and Injunctions prescribed unto me, I have performed your mind without any qualification or alteration, according to measure discretion and charity, having ever your mind and precepts before me’.¹³⁹³

Cromwell’s reprimand had seemingly no effect on how Legh interpreted the Injunctions. Appendix 16 identifies within a few weeks he had removed nine canons of the fifteen at Langley. The claim by monks of Ramsey abbey that Legh had dismissed half of the monks at nearby Sawtry at Christmas has hitherto appeared a gross exaggeration.¹³⁹⁴ However, Appendix 16 confirms that in December, Legh did dismiss over half the monks at Sawtry.

It might, therefore, appear that once Cromwell gave some latitude to the implementation of the dismissal Injunction to Legh and the other Visitors, in early September, he lost control of its use. Effectively, however, Cromwell, if not encouraging Legh, at the least turned a blind eye towards Legh’s interpretations. In

¹³⁹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 96, fo. 37 (LP, IX, 228) - including the late cardinal Wolsey’s illegitimate daughter so the letter alleged.

¹³⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 19v (LP, IX, 622).

¹³⁹³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

¹³⁹⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 234 (LP, X, 103). Perhaps Bedyll also thought it an exaggeration as he qualifies the claim, in brackets ‘(as I am informed)’.

October, as a result of apparent royal displeasure over the manner of the monastic Visitation, Cromwell reprimanded Legh over his use of the dismissal Injunction, as has been seen. However, this had no effect on Legh, as the November dismissals displayed in Appendix 16 demonstrate. This does not mean that Legh was deliberately undermining the will of Cromwell, but that once the king's concerns regarding the methods used in the Visitation were placated through the suppression of Dover, Langdon and Folkestone, Cromwell again relaxed his control over Legh. With Legh as the only Royal Commissioner continually active in the seven months of the Visitation, solely or jointly responsible for the Visitation of approximately 40 per cent of the religious houses in England and Wales, it is difficult not to believe that he was enacting an attrition policy of Cromwell's, beyond the royally approved Injunctions agreed in mid August.

Perhaps it was as a result of royal displeasure in October that the Injunction on dismissal was apparently tightened up. On 21 October, Legh agreed 'expressly hereafter [to] do with men and women according to your letter'.¹³⁹⁵ On the next day, ap Rice confirmed what those instructions were: 'declared unto us for not expelling of them that are above the age of 20'.¹³⁹⁶

Layton visited Christchurch Canterbury, at the time of ap Rice's letter to Cromwell, and from the Injunctions he sent to the priory a few days later, it is clear that all Visitors had been similarly briefed.¹³⁹⁷ The Injunction had been modified so that none below the age of 20 years complete (i. e. less than twenty-one) could profess

¹³⁹⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 48r (LP, IX, 651).

¹³⁹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 56r (LP, IX, 661).

the religious rule or wear the habit; those professed who were twenty-one and less than twenty-five could depart if they wished. However, as Cranmer's letter revealed, even this definition required interpretation.¹³⁹⁸ The prior did not consider these new Injunctions to include '6 of the convent being under the age of 24 years and professed and have taken the order of deacon or at least sub deacon'.¹³⁹⁹ The prior clearly felt that any form of orders invalidated the dismissal instruction.

However, what has not been appreciated before is that, certainly by January, the original harsh rule, dismissing all those under the age of twenty-four years complete was again being enacted.¹⁴⁰⁰ Again this is confirmed by the example of St Mary's York, also visited in January, who successfully petitioned to amend the twenty-four years complete cut off point to allow those 'above the age of 22' (and less than twenty-five) who 'voluntarily desire ... to continue in the habit'.¹⁴⁰¹

During the Northern Visitation, Appendix 16 shows that the joint Visitation of Layton and Legh resulted in around twenty per cent of the sample's being dismissed. While this level of attrition is less than the twenty-nine per cent during Legh's long spell as a Commissioner in the southern province, it does not materially change the rigorous dismissal policy being implemented by Cromwell. Layton, in his period as a Commissioner in the southern province used his dismissal powers most sparingly, with only five per cent leaving as a result of his Injunctions.

¹³⁹⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 60 (LP, IX, 840). This letter of Cranmer's is transcribed in J. E. Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous writings and letters of Thomas Cranmer*, vol. 24, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1846), p. 317.

¹³⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 60 (LP, IX, 840).

¹³⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 7r (LP, IX, 784).

¹⁴⁰⁰ See Bodl, Rawlinson, B491, fo. 152v. Spalding Injunction 34.

There are a number of appeals to the Injunction regarding dismissal on age grounds¹⁴⁰² and a few inferences can be made that some appeals were successful.¹⁴⁰³ However, the small sample detailing ages of religious in the aftermath of the Visitation makes stark reading, identifying the tough implementation of the age Injunction. At the time of the acknowledgement of the Supremacy in December 1534, seventy monks of Christchurch Canterbury signed the deed.¹⁴⁰⁴ In September 1536, apparently at Petre's Visitation, only fifty-eight religious remained, and all but one were aged twenty-five years and above.¹⁴⁰⁵ At Cockersand priory, in May 1536, of the twenty-two religious only three were less than twenty-five.¹⁴⁰⁶ At Huntingdon priory, all twelve are greater than twenty-eight years of age; at Sawtry, of the six religious, all were older than twenty-six except a novice aged twenty, and at Stonely, Huntingdonshire, of the seven religious the youngest was twenty-five years old.¹⁴⁰⁷

This analysis has quantified and clarified an aspect of the Visitation whose deep effect has not previously been recognised. The loss of the young professed, as well as others who fell within the Visitors' interpretation of this Injunction, affected the life blood of the smaller monasteries.

¹⁴⁰¹ BL, Lansdowne 973, fo. 53r.

¹⁴⁰² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 169 (LP, IX, 1074), monastery unknown, the same as the ap Rice Injunction. PRO, SP 1 / 100, fos. 3,4 (LP, IX, 1080), abbey unknown, a result of ap Rice Injunction. PRO, SP 1 / 104, fo. 249r (LP, X, 1234), Lenton abbey.

¹⁴⁰³ See F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', pp. 215/216 regarding London Minorities. BL, Lansdowne 973, fos. 52r - 53r, St Mary's, York.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 7th Report, Appendix III (London, 1846), p. 282.

¹⁴⁰⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 116, fos. 44r - 45r (LP, XII (I), 437) - Richard Marshall is noted as a 'deacon and no priest', aged 21.

¹⁴⁰⁶ PRO, DL 43 / 5 / 4. These three are each aged twenty-four.

¹⁴⁰⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 336r, 338r, 340r.

The dismissal of one in five religious would have hit the small monasteries disproportionately, making it more difficult to maintain divine office and a realistic monastic routine. This policy would appear to have emerged in September and, while suggested by Legh, was accepted by Cromwell and maintained, even after royal displeasure. The smaller houses had been undermined even before the Suppression Act.

The Injunction went deeper than just dismissing the young professed. Having been sent the Injunctions, the abbot of Winchcombe wrote back to Cromwell, repeating the ap Rice Latin Injunction, word for word.¹⁴⁰⁸ He proceeded to request a licence 'that he may admit any person so disposed to prove himself in the habit and religion till he be 24 years of age and then to be at his liberty to depart or tarry in religion.' Here the abbot was effectively querying whether he was allowed novices who would profess and take their vows once they had reached 24 years complete.¹⁴⁰⁹ Appendix 15 records the novices noted by the Suppression Commissioners at first survey and demonstrates the dismissal Injunction had almost but not quite eradicated them.

In summary, the application of the dismissal Injunction can be described as varying according to Table 6.

¹⁴⁰⁸ See PRO, SP 1 / 100, fo. 139v (LP, IX, 1170).

¹⁴⁰⁹ See also F. D. Logan, 'Departure from the Religious life during the Royal Visitation of the Monasteries, 1535 - 1536', p. 215.

TABLE 6 Summary of the Changes in the Dismissal Injunction

<u>Visitation Period</u>	<u>Cromwell's Dismissal Injunction</u>	<u>Rate of Dismissal</u>
< mid August 1535	None specified.	0%
> mid August to end August	Ap Rice Injunction 'ad futurum' but Legh seeking to degrade.	c. 6%
September	Those monks/canons less than 22 years dismissed; those above 22 and less than 24 complete can choose. All nuns less than 24 years complete dismissed.	c. 16%
c. 1 October to 16 October	All less than 22 years dismissed; those above 22 and less than 24 years complete dismissed.	?
16 October to November?	Monks and nuns less than 20 years dismissed, those between 20 and 24 years complete can choose.	?
November 1535? to February 1536	Ap Rice Injunctions restored, but all below 24 years complete dismissed.	c. 32%

Table 6 identifies the evolution of the dismissal Injunction and relates it, where possible, to the dismissal statistics extracted from Appendix 15. The attrition rate in the last few months is a dramatic figure, reflecting Legh's willingness to dismiss religious beyond the levels specified in the stated Injunction. That Legh was able to widen the scope of his interpretation of the dismissal Injunction either shows

indifference by Cromwell or, more likely, reflects the vicar general's preferred approach.

3.3 Decision Making at Winchester.

It has been identified that the Injunctions for the Visitation were originally specified at Berkeley Heron in August. In mid September, at Winchester and Bishops Waltham, a wide range of issues appears to have been discussed, which had an impact on the future direction of the Visitation. Analysis of these proceedings demonstrates the impact Layton and Legh and ap Rice had in furthering the Visitation and the greater implementation and acceptance of the Royal Supremacy.

The court was at Winchester and Bishops Waltham in the period 13 to 29 September.¹⁴¹⁰ On 13 September, the decision was taken by the king and his council to postpone the next session of parliament, which had been due to commence on 2 November. It was delayed until 4 February 1536¹⁴¹¹ and there can be little doubt that the delay was due to the plague in London.¹⁴¹² At the end of August, the king received a certificate that 157 persons had died in London during the previous week, of which '141 died of the pestilence'.¹⁴¹³

It has been considered that the delay in recalling parliament was due to the need for more time in which to gain evidence to prepare a future monastic Bill.¹⁴¹⁴ However, the king's fear of the plague appears the paramount reason for the delay¹⁴¹⁵

¹⁴¹⁰ See Appendix 12. Knowles confuses Bishops Waltham for Waltham abbey. See D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 476.

¹⁴¹¹ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 167 (LP, IX, 370) and S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 217.

¹⁴¹² See LP, IX, 156, 172, 274, 279 & 413.

¹⁴¹³ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), The Lisle Letters, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1981), No. 441, p. 576.

¹⁴¹⁴ A. G. Dickens, Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation (London, 1959), p. 130.

¹⁴¹⁵ N. Samman 'The Henrician Court During Cardinal Wolsey's Ascendancy c. 1514 - 1529' (University of Wales, Bangor, Unpublished Ph. D., 1989), pp. 36, 37.

and, as in 1526, resulted in the king prolonging his giest.¹⁴¹⁶ A further reason for which it is unlikely the parliamentary delay was directly due to the monastic Visitation is that it was not until three or four days after the king's decision to prorogue parliament that the principal monastic Commissioners met together.

Layton was with Cromwell by Wednesday 15 September.¹⁴¹⁷ Legh and ap Rice were in the vicinity, at Wherwell, on 11 September, where they 'tarried', seeking the resignation of the abbess.¹⁴¹⁸ Effectively, Legh, Layton, ap Rice and Warmington can be identified in Winchester or at the bishop of Winchester's palace at Bishops Waltham, from 16 to about 20 September. During this time, it can be identified that specific topics were discussed, which involved the Visitors, Cromwell and the king.

The most identifiable and important task Legh and ap Rice undertook was the formulation of the king's letter to Cranmer, suspending the bishops' ordinary powers during the course of the Visitation.¹⁴¹⁹ This document, dated 18 September, confused early monastic historians into believing the Royal Visitation did not commence until October 1535;¹⁴²⁰ a confusion which continued into the nineteenth century.¹⁴²¹ Both Lehmborg and Logan have argued about the reasons for waiting until the end of September to issue the inhibition, when the Visitation had already been progressing

¹⁴¹⁶ N. Samman 'The Henrician Court During Cardinal Wolsey's Ascendancy c. 1514 - 1529' and Appendix 12.

¹⁴¹⁷ See 2.3.1 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton.

¹⁴¹⁸ See 2.3.1 The Visitation Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton. She resigned on 15 September.

¹⁴¹⁹ See D. Wilkins (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 797.

¹⁴²⁰ e. g., Nicolas Sander, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, translated by David Lewis (London, 1877), p. 129 (Sander wrote in the sixteenth century); G. Burnett, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 1 (London, 1880), p. 137 (Burnet wrote in the late seventeenth century); T. Tanner, *Notitia Monastica* (London, 1744), p. xxxvii (Tanner wrote in the early eighteenth century).

¹⁴²¹ Notably, R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England Henry VIII 1529 - 1537*, vol. 1 (London, 1878), pp. 324, 325.

for two months.¹⁴²² They both explained that to inhibit the use of the bishops' ordinary powers during a Visitation was nothing new.¹⁴²³ This inhibition meant that the bishop could not ordain priests, institute confirmation, open new churches, operate his ecclesiastical court, undertake his own diocesan Visitation, or, in other ways utilise his powers of jurisdiction during the Royal Visitation.

Logan suggested that the delay in issuing the inhibition, until well after the Visitation had commenced, may have been because its need was overlooked.¹⁴²⁴ However, the analysis of the activity of the Royal Commissioners in the first two months of Visitation has demonstrated no diminution in their authority or inquisitional power through not having the wide-ranging bishops' inhibition. Also, it is possible that Cromwell was issuing a hitherto unrecognised inhibition, before the all-encompassing version dated 18 September. This is identified in the programme of parish Visitation being undertaken by the archdeacon of Rochester in September 1535. This programme detailed central points at which representatives from surrounding parishes were to attend.¹⁴²⁵ There can be no argument about the year – it is headed 1535 – and the days of the week, as well as the dates specified, confirm the document as September 1535. At the foot of the first entry for 'die jovis viz IX die mensis Sept in ecclesia de Tumbreg' is the entry, with insertions, 'et eadem die in nocte inhibit sint pro litteras (regius ne ulterius proced[ant] pendente visitacione regie

¹⁴²² S. E. Lehmborg 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-examination', The English Historical Review, No. cccxix (April 1966), pp. 225 - 235; F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), pp. 658 - 667.

¹⁴²³ S. E. Lehmborg 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-examination', The English Historical Review, No. cccxix (April 1966), p. 227, and F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), pp. 600/601.

¹⁴²⁴ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), p. 663.

¹⁴²⁵ CKS, DR a / Vb4 fo. 120v.

majistatis).¹⁴²⁶ Thus, on 9 September, in the evening, the archdeacon received instructions to cease his deanery Visitation during the Royal Visitation.¹⁴²⁷ As the bishop of Rochester, however, did not receive the 18 September bishops' inhibition from Cranmer until after 2 October,¹⁴²⁸ it may be deduced some less formal inhibition was being used in the earlier part of the Visitation.

Lehmberg noted that while the 'immediate aim' of the bishops' inhibition was to aid the Royal Visitation, 'it was expected' to demonstrate ecclesiastical power came from the king.¹⁴²⁹ Kitching agreed with the relationship between the inhibition and asserting the Royal Supremacy.¹⁴³⁰ Bowker identified the link between the inhibition and the confusion of the royal ecclesiastical power in Cranmer's earlier metropolitan Visitation.¹⁴³¹ Logan concluded that Cromwell used the inhibition and the subsequent licensing system as a means of reinforcing the Royal Supremacy.¹⁴³²

The issue of this inhibition was, therefore, the means to ensure the bishops appreciated from where their power came: not the pope, but the king. It had no function at all in assisting the efficiency of the Royal Visitation. The Visitors had carried out their task without interference for two months already. That Legh and ap Rice were so clearly involved with the king and Cromwell in the formulation of the

¹⁴²⁶ CKS, DR a / Vb4 fo. 120v., bracketed item has been inserted on the left hand side of the manuscript, as a continuation, in the same hand.

¹⁴²⁷ With the date being so clearly specified, it would be rash to jump to the conclusion that the scribe has made an error and that the entry is a result of the bishops' inhibition of 18 September being received on 9 October. However, scribes do make occasional errors.

¹⁴²⁸ CKS, DR b / Ar.1 / 14 fo. 184r.

¹⁴²⁹ S. E. Lehmborg 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-examination', The English Historical Review, No. cccxix (April 1966), pp. 228/229.

¹⁴³⁰ C. J. Kitching, 'The Probate Jurisdiction of Thomas Cromwell as Vicegerent', Institute of Historical Research Bulletin 46 (1973), p. 102.

¹⁴³¹ M. Bowker, 'The Supremacy and the Episcopate: the Struggle for Control, 1534 - 1540', The Historical Journal, xviii, 2 (1975), p. 234.

¹⁴³² F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', English Historical Review, 103 (1988), p. 667.

inhibition, again underlines their role in establishing the means to enforce complete acceptance of the Royal Supremacy: ‘touching the inhibitions [we] thought good to show you such reasons as moved us to cause them to be made after this manner’.¹⁴³³ Their comment regarding the loyalty of bishops: ‘for such has been their juggling heretofore, as the king and you [Cromwell] know well enough’, also demonstrates their close connection to the king on this issue.

The issue of the inhibitions to bishops’ powers was reinforced by a vicegerential court, which absorbed the bishops’ testamentary and other powers for the course of the Visitation. A licensing system existed, through this court, enabling bishops to supplicate for return of some of these powers.¹⁴³⁴ What has never before been realised is that ap Rice was responsible for proposals to create this special ‘Office’ or court. The memorandum which has been ascribed to Petre,¹⁴³⁵ concerning the establishment of the vicegerential court, is in ap Rice’s handwriting.

It is titled ‘memorandum with my master’, that is, Cromwell, and details ap Rice’s thoughts for the destruction of much of the function of ecclesiastical courts. His proposals are reminiscent of the anti-clerical petitions of the 1529 parliament.¹⁴³⁶ Ap Rice recommended the removal of probate and testamentary causes, of a value greater than £500, from the church courts to the king’s hands. He derided

¹⁴³³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262r (LP, IX, 424). This is well known, e.g. J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials (London, 1721), vol. 1, pp. 144/145.

¹⁴³⁴ C. J. Kitching, ‘The Probate Jurisdiction of Thomas Cromwell as Vicegerent’, Institute of Historical Research Bulletin 46 (1973), p. 102.

¹⁴³⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 231 (LP, IX, 1071). S. E. Lehmborg, ‘Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-examination’, The English Historical Review, No. cccxix (April 1966), refers to the document’s being anonymous, but suggests Petre as the author. P. Ayris, ‘Thomas Cranmer’s Register’ (University of Cambridge, Unpublished Ph. D., 1984): an undated memo of ‘Cromwell’s advisors’. D. MacCulloch, Thomas Cranmer - A Life (Yale, 1996), p. 133, suggests Petre, with the dating being possibly September 1535.

¹⁴³⁶ S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 84 - 86.

ecclesiastical control of probate, tithes and causes of defamation and perjury.

However, he was willing to allow that matrimony suits and small value probates should be handled in episcopal courts, because that would involve less travel for the litigants. However, any powers ecclesiastical courts might retain would be 'of the king's benevolence': again, the authority of the Royal Supremacy was being applied and underlined in ap Rice's proposals.¹⁴³⁷ While ap Rice's ideas did not exactly mirror the resulting vicegerential or *ad causas ecclesiasticas* court,¹⁴³⁸ the degradation of the bishops' courts certainly resulted. The vicegerential court took control of probates greater than £200 value, even after the bishops had sued to the court for their ordinary powers to be restored.¹⁴³⁹

The memorandum demonstrates that while at Winchester, Legh and ap Rice separately and together were active in proposing a range of measures to further the Royal Supremacy. That Legh and ap Rice were, on 24 September, after leaving Winchester, marshalling more argument for Cromwell to defend the inhibition of the bishops' ordinary powers is probably because of the bishops' initial opposition; Cranmer and a number of the bishops including Winchester, Exeter, Bangor and the newly consecrated Rochester, Hereford and Worcester, and probably Salisbury, were at Winchester when the king's letter of inhibition was formulated. That it was 3 October before the inhibition was promulgated to all bishops¹⁴⁴⁰ could well have been because of some initial reticence. Legh and ap Rice's letter of 24 September had,

¹⁴³⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262 (LP, IX, 424); S. E. Lehmberg, 'Supremacy and Vicegerency: A Re-examination', *The English Historical Review*, No. cccxix (April 1966), p. 228.

¹⁴³⁸ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', *English Historical Review*, 103 (1988), pp. 663/664.

¹⁴³⁹ F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the Vicegerency in Spirituals: A Revisitation', p. 664.

¹⁴⁴⁰ DRO, Charter No. 15, fos. 66v/67r details the inhibition and the sequence of the letter, for the bishop of Exeter. Note D. Wilkins (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 797, the inhibition is not fully reproduced.

after all, been as a result of ‘supposing the bishops would be in hand with you again touching the inhibitions’.¹⁴⁴¹

While at Winchester, the Visitation *team* discussed the forthcoming Visitation of Cambridge University. At this stage, the decision it would be undertaken by Dr Legh, accompanied by ap Rice, had evidently been made. They had drawn up draft Injunctions for this university Visitation, probably guided by Layton’s recent experience in his own Visitation at Oxford.¹⁴⁴² Other than for Lincolnshire, it is possible to see that responsibility for the remaining diocesan Visitations was allocated at this time. Layton was to cover Chichester, Canterbury and Rochester dioceses,¹⁴⁴³ Legh was to undertake the remaining parts of Winchester diocese as well as London, Ely and Norwich dioceses¹⁴⁴⁴ and Tregonwell was responsible for the parts of Salisbury and Bath and Wells diocese not yet visited, as well as Exeter diocese.¹⁴⁴⁵ Reactions from the north suggest that the York province Visitation was also agreed upon.¹⁴⁴⁶ Knowles considered the Visitors ‘rambled in a somewhat aimless fashion about the country’ until December 1535.¹⁴⁴⁷ This is clearly not so after the Winchester meeting in September, when the pace and direction become remorseless.¹⁴⁴⁸

At Winchester, there was also some discussion regarding the manner in which the ‘papistical writings’, which each religious house had been commanded to send to

¹⁴⁴¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262r (LP, IX, 424).

¹⁴⁴² BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262v (LP, IX, 424(i)) and BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 261v (LP, IX, 424(ii)).

¹⁴⁴³ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 19 (LP, IX, 444).

¹⁴⁴⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 68 (LP, IX, 487).

¹⁴⁴⁵ Wells Cath, Charter No. 758, fo. 1r.

¹⁴⁴⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 36 (LP, IX, 16456).

¹⁴⁴⁷ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 286.

¹⁴⁴⁸ See also Appendices 2 to 10, demonstrating logic of visitational circuits.

Cromwell by Christmas,¹⁴⁴⁹ should be processed. Legh entreated Cromwell unsuccessfully for responsibility for these Bulls.¹⁴⁵⁰

Perhaps the most important outcome in the Royal Visitation, from the Winchester discussions, was the apparent decision to broaden the definition of ‘Sodomy’ and ‘Incontinence’ in the Commissioners’ compertes. This decision would, of course, suggest that the Royal Visitation should thereafter seek to focus on reporting sexual crime for the purpose of undermining the religious way of life. Although the type of parliamentary Act required for monastic reform does not appear to have been decided by September 1535, the type of evidence needed to assist the passing of any future Bill had become clear.

The decision to include *per voluntarias pollutiones* (that is, masturbation) in the list of crimes to be enquired about emanates from this time. Knowles makes it clear that enquiry for *per voluntarias pollutiones* was uncanonical and outside any previous episcopal Visitation.¹⁴⁵¹ The earliest original extract of the *Compendium* is of Chertsey abbey, which was visited about 26 or 27 September, a few days after leaving Winchester. Here two monks are accused, among other crimes, of *per voluntarias pollutiones*.¹⁴⁵² Evidently, after Winchester this information was being recorded.

The only earlier extracts from the *Compendium* occur in a secondary way in John Bale’s Pageant of Popes. The earlier analysis of Richard Layton’s Visitation has

¹⁴⁴⁹ Ap Rice Injunction 29.

¹⁴⁵⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E VI, fo. 262v, footnote (LP, IX, 424); PRO, SP 1 / 105, fo. 269r (LP, XI, 255).

¹⁴⁵¹ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 289, 297.

¹⁴⁵² PRO, SP 1 / 97, fo. 60 (LP, IX, 472(2)).

identified that all of Bale's extracts are from Layton's Act Book.¹⁴⁵³ Bale named guilty monks and canons in the same way as the original extracts, and these individuals, allowing for misspellings, were real people. Bale noted that these extracts were taken from 'the breviary of things found out in abbeys, assemblies, colleges, etc.'¹⁴⁵⁴

From the identification of Layton's itinerary,¹⁴⁵⁵ it is possible for the first time to demonstrate the rate at which named crimes were being recorded in the earlier part of his Visitation, as displayed in Table 7.

¹⁴⁵³ See Section 2.3.1.

¹⁴⁵⁴ John Bale, The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyves of all the Bishops of Rome to the Year 1555 with Sondrye Additions by I. S. (London, 1574). It should be noted that in Henri Estiene, Apologie pour Herodote, vol. i (A la Haye, Chez Heria Scheurleer, 1735), pp. 522 - 524, apparently extracted from Bale, the listings of names are not complete.

¹⁴⁵⁵ See Appendix 2.

TABLE 7 Analysis of Bale's sodomy and incontinence allegations, in date order of Layton's Visitation

			<u>Number</u>	
	<u>Religious House</u>	<u>Date of Visitation</u> ¹⁴⁵⁶	<u>Sodomy</u>	<u>Incontinence</u>
1	Monkton Farleigh	c. 15 August	0	1
2	Bath	16 August	2	2
3	Maiden Bradley	< 20 August	0	1
4	St Austin's, Bristol	24 August	0	1
5	Abingdon	13 September	0 ¹⁴⁵⁷	1
			—	—
			<i>subtotal</i>	6
At Winchester				
15 – c. 20 September				
6	Shulbred	27 September	0	4
7	Chichester cathedral	c. 28 September	2	11
8	Battle	c. 3 October	15	2
9	Christchurch, Canterbury	c. 17 October	9	2
10	St Augustine's, Canterbury	20 October	1	12
11	Bermondsey	c. 31 October	0	1
12	Windsor, St George	c. 1 November	0	9
			—	—
			<i>Subtotal</i>	41

¹⁴⁵⁶ See Appendix 2.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Abbot noted by Bale/ Layton as 'father of many' sodomites, but none named.

Table 7 shows a clear step change in the rate of recording sodomy and sexual incontinence before and after Winchester. While the sample is small, the trend is dramatic: before Winchester, the number of named allegations was minor, but thereafter appeared at five times the rate. The most probable cause of this was the stretching of the definition of crimes through the inclusion of *per voluntarias pollutiones* under the heading of either sodomy or incontinence.

In the Church's understanding, masturbation was categorised as sodomy. This was demonstrated in Tentler's analysis of Confessional Handbooks at the time of the reformation.¹⁴⁵⁸ Tentler quoted from Antonius' Confessional Handbook for priests, where 'if the [penitent] confesses to unnatural intercourse with his wife, no more questions need to be asked, it is sodomy, no matter how it was done'.¹⁴⁵⁹ Tentler also quoted from the handbook 'On The Confession Of Masturbation' by Jean Gerson¹⁴⁶⁰ 'where the penitent should seek a confessor after committing the crime [masturbation] just as quickly as if one had lain with a woman' as 'fire and brimstone descended on Sodom and Gomorrah to punish it'.¹⁴⁶¹

That sodomy or incontinence are intertwined in meaning with *per voluntarias pollutiones*, from the point of view of the Royal Visitation and people at large, can be seen in the responses of the canons of West Dereham, to the Visitors in early November 1535.¹⁴⁶² Presumably when questioned whether 'he knew, believed,

¹⁴⁵⁸ T. N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977). The author notes almost all of these works are based on continental european texts.

¹⁴⁵⁹ T. N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), p. 89.

¹⁴⁶⁰ T. N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 91 - 93.

¹⁴⁶¹ T. N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), p. 93.

¹⁴⁶² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114r (LP, X, 364(3)): this testimony is 'concordat cum compertis' and signed by ap Rice in his role as Registrar. This document is clearly, therefore, extracted from the Book of Acts of their Visitation. See also G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. iv (Cambridge, 1950), p. 697.

suspected or ever heard say that any of the brethren were or is defamed',¹⁴⁶³ 'Richard Norwolde, alias Marke, said in virtue of his oath and conscience that if all would so frankly confess their transgressions to the lord king as they ought, he would indeed find not one of the monks or priests who either enjoyed coming together with women or the sexual union with men or masturbation or other unmentionable abuses of that kind'.¹⁴⁶⁴ Norwolde does not use the term 'sodomy' or 'incontinence' in his description, as he specifically states the sexual acts performed.

Two of the canons, Peter Tilney and Roger Gargrave, 'who were administering the cure of souls in the country',¹⁴⁶⁵ had been questioned on the 'practice of the crime of sodomy'.¹⁴⁶⁶ The word sodomy ('sodomitici') is specifically stated. These two parish priests would appear to have answered from their knowledge of the cloisters as well as their parishes. Ap Rice noted, 'they say that this crime reigns as much in priests, both secular and religious, and the young who are not yet married'.¹⁴⁶⁷ What they meant as sodomy can be deduced from the following compertes of West Dereham, which noted the individual crimes of the canons.¹⁴⁶⁸

¹⁴⁶³ See Section 3.1 on Articles of Enquiry. BL, Harley 791, fo. 28r.

¹⁴⁶⁴ 'Richard Norwolde alius Marke dicit in vi[rto] juamenti et consciemsue que si omnes tam ingenue faterentur sua comissa domino Regi ut decent, repperiret ne unum quidem ex monachis vel presbytris quis aut utator femine congressu aut masculo concubitu aut polucionibus voluntaris vel aliis id genus nephandis abusibus'. This answer could well have been elucidated from the fifth question of the first set of brief Articles referred to in Section 3.1.

¹⁴⁶⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114v (LP, X, 364(3)). These people were not made up by the Visitors. Roger Gargrave was present at Bishop Redman's Visitation in August 1503, see F. A. Gasquet (ed.), *Anglo - Premonstratensia Collectanea*, Camden Society, Third Series, vols. vi, x, xii (1904 - 1906), p. 224.

¹⁴⁶⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114v (LP, X, 364(3)): 'Interrogati de usu criminis sodomitici'.

¹⁴⁶⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114v (LP, X, 364(3)): 'dicunt que illud crimen regnat ut plurim in presbytris tam secularibus quam regular et junenibus qui non dum sunt coniungati'.

¹⁴⁶⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114r, translated from the Latin.

