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**The Durham Clergy of the Early Sixteenth Century**

**1494 - 1540**

**Louise Marie Stevens**

**A thesis presented in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of M.A. in the  
University of Durham**

**Department of History**

**1979**

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## Abstract

Sixteenth century polemicists and later historians have traditionally denounced the Pre-Reformation clergy as being morally bankrupt, financially rapacious, and generally lacking in vocation. Recent historiography has proven otherwise in such areas as Lancashire and Lincoln; the Durham County evidence is similarly lacking in scandalous detail about the early sixteenth century secular clergy.

The resident beneficed and unbeneficed clergy were mainly local men, proceeding through orders within the county palatine or at York, and had few educational opportunities open to them. The beneficed clergy proceeded through orders more slowly than did their colleagues in the southern province, and the unbeneficed did so at an even slower rate. Their dedication to their duties was mixed. Dilapidations were the most frequent complaint made against them, and it was a fault of which both the beneficed and unbeneficed were equally guilty. There were cases of non-residence and pluralism, but monitions to reside seem to have been obeyed in general. Most of the clergy spent long periods of time, ten, fifteen and twenty years and more, farming their glebe, saying mass and providing hospitality. Aside from administering the sacraments, their lives differed little from those of their parishioners. They were ready to deal with their parishioners on the same terms as their parishioners dealt with each other, yet in all of the forums in which dissatisfaction with the clergy could have been voiced, there was a loud silence. One cannot say that the Durham clergy conformed 100 % of the time to the prescriptions of canon law, or even that they fulfilled their duties to the best of their abilities, merely that they satisfied the expectations of this particular lay community.

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## Abbreviations

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Archiepiscopal Register                            | AR              |
| <u>Archaeologia Aeliana</u>                        | <u>AA</u>       |
| Borthwick Institute of Historical Research         | Borth. I.H.R.   |
| British Library                                    | BL              |
| Consistory Court Act Book                          | CCAB            |
| Dean and Chapter Library                           | D. & C. Lib.    |
| <u>Depositions . . . from the Courts of Durham</u> | <u>SS 21</u>    |
| <u>Durham University Journal</u>                   | <u>DUJ</u>      |
| Durham Chancery Enrollments                        | DURH 3          |
| Durham Dept. of Palaeography, Prior's Kitchen      | DPK             |
| Durham Dept. of Palaeography, South Road           | DSR             |
| <u>English Historical Review</u>                   | <u>EHR</u>      |
| <u>Fasti Dunelmenses</u>                           | <u>SS 139</u>   |
| <u>Fox's Register</u> , Surtees Soc. vol. 147      | <u>FR</u>       |
| <u>Injunctions . . . of Bishop Barnes</u>          | <u>SS 22</u>    |
| <u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</u>           | <u>JEH</u>      |
| Locellus   | Loc.            |
| Original Will                                      | Orig. Will.     |
| Patent Rolls                                       | C 66            |
| Prior's Register V                                 | PReg. V         |
| Probate Register I                                 | PR I            |
| Probate Register II                                | PR II           |
| Probate Register III                               | PR III          |
| Probate Register V                                 | PR V            |
| Public Record Office                               | PRO             |
| Small Prior's Register IV                          | SPReg. IV       |
| State Papers, Henry VIII                           | SP 1            |
| <u>Tunstall's Register</u> , Surtees Soc. vol. 161 | <u>TR</u>       |
| <u>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal</u>            | <u>YAJ</u>      |
| <u>Valor Ecclesiasticus</u>                        | <u>Valor, V</u> |

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This thesis would not have been possible without the help of the archivists in London, York, and Durham. In particular I would like to thank Miss Margaret McCollum and Mrs. J.L. Drury at South Road; Mr. Pat Musset and Mr. Martin Snape at the Prior's Kitchen; Mr. J.E. Fagg, for what proved to be extremely helpful and enjoyable tutorials in palaeography; and my supervisor, Dr. D.M. Loades, for all the advice and encouragement he gave me during the course of this work.