CONTINENT {

 'Robert Wolsam with a married woman

 Thomas Mundy with a single woman

 Richard Norwolde with diverse women both married and single and he is a

 confessed sodomite

 John Jackson he is confessed of *per voluntarias pollutiones*

 Richard Watlington }

 Thomas Dighton } they are confessed of *per voluntarias pollutiones*

 Peter Tilney

 Roger Gargrave

 Thomas Downham }

This priory had at the time about twelve religious.¹⁴⁶⁹ Therefore, from the compertes, half of the house are, allegedly, guilty of *per voluntarias pollutiones*, with only one case marked sodomy. It seems, therefore, fair to deduce that when Tilney and Gargrave answered the Visitors' question regarding the extent of sodomy, their reply 'that this crime reigns as much in priests, both secular and religious', they were referring to masturbation as sodomy. This is perhaps supported by their last comment in the extract from the Act Book, which suggested a solution to the problem, 'And furthermore they wished the remedy of marriage be granted to such [persons]'.¹⁴⁷⁰

The manner of bracketing all the crimes – sexual incontinence, sodomy and masturbation within the heading of 'incontinence' in the *Compendium* extract, clearly demonstrates that masturbation also was classified as incontinence. This multiple

¹⁴⁶⁹ No acknowledgement of the Supremacy exists. Beyond the names in the compertes, Roger Foreman, soon to be prior, and Ralph Blakestone (FOR, p. 187) can be identified.

description of *per voluntarias pollutiones* as either sodomy or incontinence is important to consider when looking at the implications of Table 7 and the correspondence of the Visitors following the Winchester discussions.

This analysis demonstrates also that while including *per voluntarias pollutiones* under 'sodomy' may appear a deliberate falsehood by the Visitors, this is not necessarily so. It could be argued that as the Church classed masturbation with buggery, the extension of the word 'sodomy' into this wider meaning was not entirely false. However, the broadening of the Visitation to start including *per voluntarias pollutiones* within the classification of sodomy or incontinence did demonstrate that the name of religious was to be blackened by as much sexual crime as could be found. Effectively, up until the Winchester meeting, reported monastic crime was not as prevalent as would be required to demonstrate the widespread corruption of religious life.

The Winchester discussions in the period 16 to 20 September, therefore, represented a fundamental change in the future progress of the Royal Visitation.

¹⁴⁷⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 114r, 'et illi etiam obtarent remenium coniungii talibus concedi'.

4. The *Compendium Compertorum*

In attempting to understand the decision making process that led to the Suppression Act of 1536, it is crucial to compare the content of the Norwich Visitation *Compendium* with that of the Northern Visitation. With the Norwich Visitation taking place during November 1535, three months after the Royal Visitation formally commenced,¹⁴⁷¹ it can be believed the process had by then settled down into some form of mature pattern. The Northern Visitation of late December 1535 to February 1536 was the last main Visitation, immediately prior to the passing of the Suppression Act in March 1536, and so could be expected to hold clues to the Act itself.

The layout of both sets of documents has basic similarities with the Chertsey *Compendium*, the only other extant *Compendium* document.¹⁴⁷² Within each religious house where crimes exist, there are headings on the left hand side of the entry, stating the crime, principally 'Incontinence' and 'Sodomy'. Within these headings, are the names of monks, canons or nuns. Details of the offence are normally included to the right of the names of the individuals specified as being guilty. On all three sets of documents, the title 'Superstitions' is occasionally found as a left hand side heading, within which are entered the relics or pilgrimages found at that particular house. It is difficult to trace the evolution of a *Compendium* style by comparing the Norwich Visitation, with its thirty-two complete entries, with the one entry of Chertsey.

¹⁴⁷¹ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 269.

¹⁴⁷² PRO, SP1/97, fo. 160 (LP, IX, 472(2)) dated 29 September 1535 and in ap Rice's hand. It consists of only one side.

However, comparison of the left hand side headings of the two main Visitations yields the following table:

TABLE 8 Comparison of sexual and major crime headings in the
Compendium between the Norwich diocese and Northern Visitations

<u>Left Hand side heading</u>	<u>Number of Institutions with Heading</u>	
	<u>Norwich</u>	<u>Northern</u>
	<u>Visitation</u>	<u>Visitation</u>
No crime title	6 (19%)	43 (35%)
Incontinence	27 (84%)	59 (48%)
Suspicion of Incontinence	1	0
Sodomy	1	47 (39%)
Incest	0	3
Apostasy	1	1
Nota (Bene)	1	1
Lese Majeste	0	1
Incest & Adultery	0	1
Conspiracy	0	1
Theft	1	1
[Institutions Visited	32 (100%)	122 (100%)]

Table 8 reveals that while the Northern Visitation had thirty-five per cent of its houses with no left hand side crime heading, the Norwich Visitation had only nineteen per cent with no crime heading. Further, analysis from Appendix 9 and Appendix 10 identifies thirty-one per cent of the complement of Norwich religious houses were claimed to be guilty of crime, while in the Northern houses, the crime rate was only nineteen per cent. Crime was being noted, therefore, as much more prevalent in religious houses in the Norwich diocese.

Throughout the following analysis on the *Compendium Compertorum*, it is important to state that comparison with the feedback on moral repute contained in the later Suppression Commissioner reports of 1536 has not been made. This is because the purpose of the Suppression Commissioner survey was to concentrate on the technical implementation of the Suppression Act, to which the ‘conversation’ of the religious was irrelevant.¹⁴⁷³ Typically, only three or four words in total are used by the Suppression Commissioners to describe the moral climate of each religious house, which emphasises the superficiality of such information.¹⁴⁷⁴

¹⁴⁷³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 305.

¹⁴⁷⁴ The treatment given to the Northamptonshire Suppression Commissioners by the king clearly demonstrates that by May 1536 analysis of the moral condition of religious houses was becoming of little interest. See BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 241 (LP, X, 858); PRO, SP 1 / 104, fos. 31, 33 (LP, X, 916 and 917); and BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 249 (LP, X, 1166).

4.1 The manipulation of sodomy accusations in the Northern Compendium Compertorum

Table 8 clearly shows that the Norwich Visitation crime was almost all focussed on sexual incontinence, whereas the Northern Visitation appears to have had a lower rate of sexual incontinence than Norwich, but a greater problem of sodomy. In explaining this inconsistency, Knowles did not, it appears, have the opportunity to compare the original *Compendium* documents, but used the LP abstracts.¹⁴⁷⁵ Knowles deduced, ‘the inference seems, therefore, permissible that in many, perhaps even in all, of the cases where the word [sodomy] is left undefined, it denotes solitary sin only’.¹⁴⁷⁶ The inclusion of *per voluntarias pollutiones*, or masturbation, as a crime revealed by Visitation was without precedent, but from mid September 1535 onwards, as we have seen, a decision was taken to expose this information.¹⁴⁷⁷ Analysing the original *Compendium Compertorum* documents has allowed me to be more definite in assessing if the stated crime of sodomy can be allocated to the solitary sin of *per voluntarias pollutiones*.

In the Norwich *Compendium* (and in the Chertsey extract), *per voluntarias pollutiones* was signified under the left hand side heading of Incontinence or, in a few cases, without any left hand side heading at all. In the four individual accusations of sodomy, two were clearly identified under the title of Incontinence, one was identified with its own left hand side heading of Sodomy and the fourth had no left hand side

¹⁴⁷⁵ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 294, 297 clearly notes LP, X, 364 reference and page numbers: the LP summary is not accurate.

¹⁴⁷⁶ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 297.

¹⁴⁷⁷ See D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 297. See Section 3.3.

heading. Examination of the Norwich *Compendium* cannot confuse the reader – only four individual examples of sodomy were stated to exist, being clearly separated from the sixty-eight individual accusations of *per voluntarias pollutiones*.¹⁴⁷⁸

Turning now to the Northern *Compendium*, sodomy was being associated as a major heading at almost forty per cent of the houses, with 187 individuals named.¹⁴⁷⁹ It is this prevalence of sodomy that has shocked monastic historians. However, close examination of entries clearly distinguishes between *per voluntarias pollutiones* and sodomy. Take, for example, the priory of Thurgarton. The extract under ‘Sodomy’ is denoted as follows:¹⁴⁸⁰

Sodomite	{	Edward Elkstone	}	<i>per voluntarias pollutiones</i>
		Richard Leke		
		Richard Newark		
		John Yorke		
		Robert Flyntham		
		John Tymberland		
		Oliver Willoton		
		Thomas Woodborow		
		Richard Newarke with four boys		
		John Yorke with diverse boys		

The examples of *per voluntarias pollutiones* are explicit. The two examples of individuals named as guilty of ‘true’ sodomy (Richard Newark and John Yorke)

¹⁴⁷⁸ See Appendix 9 for crimes summary by Norwich diocese religious house.

¹⁴⁷⁹ See Appendix 10 for crimes summary by Northern Visitation religious houses. The total of 187 individuals accused in the *Compendium* of sodomy includes a small amount of duplication.

appear twice in the Sodomite list, being also listed under *per voluntarias pollutiones*. The extracts under Rufford¹⁴⁸¹, St Oswald's¹⁴⁸² and Fountains¹⁴⁸³ demonstrate a similar explicit layout.

Through examining closely the northern *Compendium Compertorum* manuscript, the stunning figure of 187 stated instances of sodomy can be reduced, in reality, to a figure of nineteen individuals, including one who suffered sodomy.¹⁴⁸⁴ The remainder of the sodomy claims can be distinguished as *per voluntarias pollutiones*.

The conclusion has to be that the sensitive heading 'Sodomy', with its misleading implication of seven individuals guilty of sodomy at Fountains abbey, eighteen at Selby abbey, four at Repton, and so on, was being used to extend or manipulate the crime of sodomy to give a negative feeling of monastic moral values. The distinctive manner in which the crime of sodomy was represented in the Northern Visitation, compared with the *Compendium* of the Norwich Visitation, shows clear propaganda opportunism. There is, of course, no reason to suppose that Blytheman's 'clean book of compertes' from which Warmington transcribed the *Compendium*, had the same layout. Perhaps it used the convention within the Norwich *Compendium* of describing *per voluntarias pollutiones* under the heading 'Incontinence'. The opportunity, perhaps, was taken when Warmington was compiling the Northern Visitation *Compendium* to stretch the crime sodomy for propaganda effect, by

¹⁴⁸⁰ PRO, SP1/102, fo. 94v - translated, brackets appear in the original manuscript.

¹⁴⁸¹ PRO, SP1/102, fo. 95v.

¹⁴⁸² PRO, SP1/102, fo. 96v.

¹⁴⁸³ PRO, SP1/102, fo. 105v.

replacing or amending headings. The Northern *Compendium*, neatly presented as it is, can, therefore, be believed to have been shown to parliament. The sodomy heading in the left hand column would catch the reader's attention, even though the attribution of *per voluntarias pollutiones* to the majority of the sodomy claims can readily be seen on further inspection.

¹⁴⁸⁴ See Summary of Crimes, Appendix 11. D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 297, deduces 'eight clear instances' of homosexuality in the Northern Visitation - his error is through utilising LP, rather than the original documents.

4.2 The Manipulation of the Description of Crime in the Northern Compendium Comperorum

While the previous analysis has clearly shown an apparent manipulation of information to inflate the sodomy figures in the Northern Visitation, Table 9 shows a further interesting comparison:

TABLE 9
Abbreviated summary of crimes – comparison between the two Visitations

	<u>Number of Individuals stated</u>	
	<u>Norwich Diocese Visitation</u>	<u>Northern Visitation</u>
Confessed crime	42 (33%)	0
Suspected crime	13 (10%)	4 (1%)
Crime stated only	73 (57%)	299 (99%)
	-----	-----
TOTAL	128 (100%)	303 (100%)

(Statistics extracted from Appendix 11)

It can be seen from Table 9 that in the Norwich Visitation a third of the religious listed were stated as confessing to specified crimes and ten per cent were only suspected. The contrast with the Northern Visitation is startling: virtually all here were just noted guilty. Such a contrast suggests the likelihood of some adjustment to the original data for a prescribed purpose. There are no doubts and no

qualifications in the northern *Compendium*, individuals are specified as guilty.

Perhaps a zero confessed crime figure for the Northern Visitation suggests so few had indeed confessed that to have reproduced it in the *Compendium* would have undermined the document's credibility. However, the end result is dramatic: 303 individuals are named guilty, almost all of them of heinous sexual crimes.

4.3 The Manipulation of Incontinence Accusations in the Northern Compendium Compertorum

While the 187 examples detailed as sodomy, in the northern *Compendium*, can be narrowed down to nineteen alleged cases of buggery, the claims of sexual incontinence are more difficult to evaluate.

The total number of 'Incontinence' accusations amongst monks and nuns in the Northern Visitation amounts to 134 which again seems a startling figure.¹⁴⁸⁵ However, when compared with the estimated complement of the 122 visited institutions it amounts to a more modest 8.5 per cent of all religious. While clearly any sexual lapse in the religious life would be unacceptable, the smallness of the statistic contrasts with the total blackness portrayed in most analyses of the *Compendium*.

Of these 134 individual 'incontinence' accusations twenty-three are represented by nuns who have had children. No clearer evidence of the manipulation of incontinence claims can be seen in the Northern *Compendium* than the examples of nuns with children at Handale and Esholt. At Esholt, Woodward identified that the nun Joanna Hutton, noted as '*peperit*',¹⁴⁸⁶ had already been punished in Archbishop Lee's Visitation. This suggests that past crimes were being included within the *Compendium* even though they had been canonically purged. This is also demonstrated at Handale where Alice Brampton is recorded in the *Compendium*, as '*peperit*' but was aged 70 at the time of the Visitation.¹⁴⁸⁷ It is probable that the

¹⁴⁸⁵ See Appendix 10.

¹⁴⁸⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), pp. 39 - 41.

¹⁴⁸⁷ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 40.

Visitors' Act Book noted the historical nature of these crimes, yet when the *Compendium* came to be edited all qualifying material was excluded. Similarly the accusation of a monk's sexual incontinence with a woman before entering religion could similarly be negatively recorded. Within the northern *Compendium* only one instance is noted of a monk accused of incontinence with a woman before entering religion and even that is marked 'suspected'.¹⁴⁸⁸ Christopher Rokesby, abbot of Coverham is accused of 'vehement incontinencia suspectus',¹⁴⁸⁹ which sounds worse than if he had actually been found guilty.

While clearly the sexual incontinence claims are massaged in the northern *Compendium*, it is wrong to attribute this to the Royal Visitors.¹⁴⁹⁰ There is every likelihood that, in their Act Book of Visitation, compertes were recorded in some relation to what they found. Layton and Legh's Visitation at Furness, for example, demonstrated a wider brief and an attention to detail which is not visible in the *Compendium*.¹⁴⁹¹ In the uprising a few months after the passing of the Act, Layton and Legh were derided specifically for their extortion and bribery 'as in taking from religious houses £40, £20 and so on...',¹⁴⁹² not for creating false claims and allegations during their Visitation. It is unfortunate that while recent historians have noted the northern *Compendium Compertorum* as unreliable evidence, they have linked this directly to the Royal Visitors and thereby discredited them and their Visitation.¹⁴⁹³ This connection has been initiated by the erroneous title on the vellum

¹⁴⁸⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 98v.

¹⁴⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 106v, 'suspected of vigorous incontinence'.

¹⁴⁹⁰ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 41.

¹⁴⁹¹ See Section 2. 4. 2.

¹⁴⁹² R. W. Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s* (Oxford, 2001) pp. 461/462 Pontefract Article number 11.

¹⁴⁹³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 302/3; G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 41 or R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 295.

cover of the northern *Compendium* specifying the '*Compendium Compertorum* of Dr Layton and Dr Legh in the Royal Visitation of York Province and Coventry and Lichfield diocese.'¹⁴⁹⁴ This title is, however, in a later hand,¹⁴⁹⁵ a fact that is hidden by its reproduction on the manuscript copies in the possession of Cotton and Lansdowne and, of course, in the nineteenth century calendared LP.¹⁴⁹⁶ As has been demonstrated, the *Compendium Compertorum* was copied up from Blytheman's material in London shortly before the Act was passed. Certainly Layton and Legh did accomplish the Visitation of York Province but the eventual *Compendium* attributed to them is a summary which has been edited for propaganda purposes. While Layton and Legh would recognise various details within the *Compendium* as emanating from their Visitation, they would have been aware material was being portrayed without any qualification. While it has been seen that Layton and Legh undertook their Northern Visitation with speed, their correspondence to Cromwell and the reaction from religious houses does not suggest they maliciously manipulated their Visitation *Acta*.

Thus, in the northern *Compendium* Robert Warmington was instructed to imply masturbation was sodomy and stretch the definition of incontinence to imply recent sexual intercourse. The names of the accused were not falsified, which gives the *Compendium* the feeling of reality, but it is the blatant removal of qualifying remarks such as suspected, or accused, or guilty thirty years ago, or previously punished, and the extension of meaning, most noticeable in the case of sodomy, that to the discriminating reader undermines the document.

¹⁴⁹⁴ PRO, SP 1 / 101, fo. 91v translated.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Thanks to Professor Cross and Professor Capp for their observations on this handwriting.

This manipulation, of course, was undertaken for a purpose. It is a testimony to the state of religious houses at the time that the government felt it needed to make the summary of the Visitation returns in the York province worse than they actually were.

¹⁴⁹⁶ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 184 - 197; BL, Lansdowne, 988, fos. 1 - 17; LP, X, 364, p. 137.

4.4 Comparison of the Non-Crime Headings of the Compendium, and their possible link to various monastic reform proposals

Besides the left hand side headings prominently displaying sexual crime, other headings or polarisation of information occur within the *Compendium* entries. These can be compared as follows:¹⁴⁹⁷

TABLE 10 Comparison of non-crime headings in the *Compendium*
between the two Visitations

	<u>Number of Houses with Heading</u>	
	<u>Norwich diocese</u>	<u>Northern Visitation</u>
	<u>Visitation</u>	
Desire release from vows	4 (12%)	25 (20%)
Superstitions	4 ¹⁴⁹⁸ (12%)	55 (45%)
Founders	0	116 (95%)
Income	0	119 (98%)
Debt	0	32 (26%)
<u>[Number of Houses</u>	32 (100%)	122 (100%)]

¹⁴⁹⁷ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 33. He talks in terms of these headings and those for sexual crimes appearing 'almost in tabular form' in the Northern *Compendium*. He notes that the information appears in the same order 'in every case'. In fact, in twenty-four out of the 122 entries, the information does not appear in the standard ordering, but this must not undermine Woodward's point that there is a definite attempt at sequencing the information.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Including Ely.

The frequency of data gathered under each of these headings in the Northern Visitation shows that, from the outset of this Visitation, Layton and Legh had been told to obtain it. Its existence demonstrates it was being logged and, therefore, was being logged for a purpose. Each of the headings in Table 10 will be analysed to detect whether the inclusion of such information was a reflection of developing options in government policy, decided upon before the Visitors left London in December 1535.

4.4.1 Desire Release from Vows Heading

Table 10 identifies that the number of houses where individuals are named who ‘desire release from their vows’ had noticeably increased from twelve per cent in the Norwich Visitation to twenty per cent in the Northern Visitation. It can be believed that the regular categorisation of those seeking release in the Northern Visitation *Compendium* was as a result of constant references to the issue in the correspondence of the Norwich Diocese Visitation. From Cambridge, on 27 October, Legh referred Cromwell to earlier letters desiring ‘further knowledge of your intent and mind as concerning these religious persons, which instantly kneeling on their knees, hold up their hands, desire to be delivered of such religion as they ignorantly have taken’.¹⁴⁹⁹ Similarly from Denney abbey on 30 October, Legh and ap Rice noted, ‘we found half a dozen ... most instantly desired with weeping eyes to go forth’.¹⁵⁰⁰ To this letter ap Rice added a postscript demonstrating concern that if the religious did leave Denney (and other abbeys) then the Visitors would be wrongly blamed for this: ‘although I reckon it well done that all were out, yet I think it were best that at their own instant suit they might be dismissed to avoid calumny and envy. And so compelling them to observe these Injunctions you shall have them all to do shortly. And the people shall know it the better that it comes upon their suit, if they be not straight discharged while we be here. For then the people will say that we went for no other case than to expel them, though the truth be contrary for they judge all things of the effects that floweth and not always of the truth.’¹⁵⁰¹

¹⁴⁹⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 84 (LP, IX, 694).

¹⁵⁰⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708).

¹⁵⁰¹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708) - my underlining.

Legh repeated from Ely that religious were ‘on their knees’ wanting to leave and ‘it would be a deed of charity that they might live in the kind of living which might be more to the glory of God’.¹⁵⁰² At Ely, ap Rice said five ‘would like to depart if they might’;¹⁵⁰³ and at Horsham St Faith, Legh noted that two canons desired release ‘whom I stayed until I know your pleasure’.¹⁵⁰⁴ Gaining this sort of intelligence, Cromwell could have wished to formally address this issue in the Northern Visitation – hence its inclusion in the tabular format of this later Visitation. Identifying the high number of institutions where requests for release from vows were made at the Northern Visitation, seems to suggest a great problem. However, looking at the number of individual cases, the picture is different. Compared with the estimated monastic complement of the Northern Houses, only four per cent of the monks/canons/nuns in fact desired release.¹⁵⁰⁵ Thus, on the basis of the individual cases in the *Compendium* and Visitation correspondence, the information demonstrated that monastic commitment to vows appears weaker in East Anglia.¹⁵⁰⁶

Undoubtedly, as ap Rice noted, the desire to be released from their vows could be linked to the pressure placed on houses ‘compelling them to observe’ the rigorous Injunctions.¹⁵⁰⁷ However, the earlier analysis makes it clear Cromwell did not have the general intention to rigidly enforce the Injunctions (certainly after September 1535) and to use them as a tool to close monasteries.

¹⁵⁰² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 272 (LP, IX, 735).

¹⁵⁰³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 145 (LP, IX, 772).

¹⁵⁰⁴ PRO, SP1/99, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 849).

¹⁵⁰⁵ Full figures in Appendix 10. Sixty-seven desire release from vows out of a total estimated monastic complement of 1495.

¹⁵⁰⁶ In the Norwich Diocese Visitation, the *Compendium* does not give exact details within those four houses where individuals desire release. An estimated six per cent of individuals can be calculated as desiring release (see Appendix 9), but it is the correspondence that is harder hitting than the statistics in the Norwich Visitation.

If this is so, why then should Cromwell seek to identify the number of religious who sought to be released from their monastic vows? Certainly, to the contemporary reader, it might have suggested a level of dissatisfaction associated with the religious life, but with only twenty-five out of 122 institutions registering such concern, it would hardly have been convincing. The *Compendium* does not specify the number of religious at each institution, although we know that Cromwell had that information.¹⁵⁰⁸ The intention here could have been to hide from the contemporary reader the fact that it was a fairly insignificant four per cent of northern religious who were, in fact, desiring release.

However, if the *Compendium* was declared to parliament,¹⁵⁰⁹ using the sexual crimes as part of the motivation for the Suppression Act, the document could also be presumed to have had other purposes as well. Since the Suppression Bill gave the choice for religious, in dissolved houses, either to obtain capacities or to transfer to other houses, the entries in the *Compendium* could well be giving a view of the likely impact of its enactment. Thus, far from attempting to demonstrate to parliament that the will of the religious to stay in convents was weak, the purpose of the document could have been to give some idea of how many religious would require to live ‘honestly and virtuously abroad’.¹⁵¹⁰ Or, alternatively and perhaps more realistically, reassuring parliament that large numbers of ex-religious would not be wandering the countryside, possibly causing trouble.

¹⁵⁰⁷ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110v (LP, IX, 708).

¹⁵⁰⁸ contained in CCCC MS 111 and referenced in ap Rice’s letters.

¹⁵⁰⁹ 27 Henry VIII, c. 28, ‘the King’s most royal majesty ... has thought good that a plain declaration shall be made of the premises, as well to the lords spiritual and temporal as to other his loving subjects the commons in this present parliament assembled’.

¹⁵¹⁰ 27 Henry VIII, c. 28.

Overall, it would, therefore, appear that the identification of those 'desiring release from vows' was a general category which Layton and Legh were requested to complete for each religious house visited. Its inclusion in the questioning during the Northern Visitation was as a result of Legh's repeated attempts, during the Norwich Visitation and earlier, to persuade Cromwell to widen the grounds on which religious were dismissed. In the event, the figures identified were so small that they were useless for the purpose of smearing the religious vocation. They may have had a use in warning the government that so few capacities would be required in the north that there could be a problem of housing those who wished to remain in religion despite the closure of their monastery.

4.4.2 Superstitions Heading

Table 10 demonstrates that about fifty per cent of northern houses had ‘Superstitions’ or relics and pilgrimages of some kind, compared with only twelve per cent in the Norwich diocese. Correspondence in the earlier Visitation reflected an accepted mockery of relics on the part of the Visitors, presumably reflecting the views of Cromwell, to whom the letters were addressed. Of Bury St Edmunds, ap Rice stated, ‘among the relics we find much vanity and superstition, as the coals that St Lawrence was toasted’;¹⁵¹¹ his comments on the many relics are reflected in the *Compendium* entry for Bury St Edmunds.¹⁵¹² However, even with such a high number of houses possessing ‘Superstitions’, no references were made to them in the Northern Visitation correspondence.

The regular tabulating of ‘Superstitions’ in the northern *Compendium* suggests that a possible means of undermining the credibility of the monasteries was being developed in the Northern Visitation. In his Ph. D. thesis, Stewart analysed John Bale’s play, ‘A Comedy concernynge thre(e) lawes of Nature, Moses and Christ, corrupted by the Sodomytes, Pharisees and papystes most wycked’.¹⁵¹³ This play, first performed in the 1530s, was an anti-papal propaganda device which links popery, sodomy and superstition together. With John Bale being employed by Thomas Cromwell for propaganda purposes,¹⁵¹⁴ it seems likely that he was building on ideas

¹⁵¹¹ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 120 (LP, IX, 772), 5/11/35.

¹⁵¹² PRO, SP1/102, fo. 113v (LP, X, 364(3)).

¹⁵¹³ A. G. Stewart, ‘The Bounds of Sodomy: Textual Relations in Early Modern England’, (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Queen Mary & Westfield College, London University, 1993).

¹⁵¹⁴ A. G. Stewart, ‘The Bounds of Sodomy: Textual Relations in Early Modern England’, (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Queen Mary & Westfield College, London University, 1993), p. 207.

that were being developed at the time of the Visitation: the desire to undermine popery by linking it with sodomy and bestiality and the worship of idols. The derisory title of ‘Superstitions’, given against most examples in the *Compendium*, was itself an indication of an attack upon the religious, who were thereby accused of exploiting popular imagination. Papal indulgences linked with such relics and pilgrimages were formally forbidden by the statutes abolishing papal authority. At the start of the Northern Visitation on 1 January 1536, a proclamation had been issued ordering the surrender of Bishop Fisher’s sermons and books, within which is stated ‘and over this ... such light persons called pardoners, go daily abroad declaring ... divers indulgences and pardons completely and deceitfully obtained of the Bishop of Rome’.¹⁵¹⁵ The campaign to eradicate papal indulgences was evidently continuing and the noting of superstition at monasteries could, therefore, be seen as part of the Royal Supremacy programme.

On the issue of ‘Superstitions’, Woodward identified the reforming, religious views of Cromwell, which suggest an attack on relics could have been purely motivated by such ideas, but he pragmatically also identified the treasure associated with shrines.¹⁵¹⁶

However, the draft Bill ‘Against Pilgrimages and Superstitions’¹⁵¹⁷ is a powerful, under-exploited, historical tool, which links the Royal Visitation to superstition and anti-papism. Within the draft it states, ‘it is enacted, ordained and established ... in this present parliament assembled and by the authority of the same,

¹⁵¹⁵ P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (ed.), *Tudor Proclamations 1*, 1485 - 1553 (Yale, 1964), p. 235.

¹⁵¹⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 52. Also note Cromwell’s *Remembrances*, circa March 1535, ‘remember all the jewels of the monasteries in England’ (BL, Cotton Titus B 1, fo. 424 (LP, VIII - 475)).

first for avoiding of idolatry, superstition, and hypocrisy that no religious person thereafter shall by any means seduce or allure any man to run about on pilgrimage to seek God in this place or that and persuade the people to give ... or that any such persons shall for lucre set forth their images or relics ... And also that they persuade not the people their pretended religion to be holiness or piety nor their simulate poverty to be virtue'.¹⁵¹⁸ The proposed punishment was projected to appear as a measure of religious reform to contain an abuse: 'The offenders here to incur the penalty of privation of their dignities, benefice, stipend and expulsion from that place where they commit such crime or offence'.¹⁵¹⁹

The link with the Visitors in this draft is direct and suggests a close knowledge of their activities: 'Whereas of late it hath pleased [...] most gracious highness being supreme head ... to purge redress and amend all crimes, enormities and excesses of religious persons within this realm ... hath sent into all parts of this realm his trusty Commissioners to see and search out heresy, idolatry, superstition, hypocrisy, buggery, adultery and other kinds of incontinence ... which have sprung of the fountain and origin of all misery and abomination, the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome ... And the said Commissioners according to their most bounden duties have diligently searched and found in diverse places of this realm the crimes and excesses aforesaid'.¹⁵²⁰

¹⁵¹⁷ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 124 (LP, X, 246(16)).

¹⁵¹⁸ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 126r/v.

¹⁵¹⁹ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 126v.

¹⁵²⁰ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 124r/v.

Elton believed this draft was written by a religious reformer and was not a 'government Bill'.¹⁵²¹ Lehmberg also doubted it was from Cromwell's office, emphasising that as it brought the king no revenue it was 'inconceivable that it originated with the government'.¹⁵²² However, close examination of the manuscript reveals, first of all, that it is in the hand of Robert Warmington, which explains why such inside knowledge of the Visitors' activities was demonstrated. As Robert Warmington has been proved to be working for Cromwell as a scribe, messenger and notary during the Visitation, it is clear this Bill does emanate from Cromwell's office.

Secondly, it can be demonstrated the Bill was written at the end of February or beginning of March 1536, immediately prior to the Suppression Act, revealing Cromwell was considering such an alternative Bill.¹⁵²³ Warmington was writing this draft Bill at about the same time he was writing the northern *Compendium Compertorum*.

The Bill is neatly written, with no deletions, and has only one insertion,¹⁵²⁴ suggesting it had been copied up for a formal purpose. The *Compendium* and this Bill show similarities. The Bill states, 'And the said Commissioners, according to their most bounden duties, have diligently searched and found in diverse places of this realm the crimes and excesses aforesaid, diversely to have insurged and of long time hitherto continued: whereupon the said King's highness, being thereof truly

¹⁵²¹ G. R. Elton, 'Parliamentary Drafts 1529 - 1540', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, xxv (1952), p. 122.

¹⁵²² S. E. Lehmberg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 224, believes the Bill possibly emanated from one of the 'commonwealth' men, perhaps Thomas Starkey.

¹⁵²³ See Appendix 13.

¹⁵²⁴ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 126v ('or act' has been inserted).

informed'. The northern *Compendium* is clearly the sort of document where the 'excesses' were listed.

What has surprised many historians is that if the crimes alleged in the *Compendium* were true, why were the religious not punished by ecclesiastical and civil law.¹⁵²⁵ The draft Bill, after its opening introduction, overcomes this by including within it a blanket pardon from the Crown, for all the crimes identified in the Visitation:

'Whereupon the said kings highness, being thereof truly informed, only intending a charitable and quiet reformation ... and desiring the true amendment of such persons as heretofore have committed any such crimes as above be rehearsed, has of his most abundant goodness remitted, forgiven and abolished all such trespass, enormities and crimes, willing, commanding and charging all such persons to leave and avoid all such enormities and excessive vices, hereafter, under pain of his laws to the offenders straightly to be executed'.¹⁵²⁶

The forgiven penitents are then exhorted to remember the 'gifts and quality' that they have all received of God and use them 'as ... may best discharge his conscience, profit himself and also the commonwealth ... and not addict himself to any private or common place where in ease and idleness he may lead his life like a drone bee, eat

¹⁵²⁵ For example, Gasquet makes the case that, through the later receipt of pensions and the fact that the 'guilty' religious were not prosecuted, they must have largely been innocent of the alleged crimes. See F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), pp. 113-135.