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### Declaration and Statement of Copyright

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

Until very recently the Pre-Reformation clergy were badly represented by both their own contemporaries and later historians. As early as the fourteenth century Chaucer depicted them, wittily if sarcastically, as worldly nuns and corrupt clergymen;<sup>1</sup> Statutes of Praemunire and Provisors were enacted to protect the full sovereignty of the English monarchy from papal interference, and polemical tracts had occasionally surfaced, casting suspicion upon the local religious in the minds of those who read or heard of them by word of mouth. By contrast, the old time Lollardy had been effectively driven underground in an England which remained steadfastly Catholic both in doctrine and practice. The scales remained precariously balanced throughout the fifteenth century in this love / hate relationship between the clergy and the laity. However, with each new provocation in the sixteenth century, they began to tilt in favor of the laity at the expense of the religious. Papal exactions; Hunne's case; the protest of Luther, markedly successful in the disorganized German principalities; all induced a growing climate of doubt and uncertainty. Finally, only two matters became certain: the king needed money, the king needed an heir, and the scales hit rock bottom for the clergy.

In the process of assuming the title of Supreme Head of the Church in England, Henry VIII let loose the reins on anticlericalism. Grievances against the clergy were presented in Parliament. They stood accused of being monetarily rapacious, morally lax, and both absentee and pluralist

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<sup>1</sup>See Chaucer's description of the prioress and the pardoner in "The General Prologue" to "The Canterbury Tales" in F.N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston, 1961), pp. 18, 23. His parson is conspicuous for the vices which he did not possess. See pages 21-22.

on a grand scale. Also effective was a propaganda campaign<sup>1</sup> issuing forth from the presses of Thomas Berthelet, the king's printer, and from others. Christopher St. Germain argued dispassionately on the abuses of the clergy and more importantly on their relation to the temporal government, but his intellectual dogmatism was perhaps too weighty for the common folk.<sup>2</sup> The more sensational impression, and longer lasting, was that made by such scurrilous pamphleteers as Simon Fish. For him, the clerical estate was immoral and power-hungry:

Ye, and what do they more? Truely nothing but applie theym silves by all the sleightes they may, to have to do with every mannes wife, every mannes daughter, and every mannes mayde, that cuckkoldrie and baudrie shulde reigne over all emong your subiectes, that noman shulde know his owne childe, that theyre bastardes might enherite the possessions of every man, to put the right begotten children clere beside theire inheritaunce, yn subversion of all estates and godly ordre . . . What remedy: make lawes ageynst them? I am yn doubt whether ye be able: Are they not stronger in your owne parliament house then your silfe? what a nombre of Bisshopes, abbotes, and priours, are lordes of your parliament? are not all the learned men in your realme in fee with them, to speake yn your parliament house for them ageynst your crowne, dignite, and comon welth of your realme; a fewe of youre owne lerned counsell onely excepted?<sup>3</sup>

In such manner did Fish taunt Henry with a faulty sovereignty. The ultimate changes were not internal, however, but bound up with England's relationship to the papacy, receiving their most concise expression with what,

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<sup>1</sup>See G.R. Elton, Policy and Police (Cambridge, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>See Christopher St. Germain, "A treatise concernynge the division between the spiritualitie and the temporalitie" (1532), and "A treatise concerning the power of the clergy, and the laws of the realm" (1535).

<sup>3</sup>Simon Fish, "A Supplication for the Beggars" in Four Supplications 1529-1553 A.D., ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (The Early English Text Society, Extra Series, no. 13, 1871), pp. 6, 8.

in its sonorous tones, might have passed for an early form of Churchilliana: " . . . this realm of England is an empire . . .", complete in and of itself.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of a general dissatisfaction with the clerical estate Fish had produced a wholesale condemnation of the clergy in England. A superficial look at the evidence might have served to substantiate some of his statements. The clergy seemed in some instances to provide the ammunition with which would-be reformers struck them down. They were disloyal lawbreakers. Bishop Fox found it necessary to fulminate not only against the lawlessness of the border thieves, but against the too outrageous behavior of their clergy, who behaved little better than the thieves themselves:

. . . compluresque capellanos sepe nominatarum partium et territoriorum de Tyndalle et Ryddysdalle, publicos et manifestos concubinarios, irregulares, suspensos, excommunicatos et interdictos, necnon litterarum penitus ignaros, adeo ut per decennium celebrantes nec ipsa quidem verba sacramentalia, uti quibusdam eorum opponentiis experti sumus, legere sciant; nonnullos etiam non ordinatos, sed sacerdotii effigiem duntaxat pretendentes, non modo in locis sacris et dedicatis verum etiam in prophanis et interdictis ac miserabiliter ruinosis, necnon vestimentis ruptis, laceratis et fedissimis, non divino ymmo nec humano officio aut servitio dignis, quasi Deum contemnentes induti, divina celebrare sacraque et sacramentalia ministrare intelleximus . . .<sup>2</sup>