¹⁵²⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 124v, fo. 125r, 'executed' here meaning 'enacted'. Note the priestly powers of the King: 'remitted' and 'forgiven' being used in a penitential sense. My thanks to Mr R. H. Shaw for his comments on this manuscript.

and suck up such allures and sustenance as should be given to poor, impotent and miserable persons'.¹⁵²⁷

This exhortation is almost directly extracted from the eighth Injunction already given to monasteries during the Visitation.¹⁵²⁸ The Injunction is directed at the misplaced giving of 'leavings' from the monastic table, and alms to the undeserving poor: 'yet not let them be so cherished that they shall leave labour and fall to idleness ... And by no means let such alms be given to valiant, mighty and idle beggars and vagabonds ... which rather as drone bees¹⁵²⁹ and mychers should be driven away and forced to labour'.¹⁵³⁰

This general attack on idleness in the commonwealth appears linked to another draft Bill that appeared in the same parliamentary session and, with modifications, became the Vagabond Act, 1536. This connection supports Lehmborg's claim that there was a link between the suppression of, what he termed, inefficient monastic charity, with the provision of a government administered Poor Law.¹⁵³¹

After this preamble, the draft Bill specifies what it is seeking to accomplish: 'Therefore, it is enacted, ordained and established by the King our sovereign lord with the assent of the lords spiritual and temporal and the commons in this present parliament assembled and by authority of the same, first, for avoiding of idolatry, superstition, hypocrisy, that no religious person shall by any means seduce or allure

¹⁵²⁷ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 125r.

¹⁵²⁸ See Table 4.

¹⁵²⁹ D. Wilkins (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol. iii (London, 1737), p. 790, translates 'drone bees' incorrectly as 'drove beasts'. Similarly, G. Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 2 (London, 1880), p. lxii. The error has arisen from Wilkins using the later copy of the Injunctions in the possession of Cotton, see BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 22r - 25v, specifically, fo. 23v.

¹⁵³⁰ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 67v. This original copy of the Injunctions is in Warmington's handwriting.

¹⁵³¹ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 230 - 233.

any man to run about on pilgrimage ... or that any such persons shall for lucre set forth their images or relics ... And also that they persuade not the people their pretended religion to be holiness or piety, nor their simulated poverty to be virtue'.¹⁵³²

This draft does not, on the face of it, forbid pilgrimage or stop individuals seeking God through 'images or relics'. However, it does seek to stop 'religious persons' encouraging pilgrimage and the devotion to images and relics. Most extraordinarily of all, it sought to specify in law that the religious life was hypocrisy. Again, the Articles are reflections of the Injunctions already given to monasteries.¹⁵³³ The draft Bill was an attempt to widen the understanding of the Injunctions which, after all, were given specifically to the religious, by placing them on the statute book. Thus the twenty-fourth ap Rice monastic Injunction states, 'that they shall not show no relics or feigned miracles for increase of lucre. But that they exhort pilgrims and strangers to give that to the poor that they thought to offer to their images or relics'.¹⁵³⁴

The nineteenth ap Rice Injunction appears to link with the 'pretensed religion' and 'simulated poverty' of the draft Bill. The nineteenth Injunction includes, for example, 'that true religion is not contained in apparel, manner of going, shaven heads and such other marks, nor in silence, fasting, up rising in the night, singing and such other kinds of ceremonies, but in cleanness of mind, pureness of living, Christ's faith not feigned and brotherly charity and true honouring of God in spirit and verity'.¹⁵³⁵

The penalties if religious persons are found to 'commit any of the above specified crimes', include any that subsequently recommit the adultery, buggery,

¹⁵³² PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 125v - 126r/v.

¹⁵³³ See Section 3.2.

¹⁵³⁴ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v.

¹⁵³⁵ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 69v.

heresy etc., that were specified at the beginning of the preamble. In the latter case, ‘any statute or act heretofore made against offenders’ would be applied. However, the penalty for religious encouraging pilgrimage and devotion to images and relics ‘for lucre’ is specified as ‘privation of dignity, benefice, stipend and expulsion of that place where he commits such crime or offence’.¹⁵³⁶ This penalty again relates to the monastic Injunctions where the penalty for not observing them includes ‘nec non privationis beneficii, stipendii, vel expulsionis a domo aut et incarcerationis in dicos confratres hec violantes infligenda’.¹⁵³⁷

In fact, the link with the monastic Injunctions is made clear in the closing part of the draft Bill. Here, in a strange conclusion to an already muddled Bill, it is emphasised that the penalties specified:

‘all religious persons respectively shall incur that hereafter break any of the Injunctions given or hereafter to be given by the said kings highness or his Visitor general or any of their Commissioners in that behalf, ... Provided always that [they] may hereafter for any just and reasonable cause release and dispense for a time with any religious person or persons from observing of some of the said Injunctions’.¹⁵³⁸

While the Bill was confused and unworkable, it was clearly a child of the Royal Visitation, the monastic Injunctions and the compertes. Patently, it addressed the issue of pilgrimage and relics in an Erasmian way. It attempted to eradicate hypocrisy and profiteering, as seen by the Visitors, in the many images and relics displayed and venerated throughout the monasteries of England. Given the large number of

¹⁵³⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fos. 126v - 127r.

¹⁵³⁷ This closing part of the Injunctions is included only in ap Rice’s Latin copy. See PRO, E 36 / 116, fo. 225r (LP, VIII, 76(4)).

¹⁵³⁸ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 127r (this is the end of the draft Bill).

religious houses stated in the Northern Visitation as having relics and pilgrimages, it is easy to project how such an Act could have been utilised in suppressing a large number by 'expulsion from that place where they commit such crime or offence'.¹⁵³⁹ Monasteries would, at least, be forced to give up their images and relics for fear that they could be interpreted as an abuse of the Act.

Analysing this draft Bill from the perspective of the Visitation, therefore, suggests an approach to monastic dissolution linked to reform rather than directly financial motives. Perhaps it is because this Bill was not definite enough in its final outcome that it was not redrafted into something more workable. It was Cromwell's servant writing the Bill and while Cromwell was clearly against pilgrimages and relics, he chose the later Injunctions, issued to all the clergy of the realm in August 1536, to open the general campaign against pilgrimage, images and relics.¹⁵⁴⁰

¹⁵³⁹ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 126v.

¹⁵⁴⁰ G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxx-lxxii.

4.4.3 Founder Heading

In almost every entry in the Northern Visitation, a ‘founder’¹⁵⁴¹ is specifically stated (or in three cases noted as ‘uncertain’), while the Norwich diocese *Compendium* makes no reference to such information.¹⁵⁴² Evidently, there must be strong reasons for its consistent inclusion. The instructions for the ‘general Visitation of the Monasteries’, while discredited, do include as their third question, ‘who were the first founders of this house’; with a note that the first founder, second, third and as many they have, should be exhibited.¹⁵⁴³ As the CCCC MS 111 includes the current founder for almost all houses specified, it is clear from the outset of the Visitation this material was being obtained alongside other information.¹⁵⁴⁴ The twenty-ninth Injunction, issued by the Visitors, ‘reserving power ... to search and try the foundations, charters, donations, appropriations and muniments of the said places’¹⁵⁴⁵ demonstrates that foundation information was being examined, principally to identify ‘papistical scripts’.¹⁵⁴⁶ The religious houses and other ecclesiastical institutes were in fact required to send such material to Cromwell. Early in the Visitation, the houses were being told to send the documents before Christmas,¹⁵⁴⁷ and in the Northern

¹⁵⁴¹ referring to current founder. The current founder often had the right to nominate corrodians, an involvement with elections and an interest in the house through heredity.

¹⁵⁴² Appendix 10 shows, in the last column, the founder specified in the Northern *Compendium*, by religious institution. See abbreviations also in Appendix 1. Founder information in Appendix 9, for the Norwich diocese Visitation, has been abstracted from B. Thompson, ‘Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution’, *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, Sixth Series, 4 (1994), pp. 124-125 and CCCC MS 111, fos. 340/341.

¹⁵⁴³ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 15v.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Woodward considered such information might be available from other sources and not necessarily obtained by the Visitors (see G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 33).

¹⁵⁴⁵ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v. See Table 4.

¹⁵⁴⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 6, fo. 71v.

¹⁵⁴⁷ e. g. WC, W52/70, Charter of St Swithin’s Winchester.

Visitation they were told to send them by Easter Sunday.¹⁵⁴⁸ In the latter case, such a deadline would have been after the Suppression Act had been passed, demonstrating the Visitors must have amassed summary information on founders as they went about their travels.¹⁵⁴⁹

A piece of evidence that founders represented an important aspect, early on in the Visitation, is demonstrated by the misunderstood manuscript BL, Harley 604.¹⁵⁵⁰ Clay, who transcribed this document, called it the 'Itinerary', which he felt was sent to Cromwell by Layton and Legh at the end of the Visitation.¹⁵⁵¹ It has been proved, in comparison with the corrected *Compendium*, that the Harleian manuscript certainly does not represent the route taken by the Northern Visitation Commissioners.¹⁵⁵² The manuscript details most religious houses and some secular colleges in the York diocese. The writer¹⁵⁵³ explains that, 'In all these we have been in, besides diverse other more, both in Durham bishopric and also Carlisle, with many good towns and villages, as well in my lords grace liberty as in others'.¹⁵⁵⁴ This identifies that the writer has been not only in the York diocese but in the whole of York province.

Sixty-eight houses are noted containing, in most instances, the distance travelled between each, the original founder and the current founder, as well as the religious order of the house. Over fifty of the houses have a specific original founder defined,

¹⁵⁴⁸ e. g. BL, Add. 37, 769, fo. 164, evidences of Cockersand, Lancs., or PRO, SP1/102, fo. 227 (LP, X, 501), Charters of Bridlington, or PRO, SP1/103, fo. 71 (LP, X, 611), evidences of Whitby.

¹⁵⁴⁹ There are also proofs from the manner in which the *Compendium* was copied, see A. N. Shaw, 'The Compendium Comptorum and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation', pp. 62-63.

¹⁵⁵⁰ BL, Harley 604, fos. 122 - 125 (LP, IX, 1173).

¹⁵⁵¹ J. W. Clay (ed.), *Yorkshire Monastic Suppression Papers*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, vol. xlviii (1912), pp. 13-16.

¹⁵⁵² In A. N. Shaw, 'The *Compendium Comptorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation', Appendix 10 of which analyses the manuscript.

¹⁵⁵³ The handwriting is unfortunately not identified yet, even after an exhaustive search at the Borthwick Institute, York and elsewhere. My thanks to Professor Smith for his assistance.

proved in some cases by reference to the tomb of the founder being located in the monastery. Up to thirty-five of the sixty-eight houses have the current founder defined, although by inference from the original founder it is clear who the current founder would be.¹⁵⁵⁵

The data is effectively grouped in the archdeaconries of York diocese, although this is not specified: it commences with Cleveland, then East Riding, then York, then Richmondshire (including houses in Lancashire), followed by some miscellaneous houses including those in the centre of York and concludes with the archdeaconry of Nottingham. The listing suggests it represents the step-by-step journey of an individual involved in the Commission of the Tenth, to compile the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* during 1535. The writer refers to the apparent purpose of this listing when he states, as if concluding the catalogue of houses, ‘But sir I pray you if I miss others in true writings or else in the date or count of kings and years, blame my precedent and not me, for I have nothing of their founders nor of the years of their foundation but by other mens reports’.¹⁵⁵⁶ The writer then adds the data for Nottinghamshire, before concluding, in the last sentence, ‘and thus Jesus preserve your mastership’.¹⁵⁵⁷

It is possible that this document was the result of a request by Cromwell to the archbishop of York for certain information. The information required appears to concern founders and the logistics of travelling between religious houses. The

¹⁵⁵⁴ BL, Harley 604, fo. 125r: ‘lord’s grace’ being the archbishop of York.

¹⁵⁵⁵ e. g. The original founder of Selby is noted as King William the Conqueror (fo. 122v). It can be deduced the King is current founder.

¹⁵⁵⁶ BL, Harley 604, fo. 124v.

¹⁵⁵⁷ BL, Harley 604, fo. 125v - my underlining.

respondent wrote the information as best he could, relating it to the recent journey he and others had undertaken in the Commission of the Tenth.

That senior personnel in York were aware of Cromwell's intention to visit York province is clear from the end of September. Sir George Lawson, member of parliament for York and a Commissioner of the Tenth, had written from York, having heard word of the forthcoming Visitation: 'whereas I understand your Commissioners shall shortly resort in these parts in a Visitation by your authority'.¹⁵⁵⁸ He had heard, 'there shall be temporal persons to have the surveying and receipt of the lands pertaining to monasteries and religious houses'. Probably this letter was a reaction to Cromwell's request for information to prepare the way for the Northern Visitation. A month later, the registrar of the Praemonstratensian order, living in York diocese, was writing requesting assistance from Cromwell's commissary 'at your [forthcoming] Visitation'.¹⁵⁵⁹

The Commission of the Tenth had completed its work in Yorkshire by the beginning of July¹⁵⁶⁰ and so providing the information contained in Harley 604 in October would have been feasible. Indeed, it could have been the receipt by Cromwell of the final draft of Harley 604 that caused the friction with the prior of Bridlington. The manuscript states of Bridlington, 'of the first foundation of Lord Walter Gawntt, whose body lies in the middle of the choir'.¹⁵⁶¹ At the latter end of October, Cromwell wrote to the prior of Bridlington, advising him 'to recognise the kings highness' as patron and founder. The prior refused, referring to 'our original

¹⁵⁵⁸ PRO, SP1/96, fo. 231 (LP, IX, 425) delivered by Dr James Rookby, an auditor of the Tenth.

¹⁵⁵⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 49v (LP, IX, 652). Richard Bowyer, alias Stritley, seen in August hindering the archbishop of York's Visitation at St Mary's. See LP, VIII, 964, 965, 966.

¹⁵⁶⁰ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 102 (LP, IX, 703).

grant to us made by Gilbert de Gaunte, cousin to our original founder ... which of equity, his highness ought not to be so'.¹⁵⁶²

That Cromwell was examining closely the identity of founders at this stage of the Royal Visitation is reinforced in a letter from Legh. Writing from Bury St Edmunds on 4 November, Legh sought a position for a kinsman, 'Master Doctor Rookeby', and suggested he would be useful to Cromwell 'in examination of the foundations of religious houses or otherwise'.¹⁵⁶³ Just a few days before, Legh had also noted that at Fordham 'my lord of Northumberland is founder there, of whom I suppose you may easily obtain his title and interest';¹⁵⁶⁴ this house consisted of a prior and a canon, both very old 'and at death's door', and evidently seemed ripe for closure after the altering of founder responsibility to the king.¹⁵⁶⁵

This apparent activity in October 1535, related to the allocation of founder responsibility at monasteries, leads me to believe that the 'Common Law Opinion', dated by LP to February 1536, should be dated to October 1535.

This 'Common Law Opinion', which Cromwell obtained, estimated an income to the crown of £40,000 per annum if 'escheator or Commissioners' seized the king's foundation religious houses.¹⁵⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶¹ BL, Harley 604, fo. 122v.

¹⁵⁶² BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 68r (LP, IX, 670).

¹⁵⁶³ PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 224 (LP, IX, 762).

¹⁵⁶⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 272 (LP, IX, 735).

¹⁵⁶⁵ The weak position of Northumberland, which led to the parliamentary Act making the king his heir a few months later, is clearly reflected in Legh's comments.

¹⁵⁶⁶ This also links with the Berkeley Castle petition of 1529, which Hoyle suggested was discussed in the parliament of that year, and which included the recommendation that founders reclaim lands if they

This 'good law' was specifically aimed at those houses who had 'willingly lacked of their number or willingly omitted such divine service or other observance or ordinance established upon their foundation'.¹⁵⁶⁷ The writer of the 'Common Law Opinion' evidently felt able to express his opinion to Cromwell, regarding the £40,000 proceeds, 'which monks, canons and nuns do occupy and withhold from our sovereign lord contrary to the laws of this realm and the law of God and to the great peril of their souls'.¹⁵⁶⁸ That St Albans, with a net income of £2102 per annum was being placed alongside Torksey priory, with a net income of just £13 per annum, seems almost too general to be true.¹⁵⁶⁹

What gives credence to the dating of the 'Opinion' to October 1535 is the commencement of ad hoc suppressions in November. These surrenders were specifically of houses where the king was noted as 'founder and patron'. The surrender documents state 'because of the great and heavy debt which oppresses and almost overwhelms us' that the houses have 'by the kings permission ... consented ... to be totally annihilated',¹⁵⁷⁰ whereas crimes or lack of numbers seemed more obvious reasons for these closures. The Statute of Provisions, 1307, included within it a clause that founders who had originally granted endowments could repossess them if misused. The economic failure of a few smaller houses in the mid fifteenth century had resulted in escheat,¹⁵⁷¹ so perhaps debt, loosely linked to an 'ordinance

were not devoted to the original intention of the donor. See R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 286.

¹⁵⁶⁷ PRO, SP1/101, fo. 248 (LP, X, 242).

¹⁵⁶⁸ PRO, SP1/101, fo. 248 (LP, X, 242).

¹⁵⁶⁹ My examples of the variety of income of king's foundation houses. Thanks to Professor Cross for her comments on this 'Common Law Opinion'. In her judgement, it would have been impossible, at this stage, to close the larger houses in this way.

¹⁵⁷⁰ E. Hasted, *History of Kent* vol. 4 (Canterbury, 1799), p. 105.

¹⁵⁷¹ B. Thompson, 'Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, Sixth Series, 4 (1994), pp. 112, 115.

established upon their foundation’, could be viewed within the ambit of the ‘Common Law Opinion’.

However, these suppressions certainly appear better organised than the dissolution of Holy Trinity, Christchurch, London, in 1532. Here the priory, pleading its insolvency, requested the king’s help to overcome its difficulty. This led to its being surrendered to the king as alleged founder, but the process was so fraught with illegality that a parliamentary Act was required to ensure the king’s title.¹⁵⁷² The standardisation of the wording in the seven surrender documents, used in the Royal Visitation from 13 November through to 28 February, suggests a confidence in this process, built up from experience.¹⁵⁷³ Indeed, the analysis of founders, listed in the northern *Compendium*, show that about half were of the king’s foundation and could have fallen within the provisions of the ‘Common Law Opinion’. This would have suggested to Cromwell that the £40,000 estimate was much lower than he actually could expect.¹⁵⁷⁴

Pulling all this evidence together, a decision was taken, probably when the court was at Winchester in mid September, to explore the possibility of suppressing king’s foundation houses, should circumstances permit. Cromwell set about gaining information during October, on how such a scheme could be implemented. The king’s concern in October, regarding Legh’s conduct in the Visitation, prompted Cromwell to defend the manner in which he was directing the Visitation. Layton’s extraordinary claims of monastic misconduct at three houses on the Kent coast were

¹⁵⁷² E. J. Davis, ‘The Beginning of the Dissolution - Christchurch, Aldgate, 1532’, Royal Historical Society Transactions, Fourth Series, viii (1925), pp.132 - 135 and D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 200/201.

¹⁵⁷³ The legality of Tilty and Hornby’s surrenders is doubtful.

developed opportunistically for Cromwell's defence. In identifying that a tough attitude was required to root out this intolerable indiscipline, Cromwell was able to reinforce the king's vision of his reforming zeal. The role of the king in initiating the Royal Visitation was, after all, described as, 'tendering his high office, prerogative, pre-eminence and dignity, given to him by the law of God, in this behalf to purge, redress and amend all crimes, enormities and excesses of religious persons within this realm.'¹⁵⁷⁵

Cromwell was able to balance this reform opportunity in the three monastic surrenders in November, with the financial incentive even these small houses yielded. For Cromwell, this represented an experiment in monastic reform, suggesting that, at the beginning of November 1535, the use of escheat of king's foundation houses was the most favoured option at that time.

That escheat of particular religious houses of the king's foundation was a possible option at Christmas time is reflected in Layton's first letter, as he made his way to Lichfield. In this one letter, he complained of the activities of Lord Mordant at Harrold priory in abusing the king's foundation there; of St Andrew's, Northampton, he bemoaned 'the King's foundation thus to be mangled by the quondam', and he reported Newark College, Leicester, to be of the king's foundation. It must be presumed his particular intent, with regard to the king's foundation houses, was a reflection of conversations with Cromwell prior to his departure for the Northern Visitation.

¹⁵⁷⁴ See Appendix 10 for founders by religious house.

¹⁵⁷⁵ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 124r.

Looking back at the *Compendium Compertorum*, if it was being shown to parliament, rather than being an internal piece of government analysis, the definition of founder's name could have had a specific reason. Woodward felt that the catalogue of founders' names would be useful as their interests would have to be provided for if dissolution was to take place.¹⁵⁷⁶ This is, of course, partially borne out by the Suppression Act itself, which stated, as its last proviso, in the format it left the Lords:

‘Saving always and reserved unto every person and persons being founders, patrons or donors of any abbeys ... that should be suppressed by this Act, their heirs and successors, all such right, title, interest, possessions, rents, annuities, fees, offices, leases, commons, and all other profits whatsoever which any of them have or should have ... otherwise than by reason or occasion of the dissolution’.¹⁵⁷⁷

Here the Act was providing a sop for founders: they would lose various rights of privilege, the spiritual benefits of founders, the status and position of founder, and the ability to claim back the endowment through escheat, but they would not lose the right of various rents and fees where they have legal title.

The identification, therefore, in the *Compendium* of the founder's name might add some feeling of security to that founder that at least some of his interests were being preserved. Indeed, there is the suggestion from correspondence after the passing of the Act, that ex founders hoped to benefit from the spoils of the dissolution.¹⁵⁷⁸

¹⁵⁷⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 33.

¹⁵⁷⁷ transcribed in J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 159; HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28).

Woodward suggested that the inclusion of the founder's name in the *Compendium* was a defensive measure, that perhaps the government noted the information because of the backlash that might result from the king's taking over endowments. However, perhaps the government need not have been so sensitive at the time of the passing of the Act. Perhaps Thompson was correct in his analysis that 'Patrons had probably lost interest ... in most of the monasteries by the 1530s'.¹⁵⁷⁹ With half of the houses claimed as king's foundation in the *Compendium*, the non-Crown patrons were shown not to be an overriding issue.¹⁵⁸⁰

¹⁵⁷⁸ B. Thompson, Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', Royal Historical Society Transactions, Sixth Series, 4 (1994), p. 119.

¹⁵⁷⁹ B. Thompson, Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', Royal Historical Society Transactions, Sixth Series, 4 (1994), p. 121.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Thompson demonstrated in the smaller sample of Norfolk houses, only twenty-nine per cent had the King as founder. See B. Thompson, Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', Royal Historical Society Transactions, Sixth Series, 4 (1994), pp. 124, 125.

4.4.4 Income and Debt Heading

In the Northern *Compendium*, an annual ‘income’ figure is shown for all but three locations (York cathedral, the Household of Cuthbert Tunstal and Ripon College) and ‘debt of the house’ is shown for a quarter of the entries.¹⁵⁸¹ The consistent appearance of these figures again shows some definite purpose in their recording.

Perhaps the Norwich Visitation again influenced the formatting of this information. On 30 October, Legh and ap Rice had written from Denney abbey that the nuns of Sopham had sold off their ‘cattle, corn and household stuffs’ before their coming.¹⁵⁸² A few days later they wrote from Westacre, ‘Also ye shall understand that hereabouts where we go at diverse places they have sold before we came both lands and goods and had prepared to go away and utterly relinquish their houses’.¹⁵⁸³ Such activity would be reflected in the concern for what was happening to the capital and income base of religious houses, which might be reflected in the requirement to provide financial information in the Northern Visitation. At Fountains, Layton and Legh had discovered, only six days previously, that the abbot had been selling off jewels, gold and plate to a professional goldsmith, probably to offset the huge debt of the house.¹⁵⁸⁴ The abbot had also ‘greatly dilapidated his house, wasted there woods’. The Norwich *Compendium* noted that at Wendling ‘here great dilapidation exists’¹⁵⁸⁵ and at Crabhouse, it was related that the nunnery was alienating property.

¹⁵⁸¹ ‘Redditus annus’ and ‘debet domus’ e. g. PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 93r.

¹⁵⁸² PRO, SP 1 / 98, fo. 110r (LP, IX, 708).

¹⁵⁸³ PRO, SP1/99, fo. 37r (LP, IX, 808) – 16 November 1535. Other examples, LP, X, 624.

¹⁵⁸⁴ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 136r (LP, X, 137): the *Compendium* entry notes £1000 debt at Fountains.

¹⁵⁸⁵ PRO, SP1/102, fo. 111v.

It can be seen from these examples that there was a great concern that monastic property was being wasted. In many instances it was the insolvency of certain houses that was necessitating the sale of goods to raise money.¹⁵⁸⁶ Indeed the preamble of the Suppression Act made it clear ‘whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent spoil, destroy, consume, and utterly lay waste, as well their churches, ... lands ... as the ornaments of their churches ... to the high displeasure of God, slander of good religion and to the great infamy of the King’s highness and the realm’.¹⁵⁸⁷

This leads to the conclusion that the debt figures noted in the *Compendium* seek to demonstrate to the reader the incompetence and waste present in many monasteries, large and small. Effectively, as the incontinence and sodomy accusations supported the preamble to the Act, so the debt and revenue figures reinforced claims about the misuse of money and land resources.

Perhaps the greatest evidence that such data was collected by the Visitors is that the figures for income bear little relationship to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* gross or net income figures. If Warmington had been separately adding financial entries to the ‘clean compertes’ of Blytheman, he would surely have used the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* figures that were less than a year old. It is clear, therefore, that this information was being recorded in the Visitation. The different ways that the figures are recorded – some in marks, some in pounds, some scores of pounds, others hundreds of pounds – seem to reflect figures had been obtained from the field. However, both Layton and Legh seem familiar with *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income figures: they reported to

¹⁵⁸⁶ J. R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents AD 1485 - 1603* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 57.

Cromwell, Guisborough is a ‘house of a thousand marks’,¹⁵⁸⁸ the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income figure being £624.¹⁵⁸⁹ Of Fountains, Layton wrote, ‘the first fruits to the King is a thousand pounds’,¹⁵⁹⁰ the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income figure being £1,004.¹⁵⁹¹

That they were calculating new net income figures is evident from Layton’s letter telling Cromwell that Marton priory was worth ‘seven score pounds good lands and but 40 marks of this in spiritual tithes’.¹⁵⁹² The estimate in his letter of £140 net income contrasts with the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* figure of £151.¹⁵⁹³

However, the definition of annual income noted in the *Compendium* is difficult to gauge. In the Marton example, the *Compendium* income figure noted is £130, differing from both the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* figure and Layton’s estimate to Cromwell. Net income typically represented spiritual and temporal income less allowable costs, such as corrodies, charity specified by the founder and stewards’ fees; while annual income was normally a revenue figure related to leases and land payments (and, therefore, excluding tithes and other spiritual income, as well as income from woods and curial fees, etc.).¹⁵⁹⁴ In summing all the income figures shown in the northern *Compendium* and comparing with the summation of the *Valor*

¹⁵⁸⁷ J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 155; HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28).

¹⁵⁸⁸ PRO, SP1/102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271) and PRO, SP1/102, fo. 126 –, fo. 127 (LP, X, 288). 1,000 marks = £666.

¹⁵⁸⁹ A. Savine, ‘The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution’ in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, 1 (Oxford, 1909), p. 286.

¹⁵⁹⁰ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 114 (LP, X, 137).

¹⁵⁹¹ A. Savine, ‘The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution’ in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, 1 (Oxford, 1909), p. 286.

¹⁵⁹² PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 18 (LP, X, 271).

¹⁵⁹³ A. Savine, ‘The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution’ in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, 1 (Oxford, 1909), p. 286.

¹⁵⁹⁴ A. Savine, ‘The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution’ in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, 1 (Oxford, 1909), p. 269 for summary of income definitions.

Ecclesiasticus figures for those same institutions, there is a seven percentage point increase.¹⁵⁹⁵ This suggests that the income figure was really an attempt at obtaining a current update of the net income.¹⁵⁹⁶

Obtaining detailed financial figures when engaged in such a rapid Visitation in the north appears initially suspect. It is difficult to envisage an examination of a monastery's financial affairs being anything but superficial in the circumstances. However, given there appears evidence of forewarning of the Visitors' arrival, the religious may have been told by the Visitors to prepare financial information in advance. Further, having only six to eight months previously had their financial information thoroughly reviewed by the Commissioners of the Tenth, the basic evidence would already exist. Effectively, the religious could, therefore, have been simply updating basic records which already existed at their houses.

That the Visitors' income figure is greater than the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income also suggests the Visitors were not superficial in their task. It had been in the interest of ecclesiastical institutions to ensure low net income figures in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey, because of the future tax implications. In the example of the sympathetic Commissioners of the Tenth that assessed Cockersand priory in Lancashire, it is clear the valuation of £157 was considerably below the true net income.¹⁵⁹⁷ However, the Visitors were not deceived by the false figure and noted its

¹⁵⁹⁵ *Valor Ecclesiasticus* £21,902; income heading £23,451.

¹⁵⁹⁶ A. Savine, 'The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution' in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, 1 (Oxford, 1909), p. 99: here he calculates, for Yorkshire, that gross income is an average twenty-seven per cent greater than net income; net income is, in turn, eighteen per cent greater than gross temporal income. The *Compendium* income heading can only, therefore, relate realistically to net income.

¹⁵⁹⁷ For detailed discussion of this, see R. J. Mason, 'The Income, Administration and Disposal of the Monastic Lands in Lancashire from the Dissolution to 1558' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of

income as exactly £200.¹⁵⁹⁸ All the north Lancashire houses were similarly marked substantially higher in the *Compendium*.¹⁵⁹⁹

It is clear from the reproduction of the income figures in the *Compendium* that, at that stage, it had not been decided upon to use the £200 net income figure from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey. In the Suppression Act, the religious houses marked for closure are those 'which have not in lands, tenements, rents, tithes, portions and other hereditaments, above the clear value of two hundred pounds'.¹⁶⁰⁰ The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey is not specified as the financial yardstick for this Act. To those in the Lords and the Commons it may have seemed a new survey would identify the up to date figures, rather than using the first results of the novel *Valor Ecclesiasticus* analysis. Indeed, perhaps this was also in the mind of the government when initially proposing the Act, as the enacting survey Commissioners were required to provide 'A new survey', including updated financial details.¹⁶⁰¹

Given this apparent willingness to use updated financial data, it would not have been incongruous, at the time, to include the Visitors' latest financial data. If the *Compendium* higher income figures had been used, Sawley abbey, Easby St Agatha priory and Cockersand priory might have evaded the £200 limit set by the Act. However, even though there is a difference between the higher income figure specified in the *Compendium* and the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* figure, it is only these three

London, 1962), pp. 37 - 61, or C. Haigh, *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Chetham Society (Manchester, 1969), pp. 37-38.

¹⁵⁹⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 101v.

¹⁵⁹⁹ See Appendix 10 for comparison. There are two substantial errors in the *Compendium*: the income for Beverley College is marked £68, while the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* is £724, and the income of Newburgh is marked £80, while the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* is £367. In the latter case the scribe has duplicated the previous entry of £80 for Swine.

¹⁶⁰⁰ J. Youngs, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 156.

houses which, effectively, are misclassified as being above or below £200. Given the northern *Compendium* contains 113 religious houses of all sizes, the eventual incorrect classification of three does not appear a deliberate deception.

Finally, there is no reason to believe that during the Northern Visitation Layton and Legh had knowledge that such an updated net income figure could be used as the basic rule for deciding which houses would fall within the Suppression Act's orbit. They would not have taken such time and energy in persuading the canons of Marton and Hornby to surrender (on 9 and 23 February respectively) if they had known that, within a few weeks, a parliamentary Act would have legally enacted such closures.¹⁶⁰² The Visitors' brief to obtain debt and revenue information could not, therefore, before Christmas, have related such figures to a definite closure programme.¹⁶⁰³

Probably Knowles is correct: the Visitors obtained information on net income and debt as a summary of the financial position of the house.¹⁶⁰⁴ However, Warmington, in copying up the *Compendium* at the beginning of March, could have singled out this information as it is possible that, by then, options had narrowed to a Suppression Act based on income of some kind. If the *Compendium* was the document declared to parliament, then the financial figures would have provided partial justification of the Act, as well as demonstrating which religious houses would fall within its provisions.

¹⁶⁰¹ G. Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxi, lxx.

¹⁶⁰² In the event, Hornby came outside the terms of the Act as it was a cell, and so it remained open until the final closure of Croxton, the mother house, two years later.

¹⁶⁰³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 290. He views these examples as 'one more proof of the empirical unpremeditated decisions that are characteristic of Cromwell in all his dealings with monasteries'.

¹⁶⁰⁴ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 279.

5. The Suppression Act of 1536

5.1 *The Suppression Act and the Compendium Compertorum*

The date on which the Suppression Bill was first debated in parliament is not definitely known. Various deductions have been made from the correspondence at that time. Lehmborg suggested the Bill was introduced into the Lords ‘about Monday 6 March’, by 11 March had passed the Lords, and was through to the Commons by 18 March.¹⁶⁰⁵ Woodward felt the Bill to have been presented to parliament about the end of the second week of March, that is, 11 March, agreeing with Knowles.¹⁶⁰⁶ The dating evidence hangs on the interpretation of a letter from a priest, Thomas Dorset, to the mayor of Plymouth and others, dated Monday 13 March.¹⁶⁰⁷ The letter was full of news regarding events in parliament and in London. While Dorset said that the king came to the Commons on the Saturday, ‘and delivered them a Bill’ and referred to parliamentary business, he mentioned no monastic Suppression Bill. If, therefore, the Bill had been introduced to the Lords on 6 March, or the king’s appearance in the Commons was a result of the Suppression Bill, it seems improbable that Dorset would have failed to mention it.

What has not been fully appreciated before is that by 12 March, ap Rice, Tregonwell and Legh were engaged in monastic business elsewhere.¹⁶⁰⁸ Of this

¹⁶⁰⁵ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 226, 227.

¹⁶⁰⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 64, D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 291, also S. Jack, ‘The Last Days of the Smaller Monasteries in England’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. xxi, No. 2 (April 1970).

¹⁶⁰⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fos. 131/132 (LP, X, 462).

¹⁶⁰⁸ Ap Rice and Tregonwell were at Worcester priory, see Worc. D & C, Register A 6 (iii), fos. 1r - 2r, and Legh was at Winchester priory and Beaulieu abbey, see PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 211 (LP, X, 472) and PRO, SP 1 / 239, fo. 286 (LP, Addenda, 1055). Legh is known to have been in London on 8 March,

group, at least ap Rice is known to be involved with sifting the data from the Royal Visitation,¹⁶⁰⁹ this suggests that by 12 March at the latest, the support material for this Bill had been completed. As Layton and Legh could not have arrived in London with the ‘clean book of compertes’ until Tuesday 29 February or Wednesday 1 March, the time for compiling the northern *Compendium Compertorum* and other analysis of the Visitation statistics was very limited indeed.

Whether the Bill was first presented to parliament on 6 or 11 March, it had, certainly, completed its passage by Thursday 16 March. On that date Lord Lisle’s agent in London wrote to Lady Lisle, confirming details of the Act and that Cromwell’s secretary, Ralph Sadler, ‘affirmeth the same’.¹⁶¹⁰

‘An Act for dissolving the lesser monasteries, the revenues of which are under two hundred pounds per annum and for vesting them in the king and his heirs’¹⁶¹¹ was in two parts. The original Bill was the main part and it contained the message formula that identified it originated in the Lords.¹⁶¹² On its return to the Lords, from the Commons, it was marked ‘A ceste Bille les communes sont assentus avecque unus provision a(...) annex’, indicating the Bill was accepted and an additional provision attached.¹⁶¹³ The addition, to which the Lords also recorded their acceptance, concerned the continued employment of household staff and agricultural labourers at the level each suppressed abbey had previously maintained, with a penalty of £6 13s

see PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 193 (LP, X, 439). His commission to deprive and elect a new prior at Winchester is dated 11 March, see BL, Add. MS 48022, fos. 91r – 92r.

¹⁶⁰⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 141, fo. 130r (LP, XIII(2), 1225) and PRO, SP 1 / 157, fo. 258r (LP, XV, 280(2)).

¹⁶¹⁰ M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters*, vol. 3 (Chicago, 1981), Nos. 655, 658. This excellent source is not noted by Lehmborg; also confirmed by Chapuys, see SSP, vol. 5, part 2, No. 37.

¹⁶¹¹ HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28).

¹⁶¹² HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28), ‘soit Baille aux communes’, S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 226.

4d for non compliance. Youings suggested this addition was subsequently added on the king's authority, and not by the Commons.¹⁶¹⁴ This is clearly not the case. These additions are consistent with the message and assent formula used at the time, and demonstrate valid additions from the Commons.¹⁶¹⁵

The preamble to the Suppression Act is universally seen by historians as being an unfair representation of the compertes or associated correspondence of the Visitation. The Act commenced,

‘Forasmuch as manifest sin, vicious carnal and abominable living is daily used and committed commonly in such little and small abbeys, priories and other religious houses of monks, canons and nuns where the congregation of such religious persons is under the number of 12 persons whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent spoil, destroy, consume and utterly waste, as well their churches, monasteries, priories, principal houses, farms ... as the ornaments of their churches and their goods and chattels to the high displeasure of almighty God, slander of good religion and to the great infamy of the king's highness and the realm if redress should not be had thereof. And albeit that continual Visitations have been heretofore had, by the space of two hundred years and more for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal and abominable living yet, none the less, little or none amendment is hitherto had but the vicious livings, shamelessly increase and augment and by a cursed custom so rooted and (infested) that a great multitude of the religious persons in such small houses do rather choose to roam abroad in apostasy than to

¹⁶¹³ S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 228, brackets indicate missing word in original manuscript.

¹⁶¹⁴ J. Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 46 links the addition with Thomas Starkey's ideas on redistribution of monastic wealth.

¹⁶¹⁵ My thanks to Mr H. S. Cobb, former Clerk of Records, HOL, for his comments. Also S. E. Lehmborg, The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 228.

conform themselves to the observation of good religion, so that without such small houses be utterly suppressed and the religious persons therein committed to great and honourable monasteries of religion in the realm, where they may be compelled to live religiously for the reformation of their lives there can else be no redress nor reformation in that behalf.’¹⁶¹⁶

This preamble has some echoes of Layton’s letter of the previous year to Cromwell, entreating service in the Royal Visitation. Layton, as in the preamble, had attacked the earlier Visitation system, ‘which ever by friendship till this day, have found crafty means to be their own Visitors, thereby no reformation intending, neither good religion (if any be) to increase’.¹⁶¹⁷

As has been regularly noted, the specification in the Act of religious houses under twelve persons appears to relate to the papal bull Wolsey obtained in 1528/1529.¹⁶¹⁸

The Act continued by demonstrating its most direct connection with the activities of the Royal Visitation:

‘In consideration, whereof, the king’s most royal majesty being supreme head in earth under God of the church of England daily finding and devising the increase advancement and exaltation of true doctrine and virtue in the said church to the only glory and honour of God and the total extirpating and destruction of vice and sin

¹⁶¹⁶ HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28). N.B. Quotations from the Act are taken from the Act itself. Errors do occur in Statutes of the Realm, vol. viii (London, 1817), pp. 575 - 578, and in reproductions.

¹⁶¹⁷ BL, Cotton Cleo. E IV, fo. 13v (LP, VIII, 822).

¹⁶¹⁸ R. W. Hoyle, ‘The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries’, The Historical Journal, 38, 2 (1995), p. 297; D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 163, 304.

having knowledge that the premises be true as well by the compertes of his late Visitation, as well by sundry credible informations, considering also that diverse and great solemn monasteries of the realm wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right (well) kept and preserved, be destitute of such full numbers of religious persons as they ought and may keep has thought good that a plain declaration should be made of the premises, as well to the Lords spiritual and temporal as to other his loving subjects, the Commons in this present parliament assembled. Whereupon the said Lords and Commons, by a great deliberation, finally be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of almighty God and to the honour of this his realm that the possessions of such small religious houses now being spent, spoiled and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin shall be used and committed to better use and the unthrifty religious persons, so spending the same, to be compelled to reform their lives. And, therefore, most humbly desire the king's highness that it may be enacted ... that his majesty shall have ... all such singular such monasteries, priories and other religious houses of monks, canons, nuns of what kind of diversities of habits, rules, orders, so ever they be called or named which have not in lands, tenements, rents ... above the clear yearly value of two hundred pounds ... And that also his highness should have in him and to his heirs all and singular such monasteries, abbeys and priories ... which at any time within one year next, afore the making of the Act have been given and granted to his majesty ... under convent seal¹⁶¹⁹

This section of the Act clearly relates the information on vice, sin and waste to the Royal Visitation. It is unfortunate that in most transcriptions of this section, the

¹⁶¹⁹ HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28).

word ‘compertes’ is replaced erroneously by ‘accounts’, which partially dulls the direct connection.¹⁶²⁰

All historians have agreed that the data from the Royal Visitation does not support the Act’s claim that the small religious houses are the most corrupt. Youings writes, ‘At the risk of flogging a dead horse, it must also be pointed out that the evidence of the Visitors, such as it was, did not bear out the creed which Henry and his advisors chose to adopt, namely that only the wealthier houses were worthy to continue’.¹⁶²¹ Woodward also noted that the *Compendium Compertorum* could not have been put before parliament because it tended ‘to present the larger abbeys in the worse light’ and, therefore, undermined the statement in the preamble.¹⁶²² Lehmberg also considered the *Compendium Compertorum* would have required editing because it demonstrated the larger houses were as bad as the small.¹⁶²³ Elton called the Act’s insistence that small houses were corrupt, ‘hypocritical’.¹⁶²⁴ Effectively, therefore, the current historical position denies that feedback from the Royal Visitation and the compertes of the *Compendium Compertorum* had any relationship to the eventual Suppression Act. However, this is totally false.

¹⁶²⁰ Eg, J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 155, or R. W. Hoyle, ‘The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries’, *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (1995), p. 296, or R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England Henry VIII 1529 - 1537*, vol. 1 (London, 1878), p. 355. G. Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* vol. 1 (London, 1880), p. 144 summarises as ‘full information’. However, J. R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents AD 1485 - 1603* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 59 and G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 77 do note ‘compertes’, as in the original manuscript.

¹⁶²¹ J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 43.

¹⁶²² G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 65.

¹⁶²³ S. E. Lehmberg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 226.

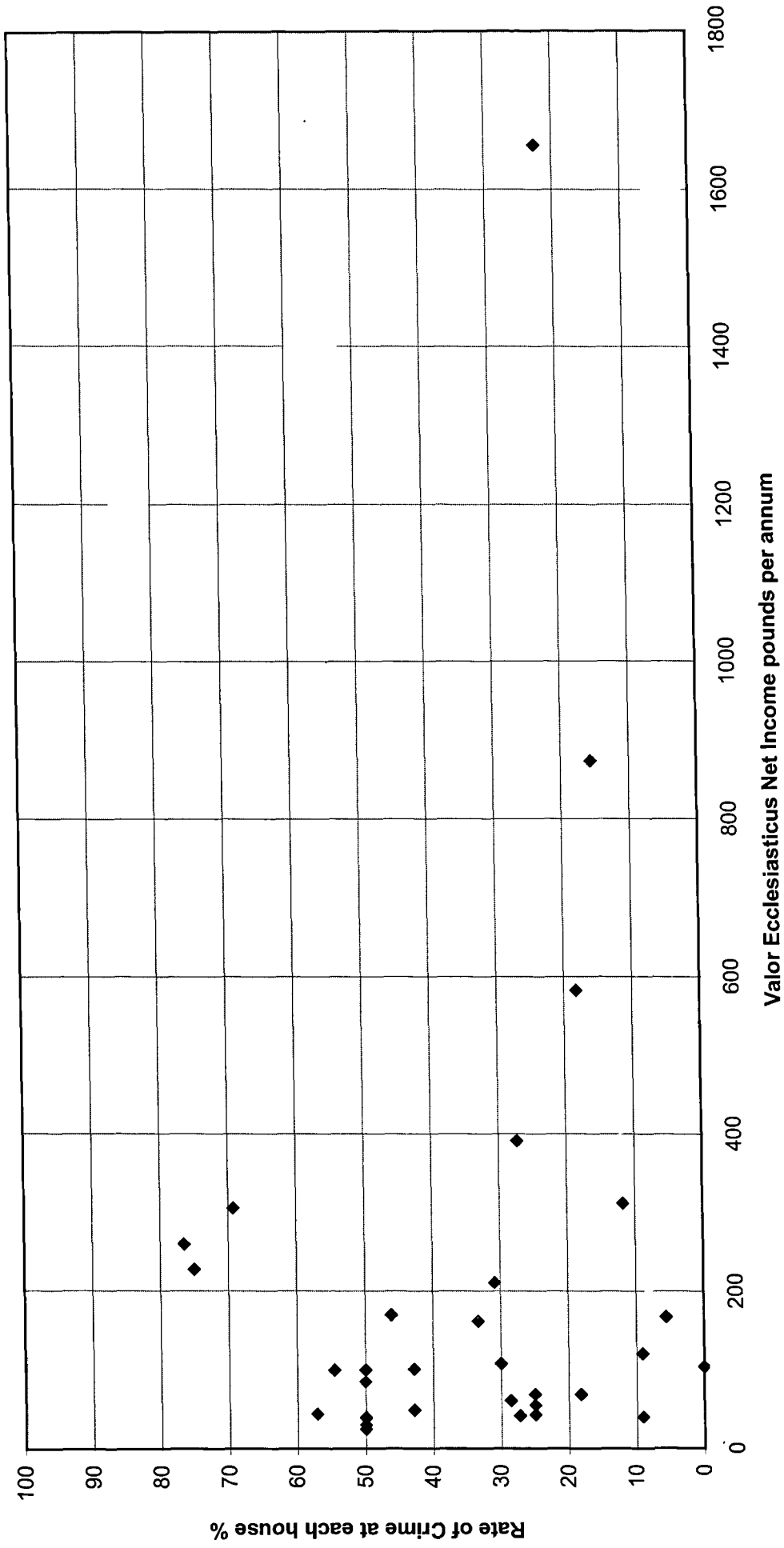
¹⁶²⁴ G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London, 1997), p. 144.

Graph 1 uses information from the compertes in the Norwich diocese *Compendium Compertorum*.¹⁶²⁵ The graph compares the rate of crime at each house, that is, the ratio of numbers of individuals noted as guilty or confessed of crime expressed as a percentage of the complement of the house,¹⁶²⁶ with the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net annual income.

¹⁶²⁵ The data used in creating Graph 1 is extracted from Appendix 9.

¹⁶²⁶ Complement has been principally obtained from CCCC MS 111 (the Visitors' own figures) or the totals acknowledging the Supremacy in 1534.

NORWICH 'COMPENDIUM COMPERTORUM' - COMPARISON OF RATE OF CRIME WITH V.E. NET
INCOME AT EACH HOUSE



GRAPH 1

Graph 1 demonstrates that, generally, the smaller houses had a much higher crime rate than the larger in the Norwich Visitation. Bury St Edmunds,¹⁶²⁷ for example, with fourteen individuals noted in the *Compendium* as suspected or guilty of crime, had a twenty-three per cent crime rate, while Aldeby priory¹⁶²⁸ had a fifty per cent crime rate, although there were only two guilty of crime. While there are exceptions, the general picture, based on the Norwich diocese, is that houses with a *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income of less than £200, did have a higher rate of crime than those greater than £200.¹⁶²⁹

Graph 2 reproduces the same comparison, but based on the crime data provided in the northern *Compendium Compertorum*.¹⁶³⁰ While, in this example, many houses of all sizes were identified with a zero rate of crime, the trend is, again, visually clear: the bigger the monastery, the lower the rate of crime.

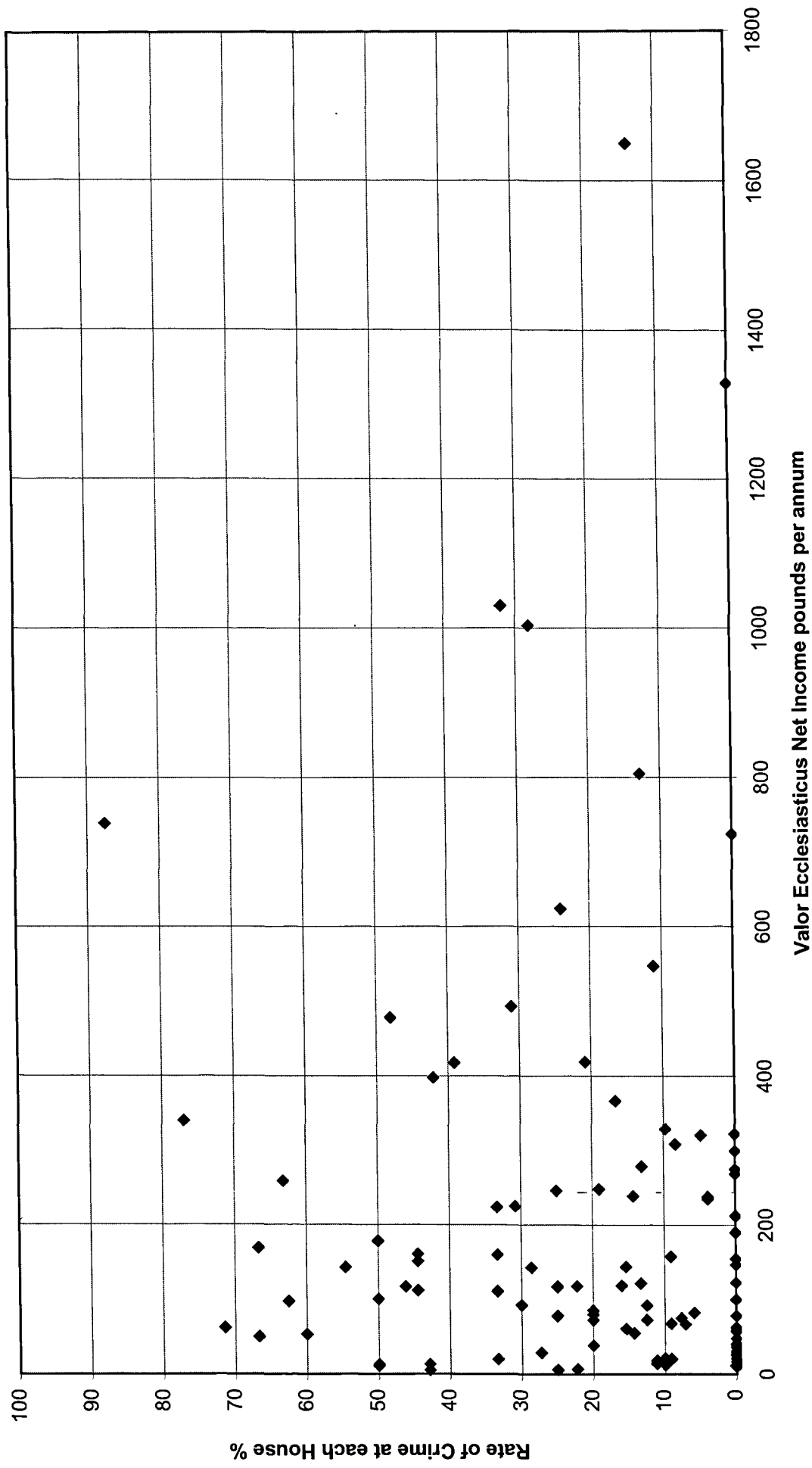
¹⁶²⁷ *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income £1,656 per annum. But note previous comments in Section 3.1 regarding Bury St Edmund's compertes.

¹⁶²⁸ *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income £25 per annum.

¹⁶²⁹ The complement for houses greater than £200 net income are also unfairly penalised by the absence of accurate figures. Thus, the Castle Acre complement of thirteen has been taken from the number at suppression in 1537 (including two possibly transferred) and is, therefore, likely to have been much higher in 1535 at the time of the Visitation. This would, of course, result in the crime rate being less than the sixty-nine per cent estimated in November 1535.

¹⁶³⁰ Data extracted for Graph 2 from Appendix 10.

NORTHERN 'COMPENDIUM COMPERTORUM' - COMPARISON OF RATE OF CRIME WITH V.E. NET INCOME AT EACH HOUSE



GRAPH 2

The previous claims, therefore, that the evidence the Visitors obtained on crime does not tally with the Suppression Act can now be contradicted. The larger houses, above £200 net income, did not generally have more crime than the smaller ones.

Historians, in looking purely at absolute numbers, have unfairly discredited the relationship between the Royal Visitation and the Suppression Act. Of course, the king or Cromwell would not have used graphs, but they were hearing about the corruption of smaller houses¹⁶³¹ and they did have tabulated data available showing crimes and the complement of each house.¹⁶³² What can be portrayed in graphs, they could see from tabulated evidence.

The Act does not, in fact, say that all larger monasteries are blameless.¹⁶³³ The religious persons at suppressed houses are to be 'committed to great and honourable monasteries', which does not suggest they all are 'honourable'. Further, 'diverse and great solemn monasteries of the realm wherein, thanks be to God religion is right well kept' reflects that some, but not necessarily all, are in a good spiritual condition.

The other aspect which has led to much discussion among historians is whether the 'plain declaration' made to the Lords and Commons, was the *Compendium Compertorum* or a document similar to it. Gasquet felt that the direct connection could never be ascertained.¹⁶³⁴ Dixon considered it unlikely that the *Compendium Compertorum*, being written in Latin, would be placed before parliament. However, that is probably an unfair presumption to make, especially as not much knowledge of

¹⁶³¹ From Legh's correspondence in the Norwich Visitation, see Section 2.3.2.

¹⁶³² CCCC MS 111 is an example of this.

¹⁶³³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 304.

¹⁶³⁴ F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 101.

Latin was required to understand lists of names marked ‘Sodomite’ and ‘Incontinentia’. Contemporary evidence of the production of a written document is weak, and later references to a ‘black book’, by its nature, doubtful.¹⁶³⁵ Gasquet concluded that the ‘plain declaration’ in reality was a statement that the king knew the accusations of vice to be true.¹⁶³⁶ However, Gasquet’s deduction was partly based on the historical tradition that the *Compendium Compertorum* did not demonstrate the truth of the Suppression Act.¹⁶³⁷ This point is also made by Woodward¹⁶³⁸ and Lehmborg.¹⁶³⁹ However, as it is now demonstrated that the *Compendium* material is consistent with the Act, these objections are irrelevant.

It has already been identified that the so-called Norwich Diocese *Compendium Compertorum* was a log of compertes sent by Legh and ap Rice to Cromwell, during the Visitation: it is a working document. However, it has been demonstrated that the thirty-two sided northern *Compendium Compertorum* booklet had been specially compiled in the first few days of March, before the Suppression Bill was placed before parliament.¹⁶⁴⁰ It is extraordinarily neatly written, and its contents have been edited and massaged.¹⁶⁴¹ At this busy time, it would be unlikely that Cromwell would be preparing material just for the sake of it.¹⁶⁴² Of course, the northern *Compendium Compertorum* may not have been ‘declared’ in parliament. However, it was prepared with the intention of convincing people, outside the government circle, of the sexual crime, superstition, debt and low morale in the monasteries. Clearly the individuals who might need convincing were the Lords, spiritual and temporal and the Commons.

¹⁶³⁵ F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), pp. 101 - 104.

¹⁶³⁶ F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 104.

¹⁶³⁷ F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 104.

¹⁶³⁸ G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 65.

¹⁶³⁹ S. E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529 - 1536* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 226.

¹⁶⁴⁰ See Appendix 13.

The northern *Compendium Compertorum*'s purpose, either on its own, or with the equivalent sets from the other Visitation circuits, was to convince parliament of the king's need to reform and redress and to support the passing of a monastic reform Act. Therefore, although historians call both the Norwich diocese and northern documents *Compendium Compertorum*, using the same name is confusing. They are not the same type of document at all: the Norwich diocese *Compendium* is essentially an enclosure accompanying a personal letter to Cromwell, the northern *Compendium* is an official exhibit.

The Act defined that the 'head and governor' of suppressed houses would receive annual 'pensions or benefices' in relation to their degree and quality. The inmates had the choice of taking 'their capacities' or 'else shall be committed to such honourable greater monasteries of this realm wherein good religion is observed ... as shall be assigned and appointed by the king's highness. The blanket nature of the Suppression is modified by the clause,

'Provided always that the king's highness at any time after the making of the Suppression Act may at his pleasure ordain and declare by his letters patents under his great seal that such of the said religious houses which his highness shall not be disposed to have suppressed now dissolved by authority of the Act shall still continue, remain and be in the same body corporate and ... as they were before the making of this Act without suppression or dissolution'.¹⁶⁴³

¹⁶⁴¹ See especially Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

¹⁶⁴² F. A. Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (London, 1906), p. 104.

¹⁶⁴³ HOL, 27 Henry VIII, Roll of Parliament, No. 18 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28); J. Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 158.

It has always been assumed that the policy on the continued existence of religious houses of a value less than £200, subsequent to the Act, emerged in the light of Suppression Commissioner returns and the partiality of the Crown. It has been suggested that the clause, enabling the king to grant letters patent, was a device to defraud parliament into believing considerable moderation would be made in the application of the Act.¹⁶⁴⁴ The 'letters patent' clause was seen by Gasquet as solely an attempt to raise revenue by their sale. Woodward modified this view by deducing that the necessity of accommodating the religious who did not wish to leave the religious life dictated a number of exemptions.¹⁶⁴⁵ However, the overall feeling regarding exemptions, either formally through 'letters patent' or informally,¹⁶⁴⁶ is that there was no plan from the outset of the Act as to if or how such exemptions would be implemented.

The identification of a fresh, untitled, manuscript helps clarify the government's thoughts on the transfer of religious to other houses and the granting of 'letters patent' for continuance.¹⁶⁴⁷ This manuscript was made for Archbishop Parker, and is contained with the information on the Visitation Commissioners' itineraries, already widely referred to in this work. It is a copy of an original document.¹⁶⁴⁸ This extensive manuscript contains the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* income, the religious order, the name of the religious house and its complement. From comparison with the data of the Visitors' itineraries in the same manuscript, it demonstrates there is a clear

¹⁶⁴⁴ R. W. Hoyle, 'The Origins of the Dissolution of the Monasteries', The Historical Journal, 38, 2 (1995), p. 297.

¹⁶⁴⁵ G. W. O. Woodward, 'Exemption from Suppression of Certain Yorkshire Priors', The English Historical Review, No. ccc (July 1961), pp. 385, 400.

¹⁶⁴⁶ G. W. O. Woodward, 'Exemption from Suppression of Certain Yorkshire Priors', The English Historical Review, No. ccc (July 1961), pp. 390/391.

¹⁶⁴⁷ CCCC MS 111, fos. 319 - 333.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Section 2.2 validates the authority of CCCC MS 111.

common source: a few houses are marked 'non visitate',¹⁶⁴⁹ all the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* information is less than £200 and the complement of houses is the same in most instances.¹⁶⁵⁰ The religious houses are divided by county or groups of counties. However, the dioceses of St David's and Llandaff, Durham and the archdeaconry of Richmond and Carlisle have their own groupings of religious houses, less than £200.

To the right hand side of these listings are bracketed larger houses. In some instances, as with the eleven nunneries listed under Suffolk and Norfolk, are noted comments, in this case, 'nullum extat monasterium monalium in hiis comitatibus: igitur transferantur ad monasteria iuxta London'.¹⁶⁵¹ This statement clearly specifies that as a result of no convent of nuns remaining in Norfolk or Suffolk, they should be transferred to convents near London.

It is easy to deduce that this manuscript is, therefore, connected with the implementation of the Suppression Act. The larger houses adjacent to the smaller indicate the potential greater monastery to which the inmates of the smaller, if they required, could be transferred. Thus, in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, the greater Augustinian priories of Leeds, Merton, St Mary Overy or Newark are seen as suitable places to transfer the inmates of the nine smaller Augustinian houses listed.¹⁶⁵²

The most telling dating evidence of the data from which this manuscript is drawn is the manner in which the Gilbertine religious houses are treated. The

¹⁶⁴⁹ e. g. CCCC MS 111, fo. 319.

¹⁶⁵⁰ The few exceptions are specified in the Number (complement) column of Appendices 2 to 8.

¹⁶⁵¹ CCCC MS 111, fos. 320/321.

¹⁶⁵² CCCC MS 111, fo. 321.

manuscript notes the five Gilbertine houses in Lincolnshire with less than £200 net income, and signifies they will be transferred to Sempringham.¹⁶⁵³ The three Gilbertine houses in Yorkshire are noted to be transferred to Watton.¹⁶⁵⁴ The Suppression Act had no exceptions regarding its application to all religious orders.

However, the instructions to Suppression Commissioners, dated 24 April, do exclude that order.¹⁶⁵⁵ For whatever reason, in the period 16 March to 24 April, the decision was taken to exclude the Gilbertines from Suppression.¹⁶⁵⁶ The original manuscript from which Parker copied was, therefore, written before 24 April. It seems likely, however, the original manuscript pre-dated the Act. The Act excluded cells from its provision, yet the manuscript details cells, which are bracketed with other small houses for transfer to greater houses. In some instances, for example at four cells of St Mary's, York, it appears that transfer to the mother house is being suggested.¹⁶⁵⁷ With seven cells of Durham, they are to be transferred back to the mother house,¹⁶⁵⁸ and likewise five cells from St Albans.¹⁶⁵⁹ Although the original scribe may have included some cells without knowing that that was what they were, the specific identification of cells with their mother house in the case of St Mary's, Durham and St Albans is very clear. It is possible, therefore, that the original document from which Parker took his copy was drawn up before the Act was fully

¹⁶⁵³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 331.

¹⁶⁵⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 326.

¹⁶⁵⁵ S. Jack, 'The Last Days of the Smaller Monasteries in England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. xxi, No. 2 (April 1970), p. 104.

¹⁶⁵⁶ For guesses on this, see G. W. O. Woodward, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1966), p. 64, D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 67/68, or R. Graham, *St. Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertines: a History of the Only English Monastic Order* (London, 1901), pp. 172 - 176. Their being an exclusively English order and, therefore, not influenced by overseas chapters, could also have influenced the decision.

¹⁶⁵⁷ CCCC MS 111, fo. 326.

¹⁶⁵⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 327.

¹⁶⁵⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 319.

drafted and before a decision was taken to exclude bona fide cells from its provisions. This would then place the original manuscript to the first week of March 1536.