Some clergymen were singled out and brought to the attention of the king for generally unruly behavior. William Frankleyn wrote of the disloyalty, dishonesty, and wealth of the Dean of Auckland to his bishop:

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<sup>1</sup>Statutes of the Realm (Record Commission, London, 1963 reprint), vol. 3, p. 427, 24 Henry VIII, c. 12. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Marjorie Peers Howden, ed., The Register of Richard Fox, Lord Bishop of Durham 1494-1501 (Surtees Society, 1932), vol. 147, p. 82. Hereafter referred to as FR.

. . . byfore his comyng to Akeland it was the best s'vid college in the northe p'ties & now he hath fownde the meanys to make it the worst s'ved of all other if he be wele handled for makyng this impediment of the kinges prest monye and for his huntynge in yor p'k<sup>e</sup> at Akeland taking awaye of Tymber & buk in my lordes (Ruthall's) tyme for all which causes he standithe Indyted he wold rendre vnto yor grace v or vj c li' for a fyne he hathe grete substance . . .<sup>1</sup>

Disloyalty encompassed more than refusing assent to priest money, however. In an earlier letter Frankleyn wrote to Ruthall that "The p'sons of churches/ my self except, and the dean of Lanchest' who sent two hable men wt Thomas Tempest & the dean of Darnton who sent thre wt yor cowntroller never moved or p'pared peple or theyr<sup>e</sup> s'vauntes at this tyme to do yor lordship s'vice . . ."<sup>2</sup> Nor were Frankleyn's letters very flattering to himself, for they betrayed the consummate ecclesiastical administrator, and on occasion, an intriguer, rather than revealed a dedicated churchman. Early historians, particularly Foxe in his Acts and Monuments<sup>3</sup> and Burnet in his History of the Reformation, incorporated this tinted picture of the clergy in their volumes. England had escaped from the abuses of the Roman system, had made steps forward toward Progress and Truth. The result in historiography was Whiggism at its finest.

It is with this inheritance that historians of the Reformation period have had to grapple over the last thirty years. There has been the recognition that if one is ever to know the truth about the Pre-Reformation church,

old foliation (nos ff. 301v-302)

<sup>1</sup>BL: Titus B. I. 295v-296. 11 April, 1523, William Frankleyn, arch-deacon of Durham to Thomas Wolsey. 52. in Easton arch

<sup>2</sup>BL: Calig. B. III. 302r. 15 September, 1522.

<sup>3</sup>John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of the English Martyrs (London, 1870).

<sup>4</sup>Gilbert Burnet, The History of the Reformation (Oxford, 1865).

one must go beyond the analyses of the "contemporary" historians, so prone to attach a moral significance to each turn of history, and look at the primary evidence itself. Moreover, one would have to dispense with Fish's blanket condemnation of the entire clerical body and study closely individual segments of that community before any generalization could be attempted. If historians were prepared to accept the separate character of the Tudor north, they would also have to examine in depth the factors which engendered that difference. The people and the clergy demanded attention. Rachel Reid in her King's Council in the North (1921) and the Dodds sisters in their Pilgrimage of Grace and the Exeter Conspiracy (1915) had previously focused attention north of the Trent, but in no detailed and comprehensive way upon the clergy as a class. Their arguments and supporting evidence were much more valuable, however, than the many unintegrated antiquarian accounts and county histories. Synthesis of this material was in order.<sup>1</sup>

In 1947 Professor A. Hamilton Thompson produced a useful background on the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the fifteenth century with his English Clergy and their Organization in the Later Middle Ages. It was, however, rather deficient on the actual life lead by those priests operating on the parish level. That deficiency has since been rectified with Peter Heath's excellent study of the English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation,

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<sup>1</sup> Among the county histories for Durham, see the following:

William Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham (Newcastle, 1857), 2 volumes.

William Hutchinson, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham (Newcastle, 1735), 3 volumes.

Robert Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham (London, 1816-1840), 4 volumes.

The Victoria County History of Durham (London, 1907), 3 volumes.