The document demonstrates that the implementation of the Act would largely be on a county basis, as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey had been. Counties can be identified, grouped together to optimise the ability to transfer monks, canons or nuns from smaller houses to suitable larger ones. The plan shows that, where possible, Augustinian canons and Benedictine monks were targeted to be transferred to their particular religious order. However, Cluniac monks were predicted to be transferred to the nearest Benedictine houses and, for example, in Norfolk, the Trinitarian friars of Ingham as well as the Gilbertine canons of Shouldham, along with the Praemonstratensian canons of Wendling, were to be transferred to the Praemonstratensian house of West Dereham.¹⁶⁶⁰ The government was to treat nuns, of whatever order, without distinction, and they were to be moved to the nearest large house of nuns, where available.

The document demonstrates the government recognised it had a problem, especially with the relocation of nuns. The seven houses of nuns in Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcester and Hereford, were to be moved to Wiltshire¹⁶⁶¹ and, as has been seen, the nunneries of Norfolk and Suffolk were to move to London. However, the government realised at the outset, as Woodward did over four hundred years later, that they had real accommodation problems in coping with the twenty houses of nuns in Yorkshire. The entry adjacent to these twenty nunneries states, 'Nulla extant

¹⁶⁶⁰ CCCC MS 111, fo. 321.

¹⁶⁶¹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 324, presumably to Wilton, Romsey or Amesbury. See fo. 333.

ibidem monasteria ad que transfferantur'.¹⁶⁶² The convents of Durham diocese and the archdeaconry of Richmond are similarly marked, 'Nullam extat monasterium monalium super £200'.¹⁶⁶³ The many nunneries in Lincolnshire have no note at all regarding the projected location of the displaced nuns.¹⁶⁶⁴

This analysis details the challenge the government understood it would have if all monks, canons and nuns decided to stay in religion after the passing of the Act. It can be seen that the original manuscript was based on two statistics: the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* income figures obtained by the 'Commission of the Tenth' and the complement figures obtained by the Royal Visitors during their Visitation. The contribution made to formulating the Act, by the information the Visitors obtained, can now be seen for the first time.

The Visitors' itinerary information in CCCC MS 111¹⁶⁶⁵ contains another link to the Suppression Act. As was originally noted in the examination of the manuscript, it details the grand total of religious potentially to be displaced by the Act's provisions.¹⁶⁶⁶ This listing, by Visitor, of the houses they had visited with the order, number and founder specified, probably pre-dated the passing of the Act. This is because the listing by visiting Commissioner would be the earliest summary of information. As information was further sifted and other listings were generated, like that detailing where the religious could be transferred, the knowledge of who the visiting Commissioner had been became irrelevant.

¹⁶⁶² CCCC MS 111, fo. 327.

¹⁶⁶³ CCCC MS 111, fo. 328.

¹⁶⁶⁴ CCCC MS 111, fo. 331.

¹⁶⁶⁵ CCCC MS 111, fos. 339 - 349.

From the returns of the Royal Visitors, noted in Parker's manuscript, a total of 2,663 monks, canons and nuns, excluding the head of each house,¹⁶⁶⁷ were located in houses with less than £200 net income.¹⁶⁶⁸ This amounted to almost a third of monks, canons and nuns in England and Wales.¹⁶⁶⁹ However, due to the manner in which the Visitors specified, in their returns, the total number of religious on arrival at each religious house (excluding the head of the house) the 2,663 total includes those religious who had already been dismissed on age or other grounds. Based on the average recorded dismissal rate of twenty-two per cent during the course of the Visitation,¹⁶⁷⁰ perhaps 585 had already been dismissed from these smaller houses by the beginning of March 1536. Thus, in reality, approximately 2,100 monks, canons or nuns were threatened by the Act.¹⁶⁷¹

It can, therefore, be seen that in the initial calculations of the consequences of the Act the information generated by the Royal Visitors was certainly used. Youings stated that, 'when the Act was being drafted and debated' no one 'foresaw the accommodation problem'.¹⁶⁷² This is now refuted. Also refuted is the doubt about the seriousness of the government's intentions to implement the Act's provisions,¹⁶⁷³ because they can be identified planning for them.

¹⁶⁶⁶ See Section 2.2.

¹⁶⁶⁷ See Appendix 14.

¹⁶⁶⁸ CCCC MS 111, fo. 349.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Total monks, canons and nuns from D. Knowles & R. N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales (Harlow, 1971), p. 494.

¹⁶⁷⁰ See Appendix 16, sheet 2.

¹⁶⁷¹ Knowles thought the figure a 'thousand or more', D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 316. Gasquet calculated 'over two thousand monks and nuns' see Gasquet, Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (London, 1906), p. 190.

¹⁶⁷² J. Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 44.

¹⁶⁷³ D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 316.

It is often noted that after the passing of the Suppression Act the *Compendium* was never again used to note the moral reputation of the religious at each house, and in the subsequent Suppression Commissioners' survey to implement the Act, the *comperter*s from the Royal Visitation were effectively ignored.¹⁶⁷⁴ However this was not entirely the case. Annotated on the 'brief certificates', completed by the Suppression Commissioners, on eleven Norfolk religious houses can be seen information from the *comperter*s and the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.¹⁶⁷⁵ The 'brief certificate' produced by the Suppression Commissioners, probably of July and August 1536, identified the 'number of religious persons with their conversation'.¹⁶⁷⁶ For example, against Horsham St Faith is marked '5 at the Visitation. Inco[n]tinent] 1. Poll[uciones] 1.'¹⁶⁷⁷ The crimes are as noted in the Norwich diocese *Compendium*¹⁶⁷⁸ and the complement is as specified in CCCC MS 111.¹⁶⁷⁹ The official of the court of augmentations, who received the 'brief certificate', evidently had access to the summary information of the Royal Visitation. The moral state described by the Suppression Commissioners, was being briefly contrasted with that described by Legh and ap Rice.¹⁶⁸⁰ Other than the Norfolk examples, only one other example on a 'brief certificate' has been identified. On the Buildwas certificate is the same type of annotation: '12 at the visita[tion] whereof then inco[n]tinet] 2 / so[domy] 2'.¹⁶⁸¹ With

¹⁶⁷⁴ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 296.

¹⁶⁷⁵ PRO, SC 12 33 / 29.

¹⁶⁷⁶ See transcription in A. Jessopp (ed.) 'The Norfolk Monasteries at the time of the Suppression by Henry VIII', *Norfolk Antiquarian Miscellany* ii (1883) p. 450 - 463. Jessopp notes the addition of *comperta* data.

¹⁶⁷⁷ PRO, SC 12 33 / 29.

¹⁶⁷⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 112v.

¹⁶⁷⁹ CCCC MS 111, fo. 341.

¹⁶⁸⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 307 does not recognise the connection.

¹⁶⁸¹ W. G. Clark-Maxwell (ed.) 'Buildwas Abbey - the Survey of 1536' in *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, vol. xlvi (Shrewsbury, 1931 - 1932), p. 68. Original document not yet seen.

this survey being probably undertaken in September 1536,¹⁶⁸² the court of augmentations officials were in some way comparing the moral lives of the members of religious with their state at the Royal Visitation.¹⁶⁸³

Previously what was seen as the absence of evidence led historians to conclude that the Royal Visitation ceased to have any bearing on events either in the passing of the Suppression Act or in its subsequent implementation. It has been seen that even the role of the northern '*Compendium Compertorum*' in influencing parliament has been doubted. The new evidence analysed here shows that the Royal Visitation was crucial to the development of the Act, to its passing and its implementation.

¹⁶⁸² S. Jack, 'Dissolution Dates for the Monasteries Dissolved under the Act of 1536', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 43 (1970).

¹⁶⁸³ In this case undertaken by Cave, see Section 2. 3. 4.

5.2. Responsibility for the Suppression Act: Cromwell or the king?

The comparison of the *Compendium Compertorum* with the activities of the Visitors and the decisions of Cromwell and the king, does not clearly suggest the final form of the Suppression Act, even on the eve of the passing of that Act. The earlier analysis¹⁶⁸⁴ has demonstrated that the government was considering a number of approaches to monastic reform. The opportunity to close king's foundation houses by a form of escheat was utilised during the course of the Visitation. In the autumn of 1535, there are many indications that this would become the preferred route. The issue of relics and pilgrimages has been identified as one of great concern to the government from an early stage of the Royal Visitation. Small scale confiscations of relics took place during the Visitation. The regular noting of 'Superstitions' during the Northern Visitation, as demonstrated in the northern *Compendium Compertorum*, shows the government's concern and intention to act on this issue. The draft 'Superstitions' Bill, written in March 1536, was the culmination, at that time, of an appeal to reform the perceived abuses of relics and pilgrimages at monasteries.

The use of the Injunctions, specifically the clause dealing with the forced enclosure within the precincts of the religious house, has been identified as open to amendment and relaxation during the Royal Visitation.¹⁶⁸⁵ The king's view at the start of the Visitation, that the Injunctions should be applied absolutely, without dilution, has been noted.¹⁶⁸⁶ However, Cromwell, by September, had empowered his Commissioners to grant licences where they thought suitable, allowing at least the

¹⁶⁸⁴ See Section 4.

master of the house freedom to go outside the monastic premises. This and ap Rice's comments that the Visitors' intention was not to close the monasteries through the application of the Injunctions, appears to undermine the connection between the Injunctions and a policy to close religious houses. However, it clearly was a tactical ploy that could be used. In the majority of the many applications from abbots and prioresses regarding licence, we do not know if they had a favourable response or not. We know that some larger houses like St Mary's York and Spalding abbey had their Injunctions to remain within the precincts modified, but we do not have sufficient evidence to know that such licence was being granted to small religious houses. It is more than possible that the closures on 28 February on the eve of the Suppression Act at Tilty and Bilsington were as a result of the Injunction's not being modified and the inmates suing for closure. Thus, if the Suppression Act had not been passed a fortnight later, an increasing flood of voluntary submissions to the Crown, by smaller religious houses, could have resulted.

It is not certain at what stage the eventual Suppression Act was initially conceived. The feedback of compertes in addition to Legh and ap Rice's correspondence from the Norwich diocese Visitation in November displayed the economic and alleged moral deficiencies of the many smaller houses they visited.¹⁶⁸⁷ With a third of the inmates recorded as guilty of sexual crime in the Norwich diocese Visitation, particularly in the smaller houses, the option of controlled closure would inevitably be considered. This could have reawakened the memory of Wolsey's plans of 1528/1529 regarding the closure of houses with less than twelve inmates. From late September 1535, the statistical emphasis, by the Royal Visitors, had been on

¹⁶⁸⁵ With the exception, of course, of the Royal Supremacy clauses.

¹⁶⁸⁶ See Section 3.2 Injunctions.

broadening the definition and reporting of sexual crime, but that does not mean the outline of the final Act had been agreed. The *Compendium Compertorum*, whether in its unedited version of the Norwich diocese, or in the edited version of the Northern Visitation, demonstrates principally monastic sexual crime. As a document it could support any option of reform the government might consider. The compilation of sexual evidence is not proof that the eventual Suppression Act was defined earlier in the Visitation. By December 1535, the suppression of smaller houses, perhaps defined by the complement of the house or its *Valor Ecclesiasticus* net income, could have been an option, but it would have been one option among the others previously mentioned. The activities of Layton and Legh in the Northern Visitation of January and February 1536 do not suggest that they, Cromwell's most trusted Visitors, had any sense of a definitely agreed plan of suppression. It is unlikely that Layton, for example, would have spent two or three days gaining the closure of the small priory of Marton in February 1536, just a fortnight before the Act was passed, if he had understood its days were already numbered because the decision had already been made to close smaller houses. If Layton and Legh had appreciated the scope of an intended Act, then the base data from which the *Compendium* was developed could have been made more specific and damning to the smaller houses. After all, a third of small houses in the northern *Compendium* were recorded as having no specified crime.¹⁶⁸⁷ If the Visitors had been specifically briefed, it could be expected that class of house would have had a more universal condemnation in the northern *Compendium*.

¹⁶⁸⁷ e.g. See Graph 1 and Appendix 9.

¹⁶⁸⁸ See Appendix 10: 86 houses less than £200; 31 with no specified crime.

Cromwell's *Remembrances* from mid January 1536 show that he was not certain how to progress with the reform of monasteries. To the note: 'Item the abomination of religious persons throughout this realm', Cromwell added, in his own hand, 'and a reformation to devise there'.¹⁶⁸⁹ This demonstrates Cromwell had no definite plan of monastic reform at this late stage, even though the parliamentary session commenced only a fortnight later.

Cromwell's indecision regarding the final form of the Suppression Act is demonstrated even at the end of February. Knowles considered the surrendering of Tilty and Bilsington on the 28 February, on the eve of the Suppression Act, 'one more proof of the empirical, unpremeditated decisions that are characteristic of Cromwell in all his dealings with the monasteries'.¹⁶⁹⁰ However, it is more likely that the two suppressions, using the same form as the earlier ones based on the king's alleged founder status,¹⁶⁹¹ identify that no definite form of suppression or reform had yet been agreed upon. This is emphasised by the commission to Richard Cromwell to undertake the surrender of Tilty dated 1 March¹⁶⁹² and his arrival on 3 March.¹⁶⁹³ Why would Cromwell be pursuing this action when a week later the Suppression Act had been proposed to parliament?

This apparent indecision on Cromwell's part, on the eve of the Act, has already been demonstrated with the draft 'Superstitions' Bill which Warmington wrote up at

¹⁶⁸⁹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 5v (LP, X, 254(ii)). LP dates this to February 1536, but its other contents suggest mid January 1536.

¹⁶⁹⁰ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p.290.

¹⁶⁹¹ It is doubtful whether the king was indeed founder of Tilty. CCCC MS 111, fo. 342 states the founder as the Marchioness of Dorset, and this is supported by LP, V, 1557, LP, VI, 1304, LP, VIII, 188 and LP, XVI, p. 719.

¹⁶⁹² PRO, E 322 / 243, parchment insert. The date is incomplete but appears '(...)imo die martii'.

¹⁶⁹³ PRO, E 322 / 243, parchment insert and PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 151v (LP, X, 408(ii)).

the beginning of March.¹⁶⁹⁴ This Bill in its effects is completely dwarfed by the Suppression Act. The two Bills could possibly be seen as a two-pronged monastic reform attempt, enabling a direct assault on pilgrimages and relics at religious houses at the same time as closing down smaller houses. The direct link between the Visitation and the ‘Superstitions’ Bill, especially in its provision for forgiving the crimes found during the Visitation, suggest that the ‘Superstitions’ Bill was more central to Cromwell’s plans. Chapuys’ letter to Charles V of the 17 February noted that at the start of parliament a pamphlet had been printed ‘for the information of its members, containing a list of the measures to be discussed therein such as the suppression of all church ceremonials concerning images and the worship of saints and likewise those who affirm there is a purgatory’.¹⁶⁹⁵ This measure appears to echo the eventually to be disregarded ‘Superstitions’ Bill. Therefore, from all the evidence now available, it seems that, in late February / early March, Cromwell wanted to concentrate on the suppression of king’s foundation houses and introduce an Act to reform the misuse of relics and the associated pilgrimages.

Correspondence at the end of February and beginning of March identifies that parliament was going to undertake some sort of monastic closure. On 21 February Katherine Blount wrote to Cromwell telling him she had heard ‘that it will please the kings highness to take into his hands certain abbeys and priories, to put them to other uses’.¹⁶⁹⁶ Katherine Blount was the grandmother of the king’s illegitimate son, the

¹⁶⁹⁴ See Appendix 13.

¹⁶⁹⁵ SSP, vol. 5, part 2, No. 21.

¹⁶⁹⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 68 (LP, X, 335).

duke of Richmond,¹⁶⁹⁷ and so had probably heard this news directly from court, where her sons accompanied the duke.

However, news from Cromwell's office at this time, regarding a Suppression Bill appears negative. William Popley, one of Cromwell's clerks at the Rolls, wrote to Lord Lisle on the 22 February, responding to Lisle's enquiry regarding the potential suppression of Beaulieu abbey: 'I cannot perceive that the same or any like shall be suppressed, nor any other of like lands, for as much as at the session of this parliament they ordain statutes and provisions for the maintenance and good order of the clergy, as well religious as secular'.¹⁶⁹⁸ St Clare Byrne suggests that Popley is being the image of discretion, not giving anything away. However, it could also be interpreted that his ignorance of a Suppression Act was because either it had not then been drafted or Cromwell's office was not in control of its formulation. Popley, after all, was being paid an annuity by Lisle and could be expected to be truthful with his patron. Lisle had heard already, like Katherine Blount, that some form of suppression was afoot and from Popley's reply he had clearly not heard the rumour originally from Cromwell's office. There appears a strong suggestion, therefore, at the end of February, that Cromwell was at this stage not in control or, even, happy with the direction of monastic reform. Cromwell's actions in pursuing the closure of Tilty and Bilsington as well as drafting the 'Superstitions' Bill, are at odds with events outside his office.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Camden Miscellany vol. 3, LXI (1855), pp. IX-LXVII. S. T. Bindoff, The House of Commons, 1509 - 1558, vol. 1 (London, 1982), pp. 446, 452 for Katherine's sons William and Henry.

¹⁶⁹⁸ PRO, SP 3 / 6 fo. 110, (LP, X, 339); partially transcribed in M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), The Lisle Letters, vol. 3, p. 283.

On 1 April, after the passing of the Suppression Act and the Court of Augmentations Act, Chapuys wrote to Charles V ‘although Cromwell was at one time the advisor and promoter of the demolition of the English convents and monasteries, yet perceiving the great inconvenience likely to arise from that measure, he has since made attempts to thwart it, but that the king had resolutely declined to make any modifications of it whatever and has been somewhat indignant against his secretary for proposing such a thing’.¹⁶⁹⁹

The extract from a chronicle discovered by Loades supports this view, of a policy difference between the king and Cromwell on the manner in which monastic reform was to be implemented. While the chronicle is not contemporary, Loades considered that where the overall material can be checked, it is accurate.¹⁷⁰⁰ Cromwell is purported to have objected to the king about the manner of proposed suppression, reminding him of Wolsey’s ‘favour and licence of the bishops of Rome to dissolve certain monasteries yet the same... was not done without some disquiet, as everybody knoweth’. The chronicle continues with Cromwell saying,

‘“wherefore mine advice is that it should be done by little and little, not suddenly by parliament. And I doubt not but seeming how horrible this kind of religion is and how odious to the wiser sort of people they may be easily persuaded to leave their cowls and to render their possessions to your majesty, by whose progenitors they were first erected.” This saying of the Lord Cromwell although it were not without great consideration, and that he feared after came to pass¹⁷⁰¹ was not admitted, but the rest of the council making the king believe he should at all times be

¹⁶⁹⁹ SSP, vol. 5, part 2, No. 43, pp. 83/84.

¹⁷⁰⁰ D. M. Loades (ed.), *The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire*, Camden Fourth Series, vol. 5 (1968); pp.128, 159/160.

¹⁷⁰¹ The Pilgrimage of Grace and Lincolnshire rising.

able to repress easily all insolency and fury of the people, agreed it should be done by an act of parliament. Whereupon the Lord Audeley, then Lord Chancellor, and the said Richard Riche, devised two acts the one for the suppression of the monasteries not being above the value of £100 yearly¹⁷⁰² and the other erecting of this new court¹⁷⁰³ ... When this act was read in parliament all the abominations of these religious persons, which was before in the Visitation found, was opened, which abhorred all mens ears to hear'.¹⁷⁰⁴

Tying together these various sources and deductions shows that Cromwell was not directly responsible for the Suppression Act and that it was the king and other councillors who defined the monastic policy to be adopted. By 9 March, however, Cromwell's office was again in tune with the rest of the king's council. Popley reported to Lisle that 'it is thought that all houses under 300 marks shall be suppressed and had to the kings us(e) for the maintenance of certain noteable persons... but whether [it] be shall so follow or no I am not sure'.¹⁷⁰⁵

Perhaps the indecision regarding which policy of monastic reform was to be pursued accounts for the layout of the northern *Compendium Compertorum*. Warmington was instructed by Cromwell to write it up in a form that demonstrated monastic crime but also allowed the document to support a variety of reform options. In this way a Bill to restrict pilgrimages and 'Superstitions' or an attempt to legally obtain certain king's foundation houses or an attempt to suppress small houses could

¹⁷⁰² Loades notes the error.

¹⁷⁰³ The court of augmentations.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Later details in the Chronicle regarding the Commons addition to the Act including the fine for non-compliance gives considerable credence to the source, see D. M. Loades (ed.), *The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire, Camden Fourth Series*, vol. 5 (Royal Historical Society, London, 1968), p. 160.

be bolstered by the material the *Compendium* contained. In the final event, therefore, it looks as though the king may have decided upon the Suppression Act, leaving Cromwell to implement the royal decision. While Knowles inferred that Cromwell had drafted the Suppression Bill by the beginning of March 1536,¹⁷⁰⁶ the revision of the evidence here suggests Cromwell found himself implementing the royal desire.

Although these are unlikely to be Cromwell's actual words, this is the sort of dialogue informed onlookers considered was taking place.

¹⁷⁰⁵ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 198.

¹⁷⁰⁶ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1961), p. 291.

6. Conclusion

This work has identified that the Royal Visitation of 1535-1536 was more extensive, both geographically and conceptually, than has previously been appreciated. For the first time the names of all the visiting Commissioners and their regions of responsibility have been identified. It has been demonstrated that, in seven months, these commissioners visited over 85 per cent of religious houses in England and Wales as well as many hospitals and secular colleges.

The method and direction of the Visitation emerged from uncertain beginnings. The popularly held belief that the Visitors were equipped, from the outset, with Articles of Enquiry and Injunctions, has been disproved. Only as a result of the king's disapproval in early August, of the manner in which the Visitation was being conducted, were core Injunctions formulated to be given to religious houses. At this stage, the programme of the Visitation had yet to be decided upon. This is supported by the discovery that in early August, Legh and ap Rice were involved in other duties in the north Midlands. Certainly after September, the direction and purpose of the Visitation became clearer: the Commissioners' diocesan responsibilities are evident, the speed increased and the search for sexual crimes became more obvious.

The involvement of the Visitors in monastic reform and improvement during their Visitations has previously been denied; they have been seen by historians as mainly cataloguing sexual crime, while issuing standard Injunctions without reference to local circumstances. This has been seen to be untrue. The Articles of Enquiry for the Savoy hospital, Walsingham and the Cambridge colleges reflect knowledge of the

specific concerns at those locations and an apparent attempt to redress them. The reform of monastic behaviour is clear in the Injunctions left with the hospital of St Cross and also with Spalding abbey. Legh had examined the foundation documents of St Cross and discovered discrepancies in the manner the 'Hundred Hall poor' were treated. At Spalding, Bedyll introduced many additional Injunctions to ensure a better organised monastery with higher quality recruits. In a similar fashion, Tregonwell amended the statutes at Wells cathedral to improve the choral office. The Visitors were introducing measures of reform because reform was an important part of their task.

Throughout the Visitation, Cromwell does not appear to be the clear decision maker, or as firmly in control of events as historians have previously believed. When the king complained in August and October 1535 about the conduct of the Visitation, Cromwell immediately wrote to the Commissioners, criticising them for what were, in effect, his own actions or inactions. Throughout the Visitation, however, Cromwell can be seen influencing events, but in ways not previously appreciated. His 'Lutheran', anti-purgatory addition to the draft Injunctions shows one instance where he was overruled.

From the start of the Visitation, Legh can be seen pushing and extending its scope. In this, he appears to be following Cromwell's desires; desires which perhaps Cromwell felt unable to express more officially. This is why we see Cromwell 'turning a blind eye' on his youthful protégé when Legh used a wide interpretation of the Injunctions in September and October. Cromwell was aware of Legh's actions, particularly with respect to the excessive number of religious he was dismissing,

because ap Rice had told him. That Legh received the mastership of Sherburn Hospital, in September, suggests a reward from a grateful Cromwell. Cromwell allowed Legh a freedom of action in, for example, extending the age-range and conditions for dismissal from the religious life, because it suited Cromwell's interests. Cromwell's apparent aversion to the religious life is expressed in Legh's actions during the Visitation. At the end of October, as a result of the king's argument with Cromwell over Legh's conduct in the Visitation, Legh was briefly 'reined in'. The king was possibly placated by Layton's revelation of immorality at Langdon priory and the financial gains of three monastic closures; a few weeks later Legh was allowed by Cromwell to revert back to his previous practices and continue his Visitation as if nothing had happened.

Cromwell's disagreement with the king over the manner of monastic reform in February 1536 resulted in the king specifying the broad outline of the eventual Act. Cromwell's proven approach of 'voluntary' monastic surrender and escheat of king's foundation houses and reform of the veneration of 'Superstitions' was, at that time, discarded. Thus, in March 1536, Cromwell found himself involved in supporting a Bill which was not his ideal; Cromwell had largely controlled the Visitation, but the king decided upon the eventual Suppression Act.

The actions of the Visitors were diverse: they visited bishops, chapters, vicars choral, secular colleges, hospitals and universities, as well as religious houses. The only group of friars they visited was the endowed Trinitarian Friars. While the Royal Visitation is typically styled the Visitation of the monasteries, it was clearly more than that. The common denominator in all their Visitations was the gaining of submission

to the Royal Supremacy and the Royal Succession as well as declaring void all previous oaths made to Rome. In many instances, clearly identified in the southern province, such submissions had already been made during Archbishop Cranmer's metropolitan Visitation of 1534-1535. It is likely, however, that many religious institutions, especially in the north, had not made such a formal profession of the king's Supreme Headship. Layton, when referring to the need to gain acceptance of the king's Royal Supremacy in the north, described the Royal Visitation as the best way 'to beat his [the king's] authority into their heads'. The constant references to the issue of the Royal Supremacy in the Visitors' correspondence reflects this need to gain 'professions' and acceptance.

Historians, by concentrating on the issues of crimes and the *Compendium Compertorum*, have effectively drawn the conclusion that the sole purpose of the Visitation was to develop the evidence for monastic suppression. From September 1535, finding evidence for some sort of monastic suppression was an important aspect of the Visitation, but it was not clear how wide-reaching that suppression would be. It has been identified that on the eve of the Suppression Act, when still in Lancashire and Cheshire, Layton and Legh did not falter in making detours to visit secular colleges. At no stage of the Visitation is there any example of an attempt to close down secular colleges. The need to visit these colleges, even when the Visitors were in such a rush, demonstrates that the prime objective was to gain acceptance of the Royal Supremacy. It appears probable that even if there had been no consideration of a monastic reform or Suppression Act at the end of the Visitation there still would have been a Visitation, by Cromwell's agents, to reinforce the king's Supremacy.

The northern *Compendium Compertorum* was shown or exhibited to parliament, either on its own or in combination with material from other dioceses. It has been seen that the evidence it contains has been manipulated to exclude any qualification regarding the alleged crime: the monks, canons and nuns are named and the sexual crimes apparently prolific. The neatness of the document also reflects the character of an official exhibit. The attention put into this document demonstrates its purpose was to convince an external readership.

The most visible aspect of the *Compendium Compertorum* is the listing of the sexual crimes: it did exist to blacken the name of religious. However the other information it contains – the Founder, ‘Superstitions’, those desiring release from vows, debt and income – is there for a purpose. These entries represent information to support a range of differing reform options. This was necessary because in early March it seems that Cromwell was undecided about the nature of the Act, or more probably, he disagreed with the king over the manner in which monastic reform would be pursued. This helps explain why the *Compendium Compertorum* is not in a format that mirrors exactly the clauses in the Suppression Act. The *Compendium Compertorum* represents a ‘catch all’ document to support whichever of the range of monastic reform options the government should eventually decide upon. Contrary to the views of historians previously, this work has shown that the *Compendium Compertorum* does reflect the correspondence of the Visitors and the preamble and content of the Suppression Act: smaller houses, generally, did have worse problems than larger houses.

It has been demonstrated that the information the Royal Visitors obtained during the Visitation, in addition to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, provided the government with information about the likely impact of the Suppression Act's provisions. The problems of accommodating the religious leaving the dissolved houses was, therefore, understood at the time of the passing of the Act. This supports the view that the government was serious about the commitment to transfer religious; it was not subsequently taken aback by the large number of religious, in certain areas of the country, who wished to remain in the cloisters, or at a loss as to how to deal with them. The government had thought about the possibility, had made plans and was prepared to deal with the issue of relocation.

A key point in this work has been to separate Layton and Legh's actual Visitation from the *Compendium Compertorum* documents, hitherto indelibly associated with them. The northern *Compendium Compertorum* is not a true representation of their Visitation Act Book. While Layton and Legh were undoubtedly brusque in their questioning of religious, happy to receive adequate 'rewards' and would lose no opportunity to gain the resignation of an abbot, there is no evidence they deliberately lied in the Act Book. The glimpse of their activity at Furness Abbey identifies a wider remit than purely providing material for the edited *Compendium Compertorum*. It should also be remembered that even with the editing of their compertes to form the northern *Compendium Compertorum* the average crime rate was 19 per cent compared with the Norwich diocese *Compendium Compertorum*'s figure of 31 per cent. Layton and Legh cannot be judged solely on the contents of the northern *Compendium Compertorum*.

This thesis has re-written the narrative of the seven months of the Royal Visitation. It has placed in context the varying activities of the Commissioners, so that the emergence of monastic reform policies can be determined. Historians and guide books have crystallised the Royal Visitation, simplistically, into possessing one objective: the cataloguing of sexual crime. This has, by its inference, damned the Visitors more than they deserve, and obscured the extraordinary administrative achievement of the Royal Visitation.

The *Compendium Compertorum* did help make the Suppression Act of 1536, but it was not the Act that Cromwell desired.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN APPENDICES

RELIGIOUS ORDER

A	Augustinian
B	Benedictine
BH	Bonhommes
BR	Bridgettine
C	Cistercian
CA	Carthusian
CL	Cluniac
CR	Crutched Friar
D	Dominican (Nuns)
FV	Fontevrault
F	Franciscan (Nuns)
G	Grandmontine
GI	Gilbertine
HS	Holy Sepulchre
P	Premonstratensian
S	Secular College
T	Trinitarian Friars
TI	Tiran

TYPE

B	Brothers (Hospital)
C	Canons
F	Friars
H	Hospital (Monks, Nuns or Brothers)
J	Joint (Canons and Nuns)
L	Laymen
M	Monks
N	Nuns
P	Priests
R	Brethren (Bonhommes)

FOUNDER

E	Ecclesiastic / Monastic
G	Gentry
K	King
N	Nobility
U	Unknown

COUNTY

County boundaries as in 1536 (Largely the same as pre ~ 1974)

AN	Anglesey, Wales
BD	Bedfordshire
BE	Berkshire
BN	Brecknock, Wales
BU	Buckinghamshire
CA	Cambridgeshire
CE	Caernarvonshire, Wales
CG	Cardiganshire, Wales
CH	Cheshire
CM	Carmarthenshire, Wales
CO	Cornwall
CU	Cumberland
DB	Denbighshire, Wales
DE	Derbyshire
DO	Dorset
DU	Durham
DV	Devon
ER	East Riding, Yorkshire
EX	Essex
FL	Flint, Wales
GL	Gloucestershire
GN	Glamorganshire, Wales
HA	Hampshire
HE	Herefordshire
HT	Hertfordshire
HU	Huntingdonshire
IW	Isle of Wight
KE	Kent
LA	Lancashire
LE	Leicestershire
LI	Lincolnshire
LN	London
ME	Merionethshire
MO	Monmouth
MT	Montgomeryshire, Wales
MX	Middlesex
NK	Norfolk
NN	Northamptonshire
NO	Northumberland
NR	North Riding, Yorkshire
NT	Nottinghamshire
OX	Oxfordshire
PK	Pembrokeshire, Wales
RA	Radnorshire, Wales
RU	Rutland
SK	Suffolk

SO	Somerset
SP	Shropshire (Salop)
ST	Staffordshire
SX	Sussex
SY	Surrey
WE	Westmorland
WI	Wiltshire
WK	Warwickshire
WO	Worcestershire
WR	West Riding, Yorkshire
YO	York (City)

ECCLESIASTICAL DIOCESE

Diocesan Boundaries as in 1535

CANTERBURY PROVINCE

B	Bangor
BW	Bath and Wells
C	Canterbury
CH	Chichester
CL	Coventry and Lichfield
EY	Ely
EX	Exeter
L	Lincoln
LF	Llandaff
LO	London
N	Norwich
R	Rochester
SA	St. Asaph
SD	St. David's
S	Salisbury
WN	Winchester
W	Worcester

YORK PROVINCE

CR	Carlisle
D	Durham
Y	York

For definition of boundaries see D. M. Smith, Guide to Bishops' Registers of England and Wales (London, 1981) and VCH series.

SPECIAL ABBREVIATIONS FOR APPENDICES 2 to 10

UNDER RELIGIOUS HOUSE HEADING:

- **Unbracketed house, viz, Monkton Farleigh: visited and noted in CCCC MS 111, fos. 339-349.**
- **Bracketed house, viz, (Keynsham): visited and noted in correspondence or other source.**
- **Bracketed house with star, viz, (Boxley)*: visit deduced from location relative to other houses.**
- **Unbracketed house with hash, viz, Ankerwyke#: some change made to ordering of CCCC MS 111 listing.**

CCCC MS 111 information:

For unbracketed religious houses the 'Founder' and 'Number' are taken from the CCCC MS 111, fos. 339-349. The category 'Number' represents the complement of the house, but excludes the head (see Appendix 14). However, complement figures are occasionally available from CCCC MS 111, fos. 319-333. In the appendices, I have used the complement from fos. 339-349. Where this is not available, I have used the complement from fos. 319-333 and denoted it by, for example, 7/. Where both figures are available but differ, I have shown the fos. 319-333 number first, for example, 25/28.

Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton's Visitational circuit, July to December 1535

SHEET 1	Dr RICHARD LAYTON	Cell	Order	V.E.- Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
W 11	(Winchcombe)		BM	759			GL	LP IX, 723	Visited by Layton or Cromwell
W 9	(Pershore)		BM	643			WO		
W 4	(Evesham)		BM	1183			WO	LP IX, 3	1 August
W 10	(Tewkesbury)		BM	1598			WO	LP IX, 3	2 August
W 5	(Gloucester)		BM	1430			GL	LP IX, 3	2 August
W 20	(St Oswald's, Gloucester)*	y	AC	90		7/	GL		CCCC MS111, fo. 332
W 7	(Leonard Stanley)*, cell of Gloucester	y	BM	106		13/	GL		
W 19	from Cromwell @ Berkeley Heron							LP VIII, 1127	10 August
	(Cirencester)		AC	1051			GL	LP VIII, 1127	11/12 August
	to Cromwell @ Berkeley Heron							LP VIII, 1127	12 August
S 13	Monkton Farleigh, cell of Lewes	y	CLM	153	K	6	WI	LP IX, 42	
BW 2	(Bath)		BM	617			SO	LP IX, 42	16 August
BW 12	(Keynsham)		AC	419			SO	LP IX, 42	
S 19	Maiden Bradley		AC	180	K	8	WI	LP IX, 42	
BW 9	(Witham)		CAM	215			SO	LP IX, 42	
BW 11	(Bruton)		AC	439			SO	LP IX, 42; 159; 167	c 20 August. Legh there on 23 Aug.
BW 4	(Glastonbury)		BM	3311			SO	LP IX, 42; 168	<= 23 August
W 18	(St Austin's, Bristol)		AC	670			GL	LP IX, 168	24 August
W 38	(The Gaunts, Bristol)		HC	165			GL	LP IX, 168	24 August
	to Cromwell @ Thornbury/Iron Acton							LP IX, 168	25 August
BW 8	(Hinton)		CAM	248			SO	LP VII, 1127	< 1 September
	at court, Bromham ?								
	at Oxford University							LP IX, 288;312	c 6 September, with Tregonwell
L 69	(Osney)		AC	654			OX	LP IX, 350	12 September, with Tregonwell
S 2	(Abingdon)		BM	1876			BE	LP IX, 350	13 September
	to Cromwell @ Winchester							LP IX, 350	15 September
WN 20	Titchfield #		PC	249	E	12	HA		CCCC MS111 entry but >200
WN 18	(Southwick)		AC	257			HA	LP X, 138	22 September
WN 19	Tandridge		AC	81	G	3	SY		probably visited later
WN 15	Reigate		AC	68	N	3	SY		probably visited later

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 2

Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton's Visitational circuit, July to December 1535

SHEET 2	RICHARD LAYTON	Cell	Order	V.E.- Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
CH 9	Durford		PC	98		7	SX	LP IX, 444	24 September
WN 8	Waverley		CM	174	E	13/16	SY	LP IX, 444	25/26 September
CH 6	Shulbred		AC	72	K	5	SX	LP IX, 444; 533	27 September
CH 11	Easebourne		AN	29	N	6	SX	LP IX, 444; 533	
CH 10	(Rusper)*		BN	39			SX		
CH 14	(Chichester Cathedral)		SP	310			SX	LP IX, 444; 533	arrived night of 27 September
CH 2	Boxgrove		BM	145	N	9	SX	LP IX, 509	30 September
CH 17	(Aldingbourne Palace, with bishop)						SX	LP IX, 509	1 October
CH 7	Tortington		AC	75		6	SX		
CH 12	(Arundel College)		SP	168			SX	LP IX, 509	1 October
CH 3	(Lewes)		CLM	920			SX	LP IX, 509	midday 2 October
CH 5	Michelham		AC	160	K	8/9	SX		
CH 1	(Battle)		BM	880			SX		
CH 4	Robertsbridge		CM	248		12	SX		CCCC MS111 entry but > 200
CH 8	Warbleton, new priory of Hastings		AC	51	G	3	SX		
C 10	Combwell		AC	?	N	6	KE		
C 7	(Boxley)*		CM	204			KE		
C 20	(Maidstone)		SP	159			KE	LP IX, 632	
C 11	(Leeds)		AC	362			KE	LP IX, 713	
C 14	Moatendon		TF	58	N	8	KE		
C 6	Monks Horton		CLM	95	K	6	KE		c. week commencing 10 October
C 8	Bilington	?	AC	81	K	3	KE		
C 5	Folkestone		BM	41		2	KE	LP IX, 668	
C 13	St Radegund's		PC	98		9	KE		
C 12	Langdon		PC	56	K	8	KE	LP IX, 668	
C 3	Dover, cell of Christchurch, Cant.	y	BM	170	K	13/11	KE		
C 1	(Christchurch, Canterbury (Cathedral))		BM	2349			KE	LP IX, 633;668;669	arrived evening of 16 October. Fire
	heard Cranmer preach in Cathedral							LP IX, 361	17 October
C 16	St Sepulchre, Canterbury		BN	29	K	7	KE		
C 9	St Gregory, Canterbury		AC	121	E	13	KE		
C 2	(St Augustine's, Canterbury)		BM	1413			KE	see text	20 October

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 2

Itinerary of Dr Richard Layton's Visitational circuit, July to December 1535

SHEET 3	RICHARD LAYTON	Cell	Order	V.E. - 7	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
	Returned to Folkestone and Langdon and back to Christchurch that evening with Cranmer @ Ford Palace							LP IX, 668	22 October
								LP IX, 668	22 October
								LP IX, 668	morning of 23 October
C 4	(Faversham)		BM	286			KE	LP IX, 668	23 October
C 15	Minster, Sheppey (St Sexburg)		AN	129	E	11	KE		
R 1	(Rochester)		BM	486			KE	LP IX, 691;693	c. 25, 26 October
R 2	(Malling)		BN	218			KE		
R 4	(Cobham College)		SP	128			KE	PRO, E25/32	27 October
R 3	(Dartford)*		DN	380			KE		
WN 4	(Bermondsey)		CLM	464			SY	LP IX, 444	
WN 16	(St Mary Overy, Southwark)		AC	626			SY	LP IX, 444	
LO 48	(St Thomas', Acon)		HC	309			LN	LP IX, 444	
S 39	(St George's, Windsor castle)		SP	1396			BE	Bale	
LO 24	(Syon)		BRJ	1731			MX	LP IX, 954;986	<12 to 17 December
	to be with King, at Richmond?							LP IX, 986	17 or 18 December
L 90	(Chicksands)		GIJ	70			LI	LP IX, 1005	
L 129	Harrold		AN	40	K	3	BD	LP IX, 1005	CCCC MS111 notes visited by Legh
L 24	(St Andrews, Northampton)		CLM	263			LA	LP IX, 1005	night of 20 December?
L 137	(Newark College, Leicester)		SP	595			LE	LP IX, 1005	21 December
L 59	(Leicester)		AC	951			LE	LP IX, 1005	22 December
CL 61	(Lichfield)							LP IX, 1005	arrived late 22 December

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Legh's Visitational circuit, with John ap Rice as Registrar, July to

December 1535

SHEET 1	Dr THOMAS LEGH (and JOHN ap RICE)	Cell	Order	V.E. - £	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
W 12	(Worcester)		BM	1290			WO	LP IX, 5	<=30, 31 August
W 6	(Great Malvern)		BM	308			WO	LP IX, 5	31 August
W 8	Little Malvern, cell of Worcester	y	BM	98	K	7	WO		
W 5	(Gloucester)		BM	1430			GL	LP IX, 5	2 August
	with Cromwell at Gloucester								
CL 21	(Vale Royal)		CM	518			CH	LP IX, 622	for election of abbot, > 6 Aug.
CL 41	Trentham		AC	106	K	7	ST		
CL 40	(Stone)*		AC	119			ST	LP X, 324	
Y 29	(Beauvale)		CAM	196		19/	NT	LP IX, 622	for election of prior
	with Cromwell at Berkeley Heron								
W 17	(Kingswood)*		CM	239			GL	LP IX, 394	or Layton?
S 8	(Malmesbury)		BM	803			WI	LP IX, 138;139	
S 17	(Bradenstoke)		AC	185			BE	LP IX, 138;139	
S 15	Stanley		CM	177	K	13	WI		
S 30	Lacock		AN	168	K	18	WI	LP IX, 138;139	20 August
S 25	Kington St Michael		BN	25		4/3	WI		
	returned to Malmesbury							LP IX, 160	
S 22	(Edington)		BHR	442			WI	LP IX, 159;160	23 August
BW 11	(Bruton)		AC	439			SO	LP IX, 167	24 August
S 26	(Shaftesbury)		BN	1166			DO	LP IX, 228	
S 11	(Sherborne)*		BM	682			DO		
EX 13	(Forde)		CM	374			DO	LP IX, 590	
S 4	(Cerne)		BM	575			DO	LP IX, 256	< 2 September
S 1	(Abbotsbury)		BM	390			DO	LP IX, 1076	Legh/Warmington
S 9	(Milton)*		BM	578			DO		
S 29	(Tarrant)*		CN	214			DO		
S 27	(Wilton)		BN	601			WI	LP IX, 265;280	3 September
S 24	(Amesbury)*		BN	525			WI		
S 18	Ivychurch (Ederos)		AC	122	K	4	WI		
WN 22	(Wherwell)		BN	339			HA	LP IX, 344	11 September
WN 21	(Romsey)*		BN	393			HA		
	with Cromwell at Winchester								

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 3

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Legh's Visitational circuit, with John ap Rice as Registrar, July to

December 1535

SHEET 2	Dr THOMAS LEGH (and JOHN ap RICE)	Cell	Order	V.E.- ½	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
	(Winchester College)						HA		18 September, with Cromwell
WN 30	(St Cross Hospital, Winchester)		HC	184			HA		20 September
WN 16	St Denys		AC	80	K	9	HA		
WN 6	Netley		CM	100	K	12	HA		
WN 24	Wintney		CN	43	N	17	HA	LP IX, 423	24 September
S 10	(Reading)		BM	1938			BE	LP IX, 439	25 September
WN 1	(Chertsey)		BM	659			SY	LP IX, 472(1),(2)	
WN 12	(Merton)		AC	960			SY	LP IX, 472(1)	
LO 33	(Halliwell)		AN	294			MX	LP IX, 472;466	28, 29 September
LO 35	(St Paul's Cathedral)		SP	725			LN		1 October
LO 7	(Westminster)		BM	3470			LN		
LO 34	(The Minorities)		FN	318			LN		
LO 45	(Savoy Hospital)		HC	567			LN	LP IX, 661	
LO 31	Stratford at Bow		BN	108	E	9	LN		
	Barking Nunnery?							LP IX, 487	most likely visited in Dec.
LO 29	(Kilburn)		BN	14			MX		'not visited'
L 18	(St Albans)		BM	2102			HT	LP VII, 1249	11 October
L 111	Sopewell, cell of St Albans	y	BN	40	E	9	HT	LP IX, 661	
L 97	(Hitchin)		GIC	13			HT		'not visited'
L 53	(Dunstable)*		AC	344			BD		
L 7	(Hertford), cell of St Albans	y	BM	72			HT		
LO 28	(Cheshunt)		BN	14			HT		'not visited'
L 40	(Woburn)		CM	391			BD	LP IX, 622	
L 39	(Warden)		CM	389			BD	LP IX, 621;622	16 October
LO 13A	Royston		AC	86	K	10	EX	LP IX, 630	17 October
LO 14	Berden		AC	29	E	3	EX		
LO 6	(Walden)		BM	372			EX	LP IX, 640	19 October
EY 9	Ickleton		BN	71	N	12	CA		
	start at Cambridge University							LP IX, 651	21 October
EY 5	(Barnwell)		AC	256			CA		
EY 4	(Anglesey)		AC	124		11/	CA		
	end at Cambridge University							LP IX, 708	29 October

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 3

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Legh's Visitation circuit, with John ap Rice as Registrar, July to December 1535

SHEET 3	Dr THOMAS LEGH (and JOHN ap RICE)	Cell	Order	V.E.- ^z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
EY 10	Swaffham Bulbeck		BN	40	N	8	CA		
EY 11	Denney		FN	172	Q	25/28	CA	LP IX, 708	30 October
N 50	Fordham		GIC	40	N	2/3	CA		
EY 1	(Ely)		BM	1084			CA	LP IX, 735	1 November
N 3	(Bury St Edmunds)		BM	1656			SK	LP IX, 762	4, 5 November
N 33	Ixworth		AC	168		17	SK		
N 37	Thetford		HSC	44	K	6	NK		
N 20	(Thetford)		CLM	312			NK		
N 69	(Rushford)		SP	85			NK		
N 56	Thetford		BN	40	E	10	NK		
N 48	(West Dereham)		PC	228			NK	LP IX, 808	
N 59	Crabhouse		AN	30		8/7	NK		
N 49	Shouldham -canons -nuns		GIC	138	K	11	NK		
N 52	Blackborough		BN	42	G	10	NK		
N 35	Pentney		AC	170	N	12	NK		
N 57	Marham		CN	39	N	9	NK		
N 39	(West Acre)		AC	260			NK	LP IX, 808	11 November
N 16	(Castle Acre)		CLM	306			NK	Grant, see text	11 November ?
N 7	Bishop's Lynn, cell of Norwich	y	BM	25		3	NK		
N 27	Coxford		AC	121	G	10	NK		
N 30	Hempton		AC	32	N	4	NK		
N 38	(Walsingham)		AC	391			NK		
N 2	Binham, cell of St Alban's	y	BM	101	K	6	NK		
N 47	Wendling		PC	55	G	4/3	NK		
N 23	Beeston		AC	43	N	3	NK		
N 40	Weybourne		AC	28	N	2	NK		
N 15	Broomholm		CLM	100	N	7	NK		
N 14A	(St Benets, Holm)		BM	583			NK		
N 31	Hickling		AC	100	G?	10	NK		
N 51	Ingham		TF	61	G	6	NK		
N 5	Horsham St Faith		BM	162	K	5	NK		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 3

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Legh's Visitational circuit, with John ap Rice as Registrar, July to December 1535

SHEET 4	Dr THOMAS LEGH (and JOHN ap RICE)	Cell	Order	V.E. - 7	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
N 10	RELIGIOUS HOUSE (Norwich)		BM	874			NK	LP IX, 849	19 November
N 54	Norwich, Carrow #		BN	64	K	9	NK		
N 44	Langley		PC	104	N	15	NK		
N 25	Buckenham		AC	108	G	9	NK		
N 13	(Wymondham)		BM	211		12/	NK		
N 36	St Olaves		AC	49	G	6	SK		
N 1	(Aldeby), cell of Norwich	y	BM	25			NK		
N 67	(Mettingham)*		SP	202			NK		
N 53	Bungay		BN	61	N	7	SK		
N 60	Flixton		AN	23	E	8	SK		
N 17	(Mendham)*		CLM				SK		
	(Hoxne, bishop's palace)							LP IX, 889	
N 55	Redlingfield		BN	81	N	9	SK		
N 24	Blythburgh, cell of St Osyth	y	AC	48	E	5	SK		
N 21	Wangford		CLM	30	K	3	SK		
N 46	Leiston II		PC	181	N	15	SK		
N 22	(Sibton)*		CM	250			SK		
N 61	Bruisyard		FN	56	K	20	SK		
N 26	(Butley)*		AC	318			SK		
N 42	Woodbridge		AC	50	G	6	SK		
N 58	Campsey Ash		AN	182	G	19	SK		
N 34	Trew/Letheringham		AC	26	G	12/3	SK		
N 32	Ipswich, Holy Trinity		AC	88	E	7/6	SK	LP IX, 889	27 November
N 4	Eye		BM	161	E	10	SK		
LO 3	Earls Colne, cell of Abingdon	y	BM	156	N	10	EX		
LO 15	St Botolph, Colchester		AC	113	?	9	EX		
LO 20	(St Osyth)		AC	677			EX	LP IX, 1157	
LO 9	(Coggeshall)		CM	251			EX	LP X, 164	
LO 18	Little Dunmow		AC	150	N	11	EX	LP VIII, 865	at Coggeshall w/c 28 Novem.
LO 12	Tilty		CM	167	N	7	EX	LP IX, 816; X, 361:408	
LO 21	(Thremhall)		AC	60			EX		'not visited'
LO 4	Hatfield Broad Oak or Regis		BM	122	N	9	EX		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 3

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Legh's Visitation circuit, with John ap Rice as Registrar, July 10

December 1535

SHEET 5	Dr THOMAS LEGH (and JOHN ap RICE)	Cell	Order	V.E.- ⁷	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
LO 23	Beeleigh		PC	157	N	9	EX		
LO 17	Leighs		AC	114	G	10	EX		
LO 27	Castle Heddingham		BN	29	N	5	EX		
LO 5	Hatfield Peveril, cell of St Albans	y	BM	60	K	4	EX		
LO 8	Prittlewell #		CLM	155	N	7	EX		
LO 22	(Waltham)*		AC	900			EX		
LO 26	(Barking)		BN	862			EX		
LO 11	(Stratford Langthorn)		CM	511			EX	LP VIII, 297	
LO 46	Eising Spital		HC	193	?	9	LN		
L 103	(Elstow)*		BN	284			BD		
L 48	Caldwell		AC	109	N	8	BD		
L 129	Harrod		AN	40	K	3	BD		Layton there c 20 December
L 82	Lavendon		PC	79	N	10	BU		
L 47	Bushmead #		AC	71	N	4	BD		
L 20	(St Neots)*		BM	241			HU		
L 72	Stoneley		AC	46	G	6	HU		
L 106	Hinchingbrooke		BN	17		4/6	HU	LP IX, 1009	23 December
L 55A	Huntingdon		AC	187	K	13	HU	LP IX, 1009	
L 35	Sawtry		CM	141	K	12	HU	LP X, 103	25 December
L 15	(Peterborough)*		BM	1679			NN		
L 44	Bradley		AC	20	N	2	LE		
L 58	(Launde)*		AC	399			LE		
L 46	Brooke, cell of Kenilworth	y	AC	43	K	3	RU		
L 61	Owston		AC	161	K	12	LE		
L 145	(Burton Lazar)		HC	265			LE	LP XII(2), Appendix 14	
L 56	Kirkby Bellars		AC	142	E	10	LE		
L 76	Ulverscroft		AC	83	N	8	LE		
CL 61	(to Lichfield Cathedral)								=<29 December

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 3

Itinerary of Dr John Tregonwell's Visitational Circuit, September 1535 to January 1536

SHEET 1	JOHN TREGONWELL	Cell	Order	V.E.-Ž	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
	Oxford University with Dr Layton								
L 69	(Osney)		AC	654	K		OX	MagCol. Ledg.C;LP IX-350 LP IX, 375	< 6th September-13th September <13 September with Layton
L 34	Rewley ?		CM	174	K	13	OX		CCCC MS111 note visited by Bedyll
L 105	(Godstow)		BN	275			OX	LP IX, 351	13th September
L 5	(Eynsham)		BM	421			OX	LP IX, 457	
L 26	Buern		CM	124	K	14	OX	LP IX, 457,493	
L 78	Wroxton		AC	78	?	10	OX	LP IX, 457	
L 96	(Clattercote)		GIC	34		4/	OX	LP IX, 457	CCCC MS111(a) notes AC
L 116	Catesby		CN	132	?	10	NN	LP IX, 457	
L 49	Canons Ashby		AC	119	?	13	NN	LP IX, 457	
L 50	Chacombe		AC	83	N	9	NN	LP IX, 457	
L 25	(Biddlesden)*		CM	125			BU)prob not visited
L 51	(Chetwode)*, cell of Notley	y	AC)prob not visited
L 42	Bicester		AC	147	?	11	OX	LP IX, 457	
L 114	Studley		BN	82	?	15	OX	LP IX, 457	27th September
L 68	(Notley)		AC	437			BU	LP IX, 457	
L 37	(Thame)		CM	256			OX	LP IX, 457	
L 52	Dorchester		AC	190	?	7	OX	LP IX, 457	
L 63	(Missenden)*		AC	261			BU		Bedyll could have visited ?
L 100	(Ashridge)*		BHR	416			HT		Bedyll could have visited ?
L 109	Markyate		BN	114	E	12	HT/BD		
L 104	Flamstead (St Giles in the Wood)		BN	30	K	12	HT		
L 110	St Margaret's		BN	14	E	4	HT/BD		
	(to Winchester)							LP IX, 457	c 1st October
WN 13	Mottisfont #		AC	124	K	10	HA		
WN 10	Breamore		AC	154	N	9	HA		
S 5	Cranborne, cell of Tewkesbury	y	BM	55	K	3	DO		
S 14	Bindon		CM	147	K	9	DO		CCCC MS 111 notes as Bath+Wells
BW 15	(Woodspring)		AC	91			SO		CCCC MS 111 'Not Visited'
BW 16	(Barrow Gurney)		BN	24			SO		probably also not visited
BW 21	(Wells Cathedral)		SP	729			SO	Wells Cath. Charter 758	25th October

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 4

Itinerary of Dr John Tregonwell's Visitational Circuit, September 1535 to January 1536

SHEET 2	JOHN TREGONWELL	Cell	Order	V.E.-Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
BW 24	St John's Hospital, Wells	HAC	40	E	5	SO			
BW 4	(Glastonbury)*	BM	3311	K		SO	LP IX, 685	Already formally by Layton 23 Aug.	
BW 6	(Montacute)	CLM	456			SO	LP IX, 1126,1127		
BW 5	(Mucheiney)*	BM	447			SO			
BW 1	(Atheiney)	BM	209			SO	LP IX, 763	<=4th November	
BW 18	(Buckland)*	AN	223			SO			
BW 14	(Taunton)*	AC	286			SO			
BW 24	St John's Hospital, Bridgewater #	HAC	120			SO			
BW 17	Cannington	BN	39	N	7	SO			
BW 7	Cleeve	CM	155	G/N	17	SO	LP IX, 790	<= 8th November	
BW 3	(Dunster), cell of Bath	BM	37		3/	SO		complement in CCCC MS 111	
BW 10	Barlinch	AC	98	G/N	8	SO	LP IX, 795	9th November	
EX 7	Barnstable	CLM	123	N	7	DV			
EX 3	Pilton, cell of Malmesbury	BM	56	K	3	DV			
EX 16	Frithelstock	AC	127	E	5	DV			
EX 17	(Hartland)*	AC	306			DV			
EX 18	(Launceston)*	AC	354			CO			
EX 5	(Tavistock)*	BM	902			DV			
EX 15	(Bodmin)	AC	270			CO	LP IX, 908		
EX 45	Tywardreath #	BM	123	K	7	CO			
EX 21	(St Germans)*	AC	227			CO			
EX 11	(Buckland)*	CM	241			DV			
EX 19	(Plympton)*	AC	912			DV			
EX 10	(Buckfast)*	CM	466			DV			
EX 6	Totnes	BM	124	N	6	DV			
EX 26	Cornworthy	AN	63	N	7	DV			
EX 23	(Torre)*	PC	396			DV			
EX 1	(Cowick)*, cell of Tavistock	BM	78			DV			
EX 22	(Marsh Barton)*, cell of Plympton	AC				DV			
EX 45	St John Hospital, Exeter	HAC	102	E	4	DV			
EX 24	Polsoe	BN	164	E	13	DV			
EX 2	St Nicholas, Exeter, cell of Battle	BM	147	K	6	DV			

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 4

Itinerary of Dr John Tregonwell's Visitation Circuit, September 1535 to January 1536

SHEET 3	JOHN TREGONWELL	Cell	Order	V.E.-Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
EX 32	(Exeter Cathedral)		SP	1179			DV	LP X, 4	<= 1st January 1536
EX 25	Canonsleigh		AN	197	K	18	DV		
EX 13	(Dunkeswell)*		CM	295			DV		
EX 8	(Kerswell)*		CLM	28			DV	LP IX, 1126, 1127	
EX 14	(Newenham)*		CM	227			DV		
S 32	(Salisbury Cathedral)		SP	601			WI	W S R.O:D1/1/4;LP X,153	18 January and < 22 January
	Returns to Cromwell								

Itinerary of Dr Francis Cave's Visitational circuit, August to December 1535

SHEET 1	FRANCIS CAVE	Cell	Order	V.E.-Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
W 31	Whistones #		CN	53	E	7	WO		
W 14	Westwood		FVN	75	K	6	WO		
W 29	Cook Hill #		CN	34	K	7	WO		
W 1	(Alcester)*, cell of Evesham	y	BM	65			WK		
W 22	Studley		AC	117	N	9	WK		
W 15	(Bordesley)*		CM	388			WO		
W 30	Pinley		CN	23	K+	5	WK		
W 28	Wroxall		BN	72	K	5	WK		
W 36	(Astley, St Mary, Warwick)		SP	334			WK	CUL-EDR G/1/7 f108v	<24 November
W 23	St Sepulchre, Warwick		AC	41	K	3	WK	LP IX, 262	<3rd September
CL 20	Stoneleigh		CM	151	K	15	WK		
CL 33	(Kenilworth)*		AC	538			WK		
CL 5	(Coventry Priory)*		BM	808			WK		
CL 23	(Coventry Charterhouse)*		CAM	131			WK		
CL 14	(Coombe)*		CM	311			WK		
L 123	Sewardsley, cell of de la Pre	y	CN	12	N	4	NN		
L 115	Northampton, de la Pre		CLN	119	K	10	NN		
L 67	(Northampton, St James)*		AC	213			NN		CCCC MS111 fo. 323 notes 175 pounds
L 147	(Kingsthorpe, St Davy, N'ton)*		H	34			NN	LP Addenda 954 ?	Reference probably 1536
L 85	(Sulby)		PC	258			NN		
L 130	Rothwell		AN	5	K	4/	NN		
L 32	(Pipewell)		CM	283			NN	LP IX, 822	< 15 November
L 55	(Fineshade)*		AC	56			NN		
L 113	Stamford, St Michael		BN	65	E	9	NN		
CL 48	Henwood		BN	21	G	6	WK		
CL 35	Maxstoke		AC	81	G	10	WK		
CL 24	Arbury		AC	94	G	7	WK		
CL 49	(Nuneaton)*		BN	253			WK		
CL 19	(Merevale)*		CM	254			WK		
CL 50	Polesworth		BN	87	G	13	WK		
W 13	Dudley		CLM	33		2	WO		
W 25	(Halesowen)*		PC	280			WO		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Itinerary of Dr Francis Cave's Visitatorial circuit, August to December 1535

SHEET 2	FRANCIS CAVE	Cell	Order	V.E.- ?	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
CL 51	Brewood White Ladies		AN	17	G	6	SP		
CL 25	Baswich, St Thomas, Stafford		AC	141	E	7	ST		
CL 45	Brewood Black Ladies		BN	11	E	5	ST		
CL 3	(Burton on Trent)*		BM	267			ST		
CL 8	Tutbury		BM	199	K	11	ST		
CL 39	Rocester		AC	100	K	9	ST		
CL 16	Croxden		CM	90	N	12	ST		
CL 18	(Hulton)*		CM	76			ST	?	Commission to elect abbot <13 November
CL 17	(Dieulacres)*		CM	227			ST		
CL 37	Ranton		AC	90	N?	7	ST		
CL 34	(Lilleshall)*		AC	229			SP		
CL 42	Wombridge		AC	65	?	4	SP		
CL 13	Buildwas		CM	110	E	12	SP		see text
CL 32	(Haughmond)		AC	259			SP		
CL 7	(Shrewsbury)		BM	532			SP		
H 13	Chirbury, cell of Snead	y	AC	66	K	6	SP		
H 17	(Wigmore)		AC	261			HE	LP XII(1), 742(1),(3)	
H 20	Limebrook		AN	22	K	6	HE		
H 5	(Leominster), cell of Reading	y	BM	448			HE	LP IX, 856	< 20 November
H 18	Wormsley		AC	83	N	7	HE		
H 9	(Clifford)*, cell of Lewes	y?	CLM	57			HE		
H 4	(Hereford, St Guthlac)*, cell of G'ter	y	BM	170			HE		
H 19	Aconbury		AN	67	K	7	HE	LP IX, 1164	Becansaw and Vaughan there <11 Nov
H 11	Abbey Dore		CM	101	N	8	HE		
H 6	(Monmouth)		BM	56			MO	LP X, 393	Not in Vaughan's commission
H 14	(Flanesford)*		AC	14			HE		
H 12	Flaxley		CM	112	K	9	GL		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 5

Itinerary of Dr John Vaughan and Dr Adam Becansaw's Visitational circuit, August 1535 to January 1536