(1969). In it Heath examined not only the duties which canon law imposed upon the incumbent, but the actual day to day life of the parish priest, from ordination through old age. The book is impressive not only for its analysis but for the breadth of material covered. It is a product of the comparatively new trend in local Reformation studies so long needed for an understanding of the clergy as a class.

A key contribution to this need was D.M. Barratt's 1949 Oxford doctoral thesis, "The Condition of the Parish Clergy Between The Reformation and 1660, With Special Reference to the Dioceses of Oxford, Worcester and Gloucester." Well written and extremely lucid, Dr. Barratt's thesis addressed, among other things, the key issues of tithe, patronage and the education and social status of the clergy. Her avowed purpose was "to discover how accurately this semi-political literature of complaint (against the clergy) represents actual conditions."<sup>1</sup> What, she asked, was the social status of the man entering the priesthood prior to his ordination? Was he well educated? Did many men hold university degrees? What portion of their income was derived from tithe? What books had they read? She concluded that the clergy of these three dioceses were in fact rather poor in each of these respects but that, over the time span covered in her thesis, the conditions under which they lived were slowly improving.

Margaret Bowker, nearly twenty years later, commenced her study of the Lincoln secular clergy with virtually the same aim in mind: "We know that some early Tudor writers considered the clergy ignorant, immoral, non-resident and negligent in their duties. We do not know how many clerks actually con-

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<sup>1</sup>D.M. Barratt, "The Condition of the Parish Clergy Between The Reformation and 1660, With Special Reference to the Dioceses of Oxford, Worcester and Gloucester", Oxford Ph.D. Thesis, 1949, preface, p. 12.

formed to this pattern."<sup>1</sup> Anti-clericalism was still at issue and historians were seeking a solution in a close examination of patronage, the ecclesiastical courts, and in Bowker's case, non-residence and pluralism in the diocese of Lincoln. Non-residence was a potential point of alienation rather than contact, and Bowker found, using visitation and the resultant court proceedings for 1514 through 1520, that it occurred in 22% of all the parishes of that diocese.<sup>2</sup> Alienation remained her theme. She concluded in 1964 that "The path to the episcopacy was by way of canonries and archdeaconries and not by way of the parish."<sup>3</sup> She saw the alienation problem not in terms of the moral and personal abuses noted by Fish and actually experienced by the laity, but in terms of the ambition of men to advance further in what for them was not a vocation but a career. "The bitterness caused by the ecclesiastical courts, by non-residence, concubinage, the neglect of churches and the taking of fees was not obvious."<sup>4</sup> The vast middle segment of the church hierarchy, the rectors and those vicars who were pluralists and/or non-resident, ran the same danger as the bishop of losing touch with the parish, of becoming ". . . a remote and perhaps incongruous figure, rebuking the clergy for their failure in discharging parochial duties of which he had no personal experience, reaping where he had never sown."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Bowker, The Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln 1495-1520 (Cambridge, 1968), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret Bowker, "Non-Residence in the Lincoln Diocese in the Early Sixteenth Century" in JEH (XV, 1964), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>4</sup>Bowker, The Secular Clergy . . . , p. 152.

<sup>5</sup>Bowker, "Non-Residence . . .", p. 50.

Studies of more northerly areas have included Christopher Haigh's Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (1975). In a county "outside the orbit of the capital and the universities"<sup>1</sup>, was anticlericalism a potent force? Haigh concluded that it was not, that in fact "the old Church (was) not at its nadir but at its high point."<sup>2</sup> just prior to the Reformation. There was little sign of anti-clericalism, and there was fierce prosecution of heresy when it occurred. Haigh was also able to report that most of the clergy usually came from the locality which they served. They were thus an integral part of the community well before their ordination, although he noted a tendency for more clergymen to leave the Lancashire parishes than came from other dioceses. Haigh's book provides a look at a society in more remote circumstances than the parishes of the southern province.

Specialization has continued not merely according to diocesan borders, but along certain key issues as well. York diocese has been studied in depth by Dickens, Purvis, Cross, Palliser, and Gramsby, in the fields of belief, clerical literacy, tithe, and the royal supremacy.<sup>3</sup> There have been

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (Cambridge, 1975), preface, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>A.G. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558 (Oxford, 1959).

J.S. Purvis, "The Registers of Archbishops Lee and Holgate" in JEH (vol. 13, 1962).