Sheet 1	VAUGHAN and BECANSAW	Cell	Order	V.E.- 7	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
	at Vale Royal Abbey							LP IX, 35	20 August(?); Vaughan and Becansaw
SA 3	Valle Crucis #		CM	188	K	5/6	DB	LP IX, 244	22-25 August
B 1	Conway		CM	162	K	3/8	CE	LP IX, 244	30 Aug-1 Sept. B & V say St Asaph
	return to Valle Crucis							LP IX, 244	4 or 5 September
SA 5	(St Asaph Cathedral)*		SP	287			FL		
SA 1	Basingwerk		CM	150	K	5	FL		
	at Gresford							LP IX, 511	1 October
	at Gresford							LP IX, 607;608	14 October, St Asaph dioc. completed.
SA 2	Strata Marcella		CM	64	N	4	MT		
SA 4	(Llanllugan)*		CN	22			MT		
	at Aconbury, Herefordshire							LP IX, 1164	electing new prioress
LF 3	Grace Dieu #		CM	19	K	2	MO		
LF 10	Abergavenny		BM	129	K	4	MO		
LF 8	Usk		BN	55	K	5	MO		
LF 7	Tintern		CM	192	N	13	MO	LP X, 393	later abusing injunctions
LF 11	Chepstow		BM	32	K	3/2	MO		
LF 4	(Llantarnam)*		CM	71		6/	MO		
LF 2	(Malpas)*		CLM	14			MO		
LF 9	(Llandaff, Cardiff, Cathedral)		SP	174			GN	LP IX, 806	11 November
LF 1	Ewenny, cell of Glouc.	y	BM	59	K	3	GN		
LF 5	Margram		CM	181	K	8	GN		
LF 6	Neath		CM	132	K	8	GN		
SD 3	Kidwelly, cell of Sherborne #	y	BM	29	K	2	CM	LP IX, 806	planned to enter St David's diocese 20 Nov.
SD 11	Carmarthen		AC	164	K	6	CM		
SD 10	Whitland		CM	135	K	8	CM		
SD 12	Haverford West		AC	133	K	3	PK		
SD 6	Pill, cell of St Dogmels	y	TIM	52	K	3	PK		
SD 4	Pembroke, cell of St Albans	y	BM	57	K	3	PK		
SD 17	(St David's Cathedral)*		SP	193			PK		
SD 7	St Dogmels		TIM	87	K	5	PK		
SD 2	Cardigan, cell of Chertsey	y	BM	13	K	1	CG		
SD 14	(Llanllŷr)*		CN	57			CG		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 6

Itinerary of Dr John Vaughan and Dr Adam Becansaw's Visitational circuit, August 1535 to January 1536

Sheet 2	VAUGHAN and BECANSAW	Cell	Order	V.E.- Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
SD 9	Strata Florida		CM	118	K	7	CG		
SD 13	Talley		PC	136	K	8/6	CM		
SD 8	Abbey Cwmhir, cell of Whitland	y	CM	24	K	3	RA		
SD 1	Brecon, cell of Battle	y	BM	112	K	6	BN		
SD 19	Llanthony I, cell of Llanthony 2	y	AC	112	K		MO		
	To London by 14 January 1536							LP IX, 806	

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Itinerary of Dr Ellis Price and Dr William Glynn's Visitation circuit, Oct. 1535 to Jan. 1536

Map Ref.	ELLIS PRICE and Wm.GLYNN RELIGIOUS HOUSE	Cell	Order	V.E.- £	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
B 2	(Cymmer)*		CM	51			ME		
B 3	(Bardsey)*		AC	46			CE		
B 4	(Beddgelert), cell of Chertsey	y	AC	69			CE	LP IX, 900	< 30 November, suppressed
B 5	(Penmon)		AC	40			AN	LP IX, 866	< 21 November, prior imprisoned
B 9	(Bangor Cathedral)		SP	192			LE	LP X, 215	January 1536

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Bedyll's Visitational Circuit, January to March 1536

SHEET 1	THOMAS BEDYLL	Cell	Order	V.E.- Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE								
L 102	Ankerwyke #		BN	32	?	5	BU		
L 125	Burnham		AN	51	K	8	BU		
L 108	Little Marlow		BN	23	?	5	BU	LP VIII, 108; IX, 1166	
	(Bishop's Palace, Wooburn)*						BU		
S 16	(Bisham)*		AC	185			BE) Visited by Legh??
S 7	(Hurley)*, cell Westminster	y	BM	121			BE) Visited by Legh??
L 30	(Medmenham)*		CM	20			BU		
L 63	(Missenden)*		AC	261			BU		(Probably visited
L 100	(Ashridge)*		BHR	416			HT		(by Tregonwell ?
L 16	(Ramsey)		BM	1761			HU	LP X, 90,103	13 January, 15 January
EY 8	(Chatteris)*		BN	97			CA		
L 15	(Peterborough)*		BM	1679			NN		Probably visited by Legh ?
EY 3	(Thorney)*		BM	411			CA		
L 3	(Crowland)		BM	1093			LI	LP X, 181	<26 January
L 22	(Spalding)		BM	933			LI	LP X, 181,218;Rawl.B491	26, 27 January
L 93	(Sempringham)*		GIJ	317			LI		
L 36	Swineshead		CM	167	K	11	LI		
L 6	(Freiston)*, cell of Crowland	y	BM	167			LI		
L 57	Kyme		AC	101	N	8	LI		
L 91	(Haverholme)*		GIJ	70			LI		
L 33	(Revesby)*		CM	287			LI		
L 28	(Kirkstead)*		CM	286			LI		
L 124	Stixwold		CN	114	K	13	LI		
L 86	Tupholm		PC	100	K	9	LI		
L 1	(Bardney)*		BM	366			LI		
L 112	Stainfield		BN	98	?	16	LI		
L 79	(Barlings)		PC	242			LI	LP XII(i), 702	Bedyll came suddenly.
L 138	(Lincoln Cathedral -1)*		SP	575			LI	Linc. Arch. Bj/3/5	suggested by messenger.
L 88	(Bullington)*		GIJ	158			LI		
L 119	Greenfield		CN	63	K	10	LI		

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 8

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Bedyll's Visitational Circuit, January to March 1536

SHEET 2	THOMAS BEDYLL																							
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	Order	V.E.-3	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating																
L 62	Markby	AC	130	K	6	LI																		
L 81	Hagneby	PC	87	E	9	LI																		
L 121	Legbourne #	CN	38	?	10	LI	LP X, 384	Cromwell their Founder																
L 29	Louth Park	CM	147	N	12	LI																		
L 87	(Alvingham)*	GIJ	128			LI																		
L 92	(North Ormesby)*	GIJ	80			LI																		
L 94	(Sixhills)*	GIJ	135			LI																		
L 131	Orford	PN	13	?	8	LI																		
L 8	Humberstone	BM	32	?	4	LI																		
L 128	Grimsby	AN	9	K	8	LI		CCCCMS notes CN																
L 77	Wellow	AC	95	K	11	LI																		
L 84	Newsham	PC	99	?	11	LI																		
L 122	Nun Cotham	CN	46	?	12	LI		CCCCMS notes BM																
L 74	(Thornton)*	AC	591			LI																		
L 54	Elisham	AC	70	K	5	LI																		
L 99	(Newstead)*	GIC	38			LI																		
L 73	Thorneholme	AC	105	?	4/10	LI	Linc. Arch. PD/1536/3	<= 23 February																
L 120	Heynings	CN	49	?	13	LI																		
L 118	Gokewell	CN	16	?	6	LI																		
L 117	Fosse	CN	7	?	8	LI																		
Y 91	Broadholme	PN	16	?	8	NT		CCCCMS notes CN																
L 75	Torksey	AC	13	K	4/7	LI																		
L 138	(Lincoln Cathedral -2)*	SP	575			LI	Linc. Arch. B/3/5																	
L 66	Nocton	AC	43	?	5	LI																		
L 83	Newbo	PC	71	?	8	LI																		
L 2	Belvoir, cell of St Albans	BM	98	N	4	LI																		
L 80	(Croxtun)*	PC	385			LI		Possibly visited by Legh																
L 38	Vaudey	CM	124	?	13	LI																		
L 43	Bourne	AC	167	N	11	LI																		
L 65	Newstead by Stamford	AC	38	N	4	LI	LP X, 66	Bp Longland says only 2 canons																
L 23	St Leonard's, St'ford, cell Durh	BM	25	?	2	LI																		
L 34	Rewley ??	CM	174	K	13	OX		Visited earlier or by Tregonwell?																

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

APPENDIX 8

Itinerary of Dr Thomas Bedyll's Visitational Circuit, January to March 1536

SHEET 3	THOMAS BEDYLL								
Map Ref.	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	Order	V.E.-Z	Founder	Number	County	Reference	Comments/Dating	
CL 43	Beauchief ??	PC	126	K	11	WR		Error? Prob. Visited by L+L	

Compendium Comptorum -
CORRECTED FORMAT
for Norwich Diocese Visitation

Folio Ref.	Map	INSTITUTION	County	Order	Type	Susp. Confed	Sodomy Total	Self-Abuse Total	Incontinence Total	Nun with Children	Other Crimes	Des. release from vows	Total individs with "crimes"	Complement (estimated)	% of House with "crime"	V.E. - £ Net Income	Superstition Numbers	Founder
	ref.																	
LFX.364(3)																		
1113r	24 EY 1	(Ely (continued))															5	
	25 N 50	Fordham (alias Biggin)	CA	GI	C		2						2	4	50	40		
	26 N 3	(Bury St Edmund's)	SK	B	M	#	2	2	13		2		14	62	23	1656	11	
1113v		Bury St Edmund's (contd)																
	27 N 33	Ixworth	SK	A	C	#	1	1	1				1	18	6	168		
	28 N 20	(Thetford)	NK	CL	M	#	1	1	1		1		2	17	12	312		N
1114r	29 N 37	Thetford - Holy Sepulchre	NK	HS	C		2	4	4			1	4	7	57	44		K
	30 N 69	(Rushford College)	NK	S	P		2	3	3				3	6	50	85		
	31 N 56	Thetford	NK	B	N				1			9	1	11	9	40		E
	32 N 48	(West Dereham)	NK	P	C		1	6	9				9	12	75	228		K
1114v		West Dereham (contd)																
	33 N 59	Crabhouse	NK	A	N			4	4	4			4	8	50	30		
LFX.364(2)																		
1111r	1 N 49	Shouldham	NK	GI	N			2	2	2			2	11	18	69		K
	2	Shouldham	NK	GI	C		3	3	3				3	12	25	69		K
	3 N 52	Blackborough	NK	B	N				3				3	11	27	42		N
	4 N 35	Pentney	NK	A	C		5	5	6				6	13	46	170		N
	5 N 57	Marham	NK	CL	N			5	5	5			5	10	50	39		N
	6 N 39	(West Acre)	NK	A	C		1	10	3				13	17	76	260		K
1111v		West Acre (contd)																
	7 N 16	(Castle Acre)	NK	CL	M		1	7	8				9	13	69	306		N
	8 N 27	Coxford	NK	A	C			1	1				1	11	9	121		
	9 N 38	(Walsingham)	NK	A	C		4	4	6				6	22	27	391	2	K
	10 N 2	Binham	NK	B	M		1		2				3	7	43	101		
	11 N 47	Wendling	NK	P	C				1				1	4	25	55		N
1112r	12 N 23	Beeston	NK	A	C				1				1	4	25	43		

APPENDIX 9

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Compendium Comperorum -
CORRECTED FORMAT
for Norwich Diocese Visitation

Folio Ref.	Map	INSTITUTION	County	Order	Type	Susp. Confed	Sodomy Total	Self Abuse Total	Incontinence Total	Num with Children	Other Crimes	Des release from vows	Total individs with "crimes"	Complement (estimated)	% of House with "crime"	V E Net Income	Supersition Numbers	Founder	
	ref.																		
13 N 15	Bronnholm	NK	CL	M					4				4	8	50	100	5	N	
14 N 14A	(St Benet's)	NK	B	M	#		3		4				4	22	18	583		K	
15 N 31	Flicking	NK	A	C			3		6				6	11	55	100		E	
16 N 51	Ingham	NK	T	F					2				2	7	29	61		N	
17 N 10	(Norwich Cathedral)	NK	B	M			4		5				5	32	16	874		N	
18 N 1	(Aldely)	NK	B	M			2		2			2	2	4	50	25		N	
19 N 5	Horsham St Faith	NK	B	M			1		2				2	6	33	162			
20 N 44	Langley	NK	P	C								14		16	0	104			
21 N 25	Buckenhum	NK	A	C			2		2				3	10	30	108			
22 N 13	(Wymondham)	NK	B	M			4		4				4	13	31	211			
23 N 36	St Olave's	SK	A	C			3						3	7	43	49			
	TOTAL						4	68	108	11	3	26	128	416	31	6646	23		
~																			
NOTES:		Crimes include "suspected" and "confessed".																	
		Overlapping occurs between crimes, therefore, totals are not necessarily exclusive.																	
~		Complement of each House obtained from total signing 1534 Supremacy Oath and CCCC MS 111 plus head.																	
		'Valor Ecclesiasticus Net Inc.' and 'Founder' do not appear on 'Compendium' documents.																	

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Folio Ref	Map Ref	Code Ref	INSTITUTION	County	Order Type	"Sodomy" Total	"Sodomy" = Self abuse Only	Incontinence Total	Nuns with Children	Other Crimes	Des. release from vows	Total Individ with "crimes"	Complement % of House with crime (estimated)	V.E. Net Income	Debt. Superstition Numbers	Founder	
QUIRE 1																	
f93r	1	CL 61	(Lichfield Cathedral)	ST	S P							0	45	275	400	1	K
	2	CL 38	Repton	DE	A C	4	4				1	4	16	118	180	2	K
	3	CL 30	Gresley	DE	A C							5	4	31	40		G
	4	L 27	Garadon	LE	C M	5	2				3	5	15	160	173	66	K
f93v			Garadon (contd)														
	5	L 107	Langley	LE	B N								9	29	36	13	G
	6	L 45	Bredon, cell	LE	A C								3	25	24		K
	7	L 127	Grace Dieu	LE	A N			2	2			2	16	92	72	20	N
	8	L 26	(Breadsall)	DE	A C			1				1	1	11	13		G
f94r	9	CL 10	(Cell of St. James, Derby)	DE	CL M							1	2	11	10		K
	10	CL 47	(St. Mary, Derby)	DE	B N							2	13	144	140	2	G
	11	CL 44	Dale	DE	P C			2				6	13	117	100	2	G
	12	Y 47	Shelford	NT	A C	3	3	3			3	6	13	117	100	2	G
f94v			Shelford (contd)														
	13	Y 49	Thurgarton	NT	A C	10	6	7			8	12	19	259	240	1	K
f95r			Thurgarton (contd)														
	14	Y 27	Rufford	NT	C M	6	5	5			6	8	16	178	100	20	G
	15	Y 59	(Welbeck)	NT	P C	3	2	1			3	4	21	248	280	40	E
f95v			Welbeck (contd)														
	16	Y 53	(Worksop)	NT	A C	4	4				1	4	16	246	240	133	N
	17	Y 26	(Roche)	WR	C M	5	5			1		6	18	224	170	20	N
f96r	18	Y 1	Blyth	NT	B M	4	3	1				4	9	112	180		K
	19	Y 73	Wallingwells	NT	B N								11	59	60	2	N
	20	Y 37	Felley	NT	A C							9	6	41	40	40	G
	21	Y 46	(Nostell, St Oswalds)	WR	A C	8	2	4		1		9	29	493	732	1	K
f96v			Nostell, St Oswalds (contd)														
	22	Y 5	(Monk Bretton)	WR	B M	1	1			1		2	14	239	200		N
	23	Y 77	Arthington	WR	CL N								10	11	13	1	G
	24	Y 81	Hampole	WR	C N								16	63	40	1	G
	25	Y 80	Esholt	WR	C N			3	2			3	7	13	8		G
	26	Y 84	Kirkstons	WR	C N			1	1			1	9	19	20		G
f103r	82	Y 63	Mattersey	NT	GI C						1	1	7	55	60		G
	83	Y 16	(Pontefract)	WR	CL M	4	4	7		3	5	10	13	340	330	20	K
f103v	84	Y 8	(Selby)	WR	B M	18	18	5			4	21	24	739	533	300	K
f104r	85	Y 87	Simmingthwaite	WR	C N			2	2			2	13	61	10	2	N
	86	Y 85	Nun Appleton	WR	C N			2	2			2	16	73	56		N
	87	Y 52	Healaugh Park	WR	A C	1	1	2				3	15	73	80		N
	88	Y 36	Drax	WR	A C	2	1	2				3	10	92	100		G
f104v	89	Y 112	(St. Leonards, Hosp., York)	YO	A B	1	1			1	2	1	12	309	467	2	K
	90	Y 108	(York Cathedral)	YO	S P											1	K
	91	Y 12	(St. Mary's, York)	YO	B M	7	6					7	51	1650	2100	1000	K

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Folio Ref	Map Ref	Code Ref	INSTITUTION	County	Order Type	"Sodomy" Total	"Sodomy" = Self abuse Only	Incontinence Total	Nuns with Children	Other Crimes	Des. release from vows	Total Individ with "crimes"	Complement % of House with crime	V.E. Net Income	Debt Superstition Numbers	Founder	
f105r	92	Y 41	Kirkham	ER	A C			1	1			1	0	269	204	1	N
	93	Y 70	Nun Monkton	WR	B N							1	8	75	80	20	G
	94	Y 74	Wilberforce	ER	B N							4	0	22	28		K
	95	Y 42	Marion	NR	A C	3	3	1					44	151	130		K
	96	Y 76	Clementhorpe, York	YO	B N						2		0	57	50	2	E
	97	Y 72	(Thicket)	ER	B N						1		0	21	23		G
f105v	98	Y 13	Holy Trinity, York	YO	B M	7	5	1			2	6	67	169	160	1	G
	99	Y 20	(Fountains)	WR	C M	4	1	6			6	9	28	1004	1250	1000	E
f106r			Fountains (cont'd)														
	100	Y 101	(Ripon College)	WR	S P								0			1	
	101	Y 23	(Kirkstall)	WR	C M	3	3					3	10	329	329	1	K
	102	Y 32	(Bolton)	WR	A C							1	0	212	236		N
	103	Y 22	(Jervaux)	NR	C M			1				1	4	235	455	1	G
	104	Y 56	Easby, St. Agatha's	NR	P C	5	5	1			2	6	33	111	200		N
f106v			Easby, St. Agatha's (cont'd)														
	105	Y 79	Ellerton	NR	C N			1				1	11	16	15		G
	106	Y 55	Coverham	NR	P C	3	3	1				4	44	161	140	1	K
	107	Y 63	Richmond, St Martins	NR	B M	2	2	1				3	11	29	43		K
QUIRE 2																	
f107r	108	D 27	(Bishop of Durham's H'hold)	DU	S L			1				2					
	109	D 27	(Durham)	DU	B M								40	1329	2115	3	E
	110	D 4	Finchale, cell	DU	B M								0	123	146	1	U
	111	D 8	Jarrow, cell	DU	B M	1	1					1	5	39	40		E
	112	D 16	Walkenol, Newcastle	NO	T F			1				1	4	6	9		G
	113	D 9	Newminster	NO	C M								16	100	120	2	N
f107v	114	D 15	Blanchland	NO	P C							2	0	40	40	1	N
	115	Y 40	Hexham	NO	A C			2				2	13	122	100	1	E
	116	D 7	(Tynemouth)	NO	B M	8	8					8	42	398	509	4	N
	117	D 10	(Bamborough, cell)	NO	A C			1				1	4	117	13		K
	118	D 14	Alnwick	NO	P C								14	190	100	2	N
f97r	27	D 11	Brinkburn	NO	A C			1				1	9	68	66	1	N
	28	Y 38	(Guisborough)	NR	A C	6	6	1			2	6	24	624	700		N
	29	Y 78	Baysdale	NR	C N							1	11	20	18	1	G
	30	Y 82	Handale	NR	C N			1				1	9	14	10		N
	31	Y 4	Middlesborough	NR	B M			2				5	0	17	10		N
f97v	32	Y 112	(Whitby)	NR	B M	3	3				1		21	419	467	1	K
	33	Y 17	Grosmont	NR	G M								5	10	13		G
	34	Y 75	Yedingham	ER	B N			1				1	10	22	40		N
	35	Y 86	Rosedale	NR	C N								0	38	44		K
	36	Y 89	Wykeham	NR	C N								0	26	13	1	K
	37	Y 69	Nunkeeling	ER	B N								13	36	36	1	K
f98r	38	Y 33	(Bridlington)	ER	A C	2	2	1				3	11	547	682	2	U

Folio Ref	Map Ref	Code Ref	INSTITUTION	County	Order Type	"Sodomy" Total	"Sodomy" - Self abuse Only	Incontinence Total	Nuns with Children	Other Crimes	Des. release from vows	Total Individ with "crimes"	Complement % of House with crime	V.E. Net Income £	Income £	Debt Superstition Numbers	Founder	
	39	Y 93	(Beverley College)	ER	S P								34	724	68		K	
	40	Y 24	(Meux)	ER	C M								25	300	298	1	K	
	41	Y 68	Nunburnholme	ER	B N			2	1			2	9	7		1	N	
	42	Y 45	(North Ferriby)	ER	A C	4	4	3				5	7	62	60	80	1	N
f 98v			North Ferriby (contd)															
	43	Y 39	Haltemprice	ER	A C	4	4	2				6	12	100	104	4	N	
	44	Y 50	Warter	ER	A C	4	4	1		1		6	11	143	120		N	
	45	Y 88	Swine	ER	C N			1				1	17	82	80		G	
f 99r			(Newburgh)	NR	A C							3	18	367	80	2	N	
	47	Y 25	(Rievaulx)	NR	C M	1	1	2			1	3	23	279	300	133	N	
	48	Y 83	Keldholme	NR	C N							1	10	29	30	13	N	
	49	Y 66	Arden	NR	B N				1			1	10	12	13	1	N	
	50	Y 90	Moxby	NR	A N								10	26	30		K	
f 99v			(Mount Grace)	NR	CA M						2		17	323	333		K	
	52	Y 18	(Byland)	NR	C M	1	1				1	1	26	238	266		N	
	53	D 18	(Neasham)	DU	B N			1	1			1	11	21	17		N	
	54	CR 6	Shap	WE	P C						3		21	155	166		N	
	55	CR 4	(Carlisle)	CU	A C	7	7	3				9	23	418	482	3	K	
f 100r			Carlisle (contd)															
	56	CR 7	Armathwaite	CU	B N								5	13	14		K	
	57	D 17	Lambley	NO	B N			3				3	7	5	6		K	
	58	CR 9	(Kirk Oswald College)	CU	S P				3				7	78	71		N	
	59	CR 1	Wetherall	CU	B M	2	2					2	9	118	130	2	K	
	60	CR 5	Lanercost	CU	A C	2	2					2	8	78	66	1	N	
f 100v			(Holmcultram)	CU	C M	5	5	8				12	25	478	466	100	K	
	62	Y 7	St. Bees	CU	B M	2	2					2	7	143	143		K	
	63	Y 71	Seton	CU	B N			2	1			2	4	13	13	6	G	
f 101r			Calder	CU	C M	5	5	2			2	6	9	50	64	20	1	N
	65	Y 21	(Furness)	LA	C M	1	1	4				5	39	805	900	140	K	
	66	Y 34	(Cartmel)	LA	A C			2				2	10	85	100	40	N	
f 101v			(Conishead)	LA	A C	2	2	5				5	8	97	113	1	G	
	68	Y 54	(Cockersand)	LA	P C	2	2				2	2	22	158	200	100	U	
	69	CL 22	(Whalley)	LA	C M	1	1					1	21	321	541		K	
	70	Y 28	(Salley)	WR	C M								22	147	220		N	
	71	Y 3	(Lytham)	LA	B M									49	55	40	K	
f 102r			(Hornby)	LA	P C	1	1	1				1	3	20	26		N	
	73	CL 6	(Penwortham)	LA	B M							1	5	30	28		K	
	74	CL 27	(Burscough)	LA	A C	1	1	1				1	5	80	90		N	
	75	CL 9	(Upholland)	LA	B M	1	1	2				3	5	53	65		N	
	76	CL 36	(Norton)	CH	A C	2	2	2				3		180	260	200	K	
	77	CL 11	(Kersal, cell)	LA	CL M									18	9	13	K	
f 102v			(Chester, St Werburgh)	CH	B M	6	6	2			3	8	25	1030	800	100	2	K

NOTE: See Appendix 1 for summary of abbreviations

Folio Ref Map Ref	Code Ref	INSTITUTION	County	Order Type	"Sodomy" Total	"Sodomy" = Self abuse Only	Incontinence Total	Nuns with Children	Other Crimes	Des. release from vows	Total Individ with "crimes"	Complement % of House with crime	V.E. Net Income	Debt Superstition Numbers	Founder	
79	CL 2	(Birkenhead)	CH	B	M		1				1		91	108	20	N
80	CL 22A	(Stanlow)	CH	C	M		1				1		10	10		K
81	CL 4	(St. Mary's, Chester)	CH	B	N		1	1			1	14	66	40	1	K
119	CL 63	(Manchester College)	LA	S	P		4				4	25	213	200		N
120	CL 56	(St. John Baptist College)	CH	S	P		4				4	7	119	20		K
121	CL 55	(Bunbury College)	CH	S	P						4	13	48	67		G
122	CL 15	(Combermere)	CH	C	M	4	4				4	13	225	255	160	K
		TOTAL			187	164	134	23	10	67	303	1637	21902	23451	4006	81
		Additional Houses visited noted in CCCC MS 111:														
Y 67		Marrick	NR	B	N							18	48			N
D 6		Monks Wearmouth	DU	B	M							4	25			E
D 19		Newcastle	NO	B	N							11	36			K
D 5		Lindsifarne	NO	B	M							9	48			E
D 3		Farne	NO	B	M							4	12			E
D 20		Holystone	NO	A	N							9	11			K
CL 43		Beauchief	WR	P	C							12	126			K
		Additional Houses noted in Correspondence:														
Y 105		(Southwell College)	NT	S	P								516			
Y 30		(Hull Charterhouse)	ER	CA	M							12	174			
~		Overlapping occurs between crimes, therefore, totals are not necessarily exclusive.														
~		Some double counting appears in Compendium "Sodomy" Total.														
~		Complement of House obtained from "Knowles and Hadcock", "Cross and Vickers" and CCCC MS 111 plus Head.														
~		"Valor Ecclesiasticus" from "A. Savine", "Knowles and Hadcock" and "Cross and Vickers".														

NOTES:

COMPARISON OF SPECIFIED CRIMES IN THE NORWICH DIOCESE AND NORTHERN VISITATIONS

Bracketed descriptions denote a crime being designated under that main heading on the 'left hand side' of 'Compendium' documents.

	<u>Numbers of individuals stated</u>	
	<u>Norwich</u>	<u>Northern</u>
	<u>Visitation</u>	<u>Visitation</u>
<u>Confessed Crime</u>		
~ Self Abuse	32	0
~ Incontinence and Self Abuse	2	0
~ Incontinence - monks/canons	7	0
- nuns	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
subtotal	42 (33%)	0 (0%)
<u>Suspected Crime</u>		
~ Incontinence - monks/canons	10	1
- nuns	3	0
~ [Incontinence] before office with woman	0	1
~ [Incontinence] with woman before entering religion	0	1
~ ['Lese Majeste'] Treason	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
subtotal	13 (10%)	4 (1%)
<u>Guilty of Self Abuse</u>		
~ Self Abuse	4	3
~ [Incontinence] Self Abuse	23	0
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse	0	140
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse; [Conspiracy]	0	1
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse; [Apostacy]	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
subtotal	27 (21%)	145 (48%)
<u>Guilty of Sodomy</u>		
~ [Sodomy] Suffered Sodomy	0	1
~ Suffered Sodomy	1	0
~ [Sodomy] with boys and Self Abuse	1	12
~ [Sodomy] with boy/boys	0	4
~ [Sodomy] with boys; [Incontinence] with woman	0	1
~ [Sodomy] with boys; [Sodomy] Self Abuse;	0	1
[Incontinence] with woman		
~ [Incontinence] with women and confesses submission	1	0
to Sodomy		
~ [Incontinence] with women and confesses to sodomy	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
subtotal	4 (3%)	19 (7%)

Monks/Canons Guilty of Incontinence

~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse; [Incontinence] with woman/women	0	16
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse; [Incontinence] with women; [Conspiracy]	0	1
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse and single (woman?)	0	1
~ [Sodomy] Self Abuse; [Incontinence] with women; [Theft]	0	1
~ [Incontinence] Self Abuse and with woman/women	6	0
~ [Incontinence] with woman/women	21	83
~ [Incontinence] with 'simplici'; [Sodomy] Self Abuse	0	1
~ with women	0	1
~ [Incontinence] with women and dilapidations	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
subtotal	28 (22%)	104 (34%)

Laymen Guilty of Incontinence

~ [Incontinence] with woman	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
subtotal	0	1 (~)

Nuns Guilty of Incontinence

~ [Incontinence] with child/children	7	19
~ [Incontinence] with child ex priest	2	3
~ [Incontinence] with priest and one child	1	0
~ [Incontinence] with child <u>before</u> entering religion	1	0
~ [Incontinence] with men	0	1
~ [Incontinence] with priest/religious	0	1
~ [Incontinence] with 'simplici'	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
subtotal	11 (9%)	25 (8%)

Other Crimes

~ [Incest]	0	2
~ [Incest] [Adultery]	0	1
~ [Incest] layman	0	1
~ [Apostacy]	1	0
~ [Apostacy] with suspected incontinence	1	0
~ Theft	1	0
~ [Conspiracy]	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
subtotal	3 (2%)	5 (2%)

Grand Total (individuals)	128 (100%)	303 (100%)
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N. B. For the sake of clarity and to ensure no double counting in the above figures, some individuals guilty of crimes, which cover two or more of the above subheadings, have been allocated to the major sexual crime.

APPENDIX 11

APPENDIX 12

KING HENRY VIII'S SUMMER GIEST, JULY TO OCTOBER 1535

<u>Date Recorded</u>	<u>Actual Location of Court</u>	<u>Original Plan, LP, VIII, 989</u>
JULY	c. 8	Windsor
	9 - 14	Reading Abbey
		Ewelme
		Abingdon Abbey ?
	18 - 19	Langley (Woodstock)
	23 - 26	Winchcombe Abbey / Studeley Castle
	28 - 29	Tewkesbury Abbey
	31	Arrive at Gloucester
AUGUST	1 - 7	Gloucester Abbey
	7 - 8	Leonard Stanley
	8 - 12	Berkeley Heron
	16 - 23	Thornbury
		Bristol (did not visit)
		Iron Acton ?
		Little Sodbury ?
SEPTEMBER	29 Aug - 3	Bromham (Edward Bainton)
	4 - 10	Wolf Hall
		Thrupton ?
		Priors Hosborne ?
	13 - 17	Winchester
	18 - 26	Bishops Waltham
	26 - 29	Winchester
OCTOBER	2	Southampton
		Portsmouth
	5 ?	Porchester Castle
		Southampton
		Romsey Abbey
	8 - 12	Salisbury / Clarendon Park
		Thrupton ?
	15 - 19	The Vine (Lord Wm. Sandys)
	19 - 21	Basing House (Paulet)
	21 - 22	Bramsell House
	22 - 26	Easthampstead
	26 +	Windsor

APPENDIX 13

Comparison of manuscripts

Comparison of papermarks of PRO, SP 6 / 1, fos. 123 - 128 (draft parliamentary bill against pilgrimage and superstition) and PRO, SP 1 / 102, fos. 92 - 109 (the northern *Compendium Compertorum*) and the proof they were written at or about the same time.

Through analysis of the ordering of the religious institutions in the northern *Compendium*¹ in comparison with associated correspondence, it has been possible to prove the manuscript is made up of two separate quire booklets.² At some stage in the sixteenth century,³ the inner three folio sheets of quire 2 appear to have fallen out and been incorrectly replaced in the middle of quire 1, accounting for the incorrect ordering of the manuscripts and its subsequent copies and calendared extracts. The corrected format of the folio sheets is shown in Appendix 10.

Inspection of the papermarks⁴ on the four folio sheets that would make up the corrected Quire 1 reveals a consistent use of a snake or serpent papermark with an "open" tail and with its tongue pointing upwards (Mark 2), located in the right hand side of each folio sheet. The papermark on quire 2 consists of three folio sheets of a snake mark, but with a "closed" tail and with its tongue pointing downwards (Mark

¹ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fos. 92 - 109.

² A. N. Shaw, 'The *Compendium Compertorum* and Associated Correspondence of the Royal Visitation: A Comparison between the Norwich Diocese Visitation and the York Province and Coventry and Lichfield Diocese Visitation, in the Period November 1535 to February 1536' (University of Warwick M. A., 1998), pp. 17 – 24.

³ Sir Robert Cotton's copy of the *Compendium*, circa 1614, is in the incorrect format, see BL Cotton Cleo. E IV fos. 185 – 195r.

⁴ Using ultra violet light – I have used my own coding of papermarks.

1). The fourth sheet is Mark 2. Also, both quires are contained within a completely blank folio sheet which is Mark 1.⁵

Through the nature of the material the *Compendium* contains, it can be deduced it was written up by Robert Warmington in the period 1 March to, at the latest, 16 March 1536, that is, before the passing of the Suppression Act 1536.

In four years of analysing original manuscripts at over fifty national, university, college, ecclesiastical and regional archives in England and Wales, I have identified only one other manuscript with a snake papermark. That manuscript is the draft parliamentary bill against pilgrimages and superstitions.⁶

This manuscript is made up of a booklet of three folio sheets. The folio sheet fo. 123 / fo. 128 has a Mark 1 papermark and folio sheet fo. 124 / fo. 127 has a Mark 2 papermark. Folio sheet fo. 125 / fo. 126 has a Mark 1 papermark.

This snake papermark combination is certainly rare.⁷ It is difficult to believe that it is a coincidence that these two manuscripts each shared the same combination of two rare papermarks and their content was dealing with a similar topic. What encourages the conclusion that both have the same source and were written at about the same time is the discovery that the scribe of both manuscripts is Robert Warmington.

⁵ The parchment cover which contains the whole document may be of later origin. The titling on its cover, including the blotted out title, are not contemporary with the manuscript.

⁶ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fos. 123 - 128.

Effectively, Warmington used, in the compilation of these two manuscripts, a stock of snake marked paper consisting of six sheets of Mark 1 paper and six sheets of Mark 2 paper. The equal amounts of each type of paper in addition to the fact that nowhere else have I seen a serpent mark, makes it reasonably certain, given the two papermarks are interposed within each of the two manuscripts, that both documents were written up by Warmington from a rare stock of paper available to him at about the same time.

That the draft Bill supports the dating evidence of the *Compendium* is assisted by its contents. It refers to the king having sent out 'his trusty commissioners' and 'the said commissioners ... have searched and found in diverse places of this realm the crimes and excesses aforesaid'.⁸ The Bill later specified that the king 'has ... remitted, forgiven and abolished all such trespass enormity and crimes' during the Visitation⁹. This helps date it to the conclusion of the Royal Visitation. However, the draft Bill was overtaken by the Suppression Act,¹⁰ which had a clear, definite reform and financial outcome.

In conclusion, both manuscripts were written by the same person, on the same rare type of paper, containing references to similar material. It is, therefore, reasonable to presume that both manuscripts were written in the late February or early March period of 1536.

⁷ For an analysis of the wide variety of serpent marks see Don Francisco de Bosarull y Sans, *Animals in Watermarks* (Hilversum, Holland, 1959), pp. 31, 562 – 588.

⁸ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fos. 124r/v.

⁹ PRO, SP 6 / 1, fo. 125r.

¹⁰ As seen in Section 5.

APPENDIX 14

Explanation of figures detailed for religious numbers in CCCC MS 111 and Suppression Commissioners First Survey

The instructions to the suppression commissioners undertaking the survey of each religious house within their commission required the head of the house to make 'answer to the article' which they submitted. The article concerning the religious stated: 'what number of persons of religion be in the same, and the conversation of their lives, and how many of them be priests, and how many of them will go to other houses of that religion: or how many will take capacities'.¹

The Suppression Act specified within it that 'every chief, head and governor of every such religious house, during their lives' shall be provided with a yearly pension as 'their degree and quality shall be reasonable and convenient'.² This pension for the head of the religious house, the Act notes, to be proportionate to those governors who 'truly conserve and keep the goods and ornaments of their houses to the use of his grace'.

'And also his majesty will ordain and provide that the convents of every such religious house shall have the capacities they will, to live honestly and virtuously abroad and some convenient charity disposed to them towards their living. Or else shall be

¹ G. Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, vol. 2 (London, 1880), pp. lxx, lxx.

² Youings, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (London, 1971), p. 158.

committed to such honourable great monastery of this realm wherein good religion is observed'.³

The suppression commissioners' returns, many of which are summarised in LP,⁴ therefore, specify the 'number of religious persons' other than the head of the house.

The data on numbers at each house at the time of the Royal Visitation, contained in CCCC MS 111 also excludes the head of the house. This is because the data was created specifically to demonstrate the result of implementing the act. Part of CCCC MS 111 indeed identifies the prospective, alternative houses for the numbered religious.⁵ These numbers do not, therefore, include the head of the house, who had no option but to take a pension and leave his or her religious order. This is demonstrated in the *Norwich Compendium*, which noted there are eighteen in total at Ixworth,⁶ whilst in the CCCC MS 111, seventeen are recorded⁷ - the difference is that the head of the house, the prior, has not been recorded in the latter figure. Similarly, Legh reports from Horsham St Faith that, at their Visitation, are 'five monks with the prior',⁸ whilst the CCCC MS 111 notes that same house as having five;⁹ clearly the CCCC MS 111 excludes the head of the house.

³ Youngs, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London, 1971), p. 158.

⁴ Eg LP, X, 1191 and LP, XI, Appendix No. 2.

⁵ CCCC MS 111, fos. 319 – 333.

⁶ PRO, SP 1 / 102, fo. 113v.

⁷ CCCC MS 111, p. 341.

⁸ PRO, SP 1 / 99, fo. 69 (LP, IX, 849).

⁹ CCCC MS 111, p. 341.

Dismissal of Religious during the Royal Visitation - by Month

MONTH OF VISIT	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	VISITOR	Number logged by visitors	Number at survey by Suppressors		Percentage Change %
August 1535	St Oswald's, Glouc.	?	7	7		
	Maiden Bradley	Layton	8	8	inc 2 novices	
	Farley	Layton	6	6		
	Lacock	Legh	18	17	inc 3 novices	
	Kington St Michael	Legh	3	4		
	Stanley	Legh	13	10	inc 1 novice	
	Pinley	Cave	5	4		
	St Sepulchre, Warwick	Cave	3	3		
	Wroxall	Cave	5	5		
	Studley	Cave	9	8		
	sub total		77	72		-6
September	Stoneleigh	Cave	15	12		
	Ivychurch	Legh	4	5	inc 1 novice	
	Catesby	Tregon.	10	10		
	Wintney	Legh	17	10		
	St Denys	Legh	9	6		
	Netley	Legh	12	7		
	Breamore	Tregon.	9	8	inc 2 novices	
	Mottisfont	Tregon.	10	10	inc 2 novices	
	sub total		86	68		-21
October	Polesworth	Cave	13	14		
	Maxstoke	Cave	10	7	inc 1 novice	
	Arbury	Cave	7	6	inc 1 novice	
	Henwood	Cave	6	6		
	Flamstead	Tregon.	12	8	08/03/37	
	St Margaret's, Ivinghoe	Tregon.	4	5	inc 3 novices	
	Sopewell	Legh	9	5	08/03/37	
	Royston	Legh	10	7	08/03/37	
	Tortington	Layton	6	6	inc 1 novice	
	Boxgrove	Layton	9	9	inc 1 novice	
	Warbleton, New Priory	Layton	3	4	inc 1 novice	
	Michelham	Layton	9	9	inc 1 novice	
	Shulbred	Layton	5	5		
	Durford	Layton	7	9	inc 1 novice	
	Minster in Sheppey	Layton	11	9		
	Reigate	Layton	3	3	deed 10/11/35	
	Buildwas	Cave	12	8		
	Dover	Layton	11	8	at surrender	
	Folkestone	Layton	2	0	at surrender	
	Langdon	Layton	8	8	at surrender	
Bilsington	Layton	3	2	at surrender		
	sub total		160	138		-14
November	Flaxley	Cave	9	7		
	Horsham St Faith	Legh	5	4		
	Carrow, Norwich	Legh	9	8		
	Langley	Legh	15	6		
	Buckenham	Legh	9	5		
	Blackborough	Legh	10	9		
	Thetford, Holy Sepulc.	Legh	6	1		
Thetford, Nuns	Legh	10	5			

Dismissal of Religious during the Royal Visitation - by Month

MONTH OF VISIT	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	VISITOR	Number -logged by visitors	Number at survey by Suppressors	
	Pentney and Wo'gay	Legh	12	9	
	Coxford	Legh	10	3	
	Marham	Legh	9	5	
	Crabhouse	Legh	7	4	
	Wendling	Legh	3	5	
	Broomholm	Legh	7	4	
	Weybourne	Legh	2	2	
	Beeston	Legh	3	3	
	Bury St Edmund's	Legh	62	54	
	sub total		188	134	-29
December	Hatfield Regis	Legh	9	4	
	Tilty	Legh	7	5	at surrender
	Brooke	Legh	3	0	
	Huntingdon	Legh	13	11	
	Sawtry	Legh	12	5	inc 1 novice
	Stonely	Legh	6	6	
	Bradley	Legh	2	2	
	Owston	Legh	12	6	
	Kirby Bellers	Legh	10	8	
	Ulverscroft	Legh	8	8	6 professed
	Garendon	Legh/Layt.	14	14	
	Grace Dieu	Legh/Layt.	15	15	
	Langley	Legh/Layt.	8	6	
	sub total		119	90	-24
January 1536	Hampole	Legh/Layt.	15	13	
	Clementhorpe	Legh/Layt.	9	8	
	Kirlees	Legh/Layt.	8	6	
	Arthington	Legh/Layt.	9	8	
	Sinningthwaite	Legh/Layt.	12	8	
	Little Marlow	Bedyll	5	2	
	Marton	Legh/Layt.	8	5	at surrender
	Wilberfoss	Legh/Layt.	15	7	
	sub total		81	57	-30
February	Arden	Legh/Layt.	9	5	
	Keldholme	Legh/Layt.	9	5	
	Moxby	Legh/Layt.	9	7	
	Nunburnholme	Legh/Layt.	8	3	
	Rosedale	Legh/Layt.	9	7	
	Handale	Legh/Layt.	8	7	
	Baysdale	Legh/Layt.	10	7	
	Yedingham	Legh/Layt.	9	8	
	Wykeham	Legh/Layt.	9	8	
	Swine	Legh/Layt.	16	14	
	Nunkeeling	Legh/Layt.	12	10	
	Grosmont	Legh/Layt.	4	4	
	sub total		112	85	-24
	GRAND TOTAL		823	644	-22

Dismissal of Religious during the Royal Visitation - by Visitor

MONTH OF VISIT	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	VISITOR	Number logged by visitors	Number at survey by Suppressors	Percentage Dismissed %
August	St Oswald's, Glouc.	?	7	7	0
January	Little Marlow	Bedyll	5	2	-60
August	Pinley	Cave	5	4	
	Wroxall	Cave	5	5	
	Studley	Cave	9	8	
	St Sepulchre, Warwick	Cave	3	3	
September	Stoneleigh	Cave	15	12	
October	Polesworth	Cave	13	14	
	Maxstoke	Cave	10	7	inc 1 novice
	Arbury	Cave	7	6	inc 1 novice
	Henwood	Cave	6	6	
	Buildwas	Cave	12	8	
November	Flaxley	Cave	9	7	
	sub total		94	80	-15
August	Maiden Bradley	Layton	8	8	inc 2 novices
	Monkton Farley	Layton	6	6	
October	Tortington	Layton	6	6	inc 1 novice
	Boxgrove	Layton	9	9	inc 1 novice
	Warbleton, New Priory	Layton	3	4	inc 1 novice
	Michelham	Layton	9	9	inc 1 novice
	Shulbred	Layton	5	5	
	Durford	Layton	7	9	inc 1 novice
	Minster in Sheppey	Layton	11	9	
	Reigate	Layton	3	3	deed 10/11/35
	Dover	Layton	11	8	at surrender
	Folkestone	Layton	2	0	at surrender
	Langdon	Layton	8	8	at surrender
	Bilsington	Layton	3	2	at surrender
	sub total		91	86	-5
August	Lacock	Legh	18	17	inc 3 novices
	Kington St Michael	Legh	3	4	
	Stanley	Legh	13	10	inc 1 novice
September	Ivychurch	Legh	4	5	inc 1 novice
	Wintney	Legh	17	10	
	St Denys	Legh	9	6	
	Netley	Legh	12	7	
October	Sopewell	Legh	9	5	08/03/37
	Royston	Legh	10	7	08/03/37
November	Horsham St Faith	Legh	5	4	
	Carrow, Norwich	Legh	9	8	
	Langley	Legh	15	6	
	Buckenham	Legh	9	5	
	Blackborough	Legh	10	9	
	Thetford, Holy Sepulc.	Legh	6	1	
	Thetford, Nuns	Legh	10	5	
	Pentney and Wo'gay	Legh	12	9	

Dismissal of Religious during the Royal Visitation - by Visitor

MONTH OF VISIT	RELIGIOUS HOUSE	VISITOR	Number logged by visitors	Number at survey by Suppressors		Percentage Dismissed %
December	Coxford	Legh	10	3		
	Marham	Legh	9	5		
	Crabhouse	Legh	7	4		
	Wendling	Legh	3	5		
	Broomholm	Legh	7	4		
	Weybourne	Legh	2	2		
	Beeston	Legh	3	3		
	Bury St Edmund's	Legh	62	54		
	Hatfield Regis	Legh	9	4		
	Tilty	Legh	7	5	at surrender	
	Brooke	Legh	3	0		
	Huntingdon	Legh	13	11		
	Sawtry	Legh	12	5	inc 1 novice	
	Stonely	Legh	6	6		
	Bradley	Legh	2	2		
	Owston	Legh	12	6		
	Kirby Bellers	Legh	10	8		
	Ulverscroft	Legh	8	8	6 professed	
		sub total		356	253	
January	Garendon	Legh/Layt.	14	14		
	Grace Dieu	Legh/Layt.	15	15		
	Langley	Legh/Layt.	8	6		
	Hampole	Legh/Layt.	15	13		
	Clementhorpe	Legh/Layt.	9	8		
	Kirklees	Legh/Layt.	8	6		
	Arthington	Legh/Layt.	9	8		
	Sinningthwaite	Legh/Layt.	12	8		
	Marton	Legh/Layt.	8	5	at surrender	
	Wilberfoss	Legh/Layt.	15	7		
February	Arden	Legh/Layt.	9	5		
	Keldholme	Legh/Layt.	9	5		
	Moxby	Legh/Layt.	9	7		
	Nunburnholme	Legh/Layt.	8	3		
	Rosedale	Legh/Layt.	9	7		
	Handale	Legh/Layt.	8	7		
	Baysdale	Legh/Layt.	10	7		
	Yedingham	Legh/Layt.	9	8		
	Wykeham	Legh/Layt.	9	8		
	Swine	Legh/Layt.	16	14		
	Nunkeeling	Legh/Layt.	12	10		
Grosmont	Legh/Layt.	4	4			
	sub total		225	175		-22
October	Catesby	Tregon.	10	10		
	Breamore	Tregon.	9	8	inc 2 novices	
	Mottisfont	Tregon.	10	10	inc 2 novices	
	Flamstead	Tregon.	12	8	08/03/37	
	St Margaret's, Ivinghoe	Tregon.	4	5	inc 3 novices	
	sub total		45	41		-9
GRAND TOTAL			823	644		-22

APPEALS REGARDING INJUNCTIONS - Time-lag between visitation and appeal for licence

RELIGIOUS HOUSE	VISITOR	DATE OF VISITATION 1535/1536	DATE OF INJUNCTION APPEAL	References
Hailes	Cromwell?	c. 25 July	28 Jan	LP X, 192
Winchcombe	Layton?	c. 26 July	8 Sept	LP IX, 303;314;723;1170
Bath	Layton	16 Aug	24 Sept	LP IX, 426
Glastonbury	Layton	21/22 Aug	2 Sept	LP IX, 253(1),(2)
St Augustine's, Bristol	Layton	24 Aug	?	LP IX, 215
Gaunts, Bristol	Layton	24 Aug	6 Sept	LP IX, 289;296
Cerne	Legh	c. 27 Aug	2 Sept	LP IX, 256
Abbotsbury	Legh	c. 28 Aug	?	LP IX, 1087
Forde	Legh	c. end Aug	11 Oct	LP IX, 590
Wilton	Legh	3 Sept	5 Sept	LP IX, 280
Osney	Lay.+Treg.	c.12 Sept	15 Sept	LP IX, 375
Abingdon	Layton	13 Sept	27 Sept	LP IX, 455
Hyde, Winchester	Legh?	c 17 Sept	?	LP IX, 724
Markyate	Tregonwell	c. 30 Sept	3 March	LP VIII, 321
Boxgrove	Layton	1 Oct	30 Oct	LP IX, 530
London Minorities	Legh	early Oct	?	LP IX, 1075
St Albans	Legh	mid Oct	22 Jan	LP X, 192
Leeds	Layton	c. 10 Oct	31 Oct	LP IX, 713
St Augustine's, Canterbury	Layton	20 Oct	?	LP IX, 744
Christchurch, Canterbury	Layton	c. 22 Oct	30 Oct	LP IX, 707;784
Athelney	Tregonwell	c. 1 Nov	4 Nov	LP IX, 763
Pipewell	Cave	Sept/Oct?	15 Nov	LP IX,822
Bury St Edmunds	Legh	4/5 Nov	6 Nov	LP IX, 781
Shrewsbury	Cave	Nov?	Dec?	LP X, 259
Lillishall	Cave	Nov?	Dec?	LP X, 259
Wombridge	Cave	Nov?	Dec?	LP X, 259
Cleeve	Tregonwell	c. 4 Nov	8 Nov	LP IX, 790
Buckenham	Legh	Nov?	10 Nov	LP IX, 800
Castle Acre	Legh	12 Nov	27 Jan	LP X, 189
Leominster	Cave	Nov?	20 Nov	LP IX, 856
'Clergy of Bangor'	Glynn/E. Price	Jan	31 Jan	LP X, 215
Nostell	Layton/Legh	c. 8 Jan	1 Feb	LP X, 227
St Mary's, York	Layton/Legh	13 Jan	?	LP X, 219
Whitby	Layton/Legh	3 Feb	?	LP X, 239
Whalley	Layton/Legh	23 Feb	?	BL Lansdowne 973
APPEALS where visitation after 16 August:		NUMBER		
Within 10 days		8		
Within 20 days		5		
Within 30 days		6		
Greater than 30 days		5		
Don't know		8		
	Total	32		

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Cotton Manuscripts

Harleian Manuscripts

Lansdowne Manuscripts

Royal Manuscripts

Sloane Manuscripts

Stowe Manuscripts

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, KEW

DEL 4/1	Court of Delegates, Deposition Books, 1538/9
DL3	Duchy of Lancaster - Court of Duchy Chamber: Pleadings, Depositions and Examinations, Series I
DL5	Duchy of Lancaster - Court of Duchy Chamber: Entry Books of Decrees and Orders
DL25	Duchy of Lancaster: Deeds, Series L
DL26	Duchy of Lancaster: Deeds, Series LL
DL29	Duchy of Lancaster: Accounts of Auditors, Receivers, Feodaries and Ministers
DL41	Duchy of Lancaster: Miscellanea
DL43	Duchy of Lancaster: Rentals and Surveys
E25	Exchequer, Treasury of Receipt, Acknowledgements of Supremacy
E36	Exchequer, Treasury of Receipt, Miscellaneous Books
E40	Exchequer, Treasury of Receipt, Ancient Deeds, Series A
E101	King's Remembrancer: Accounts Various
E314	Court of Augmentations and Court of General Surveyors: Miscellaneous

E322	Court of Augmentations - Surrenders of Monasteries and Other Religious Institutions
PROB II	Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Wills
SC6	Special Collections, Ministers' and Receivers' Accounts
SC7	Special Collections, Papal Bulls
SC11	Special Collections, Rentals and Surveys, Rolls
SC12	Special Collections, Rentals and Surveys, portfolios
SP1	State Papers, Henry VIII, General Series
SP2	State Papers, Henry VIII, Folios
SP3	Lisle Papers
SP5	State Papers, Suppression Papers
SP6	Theological Tracts, Henry VIII
SP7	Wriothesley Papers
SP49	State Papers, Scotland, Henry VIII

THE BORTHWICK INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH, YORK

Monastic Miscellanea

York Episcopal Register, 5A	<i>Sede Vacante</i>
York Episcopal Register, 27	Wolsey, 1514 - 1528
York Episcopal Register, 28	Lee, 1531- 1544

CAMBRIDGE

Ely Diocesan Records, Cambridge University Library

EDR G/1/7	Bishops' Register, West and Goodrich
EDR G/1/8	Bishops' Register, Goodrich

County Record Office, Cambridge

P30/4/1	Audit Book (Churchwarden's Accounts), St Mary the Great, Cambridge
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Trinity College, Cambridge

Kings Hall XXV	Muniments
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MSS 433 Transcript of Declaration by Abbot of Woburn

MSS 613 Poem on Stephen Gardiner (temp. EVI)

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge

MS 170/91

MS 391/611

MS 607/279

MS 618/364

King's College, Cambridge

KCAR/3/3/1/1 Ledger Book I, (1451 - 1558)

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KCAR/4/1/74 'Compoti Burgarorium', 1535/1536

MS 291/274 The History of England (before 1591)

Downing College, Cambridge

Bowtell MS No. 1 Treasury Accounts of the Town, 1535/1536

Peterhouse College, Cambridge

Peterhouse Archives Register

The Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

CCCC MS 106

CCCC MS 108

CCCC MS 111

CCCC MS 127

CCCC MS 128

CCCC MS 301

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL ARCHIVES

Additional Manuscripts 33 Inventory of Priory Goods

AS 24 Priors Chaplains Accounts, 1536 - 1537

CC/Ac1 Burghmote Minute Book

CC/FA/12	Accounts Book, 1528 - 1538
CCA, U13/4	St John's Hospital Accounts Book
CCA, Lit. MS A11	St Martin's Priory, Dover
CCA, Lit. MS B5	Faversham Abbey, c.1532 - 1533
Ch. An. A21	Writ of Henry VIII re. Cranmer's Visitation
Ch. An. C242a	Muster 1536
DE 117	Priors' Bill of Expenses, 1500 - c.1540
DE 163	Repair to St Thomas' Shrine
MA 55	Bills of Expenses
MA 55	Bills of Expenses, 1450 - c.1550
Register T	1501 - 1532
Register T2	1533 - 1540

CENTRE FOR KENTISH STUDIES, MAIDSTONE

DRa/Vb4	Visitations of the Archdeacons of Rochester, 1504 - 1565
DRb/Ar1/13	Bishops' Register, Fitzjames and Fisher
DRb/Ar1/14	Bishop's Register, Hilsey
DRb/Ar1/15	Bishop's Register, Heath
DRb/Az/1	Subsidy Book, 1523 - 1533
DRb/Jd	Deposition Book, 1541 - 1571
PRC 17/26	Will of former prioress of St Sepulchres, Canterbury
U 120 T1/22/1	Grant by Leeds Priory

CHATSWORTH HOUSE, DERBYSHIRE

Devonshire Collection Shelf 1A [70F] 'Compendium Compertorum'

CUMBRIA RECORD OFFICE, CARLISLE

D and C 1/1	Chapter register, 1537 - 1599
D and C 1/3	Selected Documents from Chapter Register, 1536 - 1595
D and C Machell of Crackenthorpe 2	Manuscripts Book, 1411 - 1547

DRC 2/65	Manor of Dalston Court Book, 1533 - 1538
PR 122/199	Holm Cultram Abbey, Rental and Gressum Book
PR 122/200	Holm Cultram Abbey Survey, c. 1538
PR 122/237	Extract from Minister's Accounts; Thomas Legh for Holm Cultram, 1538 (Copy)

DEVON RECORD OFFICE, EXETER

Chanter 14	Bishop's Register, Veysey
Chanter 15	Bishop's Register, Veysey

DOWNSIDE ABBEY, SOMERSET

Edmund Bishop Collection

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DDR/EA/ACT/1/2	Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal Register
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5, The College (Durham Cathedral Muniments)

Locellus XXVII	Documents Concerning Episcopal Visitations
Miscellaneous Charter 2951	Royal Visitation Expenses, 1547
Miscellaneous Charter 7197	Part of Register
Miscellaneous Charter 7283	Bursars Accounts
Register V	Presentations, Institutions etc, 1486 - 1537

EXETER CATHEDRAL ARCHIVE

D and C 3498/70	Tregonwell letter, (1520s)
D and C 3498/73	Thomas Cromwell letter, (1535)
D and C 3498/74	Thomas Cromwell letter, (1536)
D and C 3551	Acts of Chapter, 1521 - 1535
D and C 3680	Fabric Accounts
D and C 3687	Suppression List

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LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY, LONDONC. Miscellaneous II: Nos. 49, 65, 113,
140, 179, 311, 448, 577, 585, 611

C. Miscellaneous XI: Nos. 56, 60

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Thomas Cranmer Register 1533 - 1553

LICHFIELD RECORD OFFICE, LICHFIELD

B/A/I/14ii Ordinations

B/A/I/14iii Bishop Rowland Lee Register

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A/3/5 Chapter Act Book Vol. I, 1520 - 1559

A/4/3/2 Collection of Monastic Elections

Additional Register No. 7 Bishop Fuller's Transcripts'

Bishop Longland Register, XXVI

Bishop Longland Register, XXVII

Bj/3/5	Ric. Bevercots Accounts Book, 1530 - 1546
Bj/5/12/8	Ric. Bevercots - rough draft, 1535/1536
Bj/5/14/11	Schedule of Annual Value of Suppressed Tupholme
DVj/26/4	Longland's Appeal to Henry VIII
L T and D (ex cell 47)	Bundle of Letters, 1509 - 1536
PD/1531/18	Presentation to Thomas Bedyll
PD/1534/6	Presentation to Layton
PD/1536/3	Presentation to Bedyll and Argall, Thorneholm
PD/1545/42	Presentation of Burton Lazars Hospital
Vj/9	Visitation Books and Papers
Vj/10	Visitation Books and Papers
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SA/MB/14	St Asaph Collations etc
SA/MB/21	St Asaph Register of Grants of Leases, 1534-1559
SA/MB/57	St Asaph Cathedral, Notitia
SA/MISC/1779	St Asaph Cathedral (Transcriptions)
SDCh/B/13	Diocese of St David's, Chapter Act Book, 1490-1661

Tredegar Park Muniments 48/40

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Balliol College, Oxford

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2P124 College Long Rolls, 1534/1535

2P125 College Long Rolls, 1535/1536

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Ledger C 1532 - 1548

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SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

Chapter Archives

Chapter Act Book 14 Holt and Blacker, 1538 - 1563

Fabric Accounts, 13 (Transcript), 1536 - 1537

Library

Press 3 Box 'Dean' Coadjutator Commission, 1535, Confirmation of Election

SHROPSHIRE RECORDS AND RESEARCH CENTRE, SHREWSBURY

LB/2/1/16 Ludlow 'The Red Book' of Laws and Ordinances, 1512 - 1815

LB/8/1/31/1-11 Ludlow Bailiffs' and Chamberlains' Accounts, 1535 - 1536

Taylor Manuscripts Microfilm No. 35 of Original located in Shrewsbury School

3365/8/438 Paper Book of Receipts and Payments, Shrewsbury

3365/465 Shrewsbury Bailiff's Accounts, (27 Henry VIII)

3365/Box II/75

Assemblatio Communis Concilia, (1532 - 1541)

SOMERSET RECORD OFFICE, TAUNTON

D/D/B Reg. 12	Bishop John Clark Register
D/D/B Reg. 13	Bishop William Knight Register
D/D/Ca 10	Royal Visitation, 1537 - 1538
D/D/Ca 10A	Bishop's Visitation of Whole Diocese, 1538/1539
D/D/Cd - 129	Deposition Book, Archdeaconry of Taunton, 1535-1537
D/D/Vc - 1	Visitation of Religious Houses and Hospitals, 1526
D/D/Vc - 20	Register of Clerical Contributions, (1533?)

WELLS CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

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Communar Accounts 1327 - 1600

Ledger Book D

WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE, CHICHESTER

Cap I/3/0	Chapter Acts, 1472 - 1544 (White Act Book)
Cap I/4 9/1	Chapter Correspondence
Cap I/4/9/2	Correspondence Bishop Sampson to D and C
Cap I/17/76	Charter No. 24
EP I/1/4	Episcopal Register (Story, Fitzjames, Sherburne)
EP I/1/5	Episcopal Register, Sherburne
EP I/1/6	Episcopal Register, Sampson
EP I/10/5	Consistory Court, 65
EP I/18/3	Bishop's Visitation, 1530 - 1531
EP VI/4/1	Account Book, 1521 - 1871

WEST YORKSHIRE ARCHIVE SERVICE, LEEDS

RD/RP 2-5 Archdeaconry of Richmond, Register of Wills, 1503 - 1546

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON RECORD OFFICE, TROWBRIDGE

D1/1/4	Statuta Ecclesie Sarum
D1/2/15	Register Bishop Campeggio
D1/2/16	Register Bishop Shaxton et al
D1/19/1	Cartulary of Reading Abbey
D1/28/1	Inspeximus, Dissolved Monasteries 1546
G23/1/2	City Ledger, B2, 1452 - 1564
1422/110	Wilton Abbey Survey, c.1538

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

Ledger Book III	Calendared
W39B/1/27	Episcopal Visitations 1532, 1548, 1555
W52/70	Cartulary of William Basyngge, 1535 (also transcribed)

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Add MS 455	'Reflections on Worcester Cathedral Priory on the Eve of the Dissolution' by Professor Joan Greatrex, 1998
A6 (ii)	Register, 1499 - 1534
A6 (iii)	Register, 1535 - 1540
A12	Volume of Miscellaneous Collections (early 16th Century)
D309	Copy of Acknowledgement of Supremacy, 1534

WORCESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, COUNTY HALL, WORCESTER

705: 24/5 (i - viii)	Letters from Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Audley to John Russell (Berington Collection)
b.716.093 BA 2648/8(ii)	Bishop Ghinucci et al Register, 1516 - 1542
b.716.093 BA 2648/9(i)	Bishop Ghinucci Register, 1522 - 1535
b.716.093 BA 2648/9(ii)	Bishop Latimer's Register, 1536 - 1539
b.802 BA 2764	Visitation Act Book of Bishop John Bell, 1540
b.821 BA 2768	Extracts from Register of Priory and D and C
b.2337 BA 732 - 4	Presentation Deeds, 1526-1544

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Register, 1508 - 1543

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