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Literacy of the Later Tudor Clergy in Yorkshire" in Studies in Church History V (Leiden, 1969), pp. 147-165.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Dilapidations in Parsonage Property" in YAJ (36, 1944-47), pp. 316-337.

Claire Cross, "Churchmen and the Royal Supremacy" in Church and Society in England Henry VIII to James I, ed. by Felicity Heal and Rosemary O'Day (London, 1977), pp. 15-34.

D.M. Palliser, The Reformation in York 1534-1553 (York, 1971).

David Michael Gramsby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York" (University of York, M.Phil. Thesis, 1966).

several admirable Ph.D. theses in the last few years, most notably that by Rosemary O'Day on patronage.<sup>1</sup> Felicity Heal<sup>2</sup> has published several sympathetic articles on the economics of the priesthood in the sixteenth century. Scarisbrick<sup>3</sup> has addressed the problem from a more national viewpoint and made estimates as to the cost with which the papacy was set aside. His results do not support the optimism of the early historians of the Reformation. In the final analysis it turned out to be far costlier to have the Supremum caput, figuratively speaking, upon one's doorstep than immured in the papal curia in Rome. The explanations of the ecclesiastical court systems, offered by Ritchie and Woodcock,<sup>4</sup> are still excellent, but the courts have come under new scrutiny from Lander<sup>5</sup> for Chichester and Marchant<sup>6</sup> for York, although the latter deals primarily with the second half of the sixteenth century. Providing the background for these studies is Keith Thomas' Religion and the Decline of Magic (1971), a re-creation of the medieval frame of mind. Research continues to proceed apace in this field,

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<sup>1</sup>M.R. O'Day, "Clerical Patronage and Recruitment in England in the Elizabethan and Early Stuart Periods, With Special Reference to the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield" (University of London, Ph.D. Thesis, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Felicity Heal, "Clerical Tax Collection under the Tudors: The Influence of the Reformation" in Continuity and Change, ed. by Rosemary O'Day and Felicity Heal (Leicester, 1976), pp. 97-122. ✓

\_\_\_\_\_, "Economic Problems of the Clergy" in Church and Society . . ., ed. by Heal and O'Day (London, 1977), pp. 99-118.

<sup>3</sup>J.J. Scarisbrick, "Clerical Taxation in England 1485-1547" in JEH (vol. 11, 1960), pp. 41-54.

<sup>4</sup>C.I.A. Ritchie, The Ecclesiastical Courts of York (Arbroath, 1956).  
Brian L. Woodcock, Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury (Oxford, 1952).

See also J.S. Purvis, An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Records (London, 1953), especially chapter three.

<sup>5</sup>Stephen Lander, "Church Courts and the Reformation in the Diocese of Chichester, 1500-1558" in Continuity and Change, ed. by O'Day and Heal (Leicester, 1976), pp. 215-237. ✓

<sup>6</sup>Ronald A. Marchant, The Church Under the Law (Cambridge, 1969).

notably by Imogen Luxton,<sup>1</sup> as in others, with new papers being presented at the bi-annual meetings of the Conference for Local Reformation Studies, last held at York in 1978.

This thesis is a contribution to that ongoing research. It is a study of the Durham diocesan clergy as a distinct social class prior to the Reformation. Specifically I have applied this study to Durham county for the years 1494-1540, from Richard Fox's episcopate to the Dissolution of the monasteries. By means of a multiple biography of the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy I have tried to investigate those factors contributing to their personal and professional lives, in addition to those peculiar to Durham diocese and the county palatine, which may or may not have affected their careers. The questions I have posed will in some instances reflect the influence of Barratt, Bowker and Haigh, but they are no less relevant for Durham than for Oxford, Worcester and Gloucester, Lincoln and Lancashire. Were the majority of Durham priests local men? If not, what was their place of origin? What social standing did their families have? How much education had they received? Did they have professional duties, outside of the pastoral ones attendant upon their cure, in diocesan and royal government? What was their economic situation prior to the Reformation, and how could they legitimately supplement their income? How long did it take to become fully ordained, and under what conditions did one do so? Was there any discernible patronage pattern? How high was the incidence of non-residence? Were the church courts very busy? In particular I have applied, where possible, these questions not only to the beneficed clergy, most readily visible in the records, but to the unbeneficed clergy, the chantry priests and chaplains,

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<sup>1</sup>Imogen Luxton, "The Reformation and Popular Culture" in Church and Society . . . , ed. by Heal and O'Day (London, 1977), pp. 57-77.

as well. It is this group of clergy which turns up in more personally interesting ways, i.e., in the wills of the parishioners, for example, and I have included as an appendix to this thesis, a fasti of all the unbene-  
ficed clergy for Durham county, 1494-1540, stating every capacity in which I have found them to appear in the records.

Some aspects of the Durham clerical scene have been researched before, so in one sense this study is not based on entirely unbroken ground. A. Hamilton Thompson<sup>1</sup> dealt briefly with the secular clergy attached to the five collegiate churches within the county. However, it was with the support which they were meant to provide for the diocesan in opposition to the priory that he was concerned. Loades<sup>2</sup> has more recently considered them, principally along the lines of the extra patronage they afforded the bishop and the income they rendered to their incumbents. Two Ph.D. theses have dealt with Durham diocese at greater length, but with some problems. Wilson's 1939 Ph.D. thesis<sup>3</sup> lacks a specific center and loses its persuasiveness in its attempt to relate all "The Changes of the Reformation Period . . ." in its two volumes. Donaldson's Edinburgh thesis<sup>4</sup> covers the years 1311-1540 but deals specifically with patronage. He does raise some interesting questions, and the second volume of his work is a useful fasti of the beneficed clergy for Durham diocese during those years. I have attempted to deal with all facets of the Pre-Reformation clergy's lives for a shorter period and

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<sup>1</sup>A. Hamilton Thompson, "The Collegiate Churches of the Bishoprick of Durham" in DUIJ (March 1944, vol. 36, no. 2; New Series, vol. V, no. 2), pp. 33-42.

<sup>2</sup>D.M. Loades, "The Collegiate Churches of Durham at the time of the Dissolution" in Studies In Church History IV, ed. by G.J. Cuming (Leiden, 1967), pp. 65-75.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara N. Wilson, "The Changes of the Reformation Period in Durham and Northumberland" (University of Durham, Ph.D. Thesis, 1939).

<sup>4</sup>Robert Donaldson, "Patronage and the Church: A Study in the Social Structure of the Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Durham" (University of Edinburgh, Ph.D. Thesis, 1955).

direct attention whenever possible to the more elusive unbeneficed priests.

The primary source material for this study is located in three main centers, the Palaeography Department in Durham at its two branches in the Prior's Kitchen and on South Road; the British Library and Public Record Office in London; and the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research in York. The records at York and London pose the least problems, aside from accessibility to a researcher based in Durham. The archiepiscopal registers at York are unbroken for the period 1494-1540, and provide valuable records of ordinations and the only visitation of Durham diocese for which the records still survive. In London my prime sources were the Chancery Enrollments and State Papers of Henry VIII, as well as the presentations on the patent rolls.

The bulk of the evidence used in the preparation of this thesis is still housed in Durham. Only two bishops' registers survive, those of Fox and Tunstall and both have been published by the Surtees Society. The Prior's Registers are more continuous over the period and provide information on the benefices and chantries in the gift of the monastery. Also housed at the Prior's Kitchen are the Locelli, loose documents containing anything from very early wills to clerical tax accounts. Testamentary evidence is admittedly not all that one could wish. The bulk of the Durham wills are extant for the period post-1540, the date at which this study ends, with extremely few prior to that date. Nine occur among the Locelli of the Prior's Kitchen for the year 1507, less than half a dozen are included with the visitation returns in York, and one, that of John Sherwode of Haughton-le-Skerne, can be found in Tunstall's Register. That of John Jackson of Easington, containing his instructions for the founding of a chantry

in that parish in 1526, can be found in Prior's Register V. I have attempted to rectify this dearth of testamentary evidence by looking at all wills, clerical and lay, for the first twenty years after 1540, on the assumption that the majority of these people will have lived through part of the period of study. Most interesting of all of the sources is the fragmentary Act Book of the Consistory Court, housed at South Road. Upon close perusal it is less "fragmentary" than it first appears. It is a mine of information on the frequency with which the church courts were used, the different causes brought in, and the interaction of the clergymen with their parishioners. By contrast, the Auckland Castle Episcopal Records, also housed at South Road, are a profound disappointment, for they consist of a fasti, a single volume compiled in 1750 from what should have been much more extensive archives housed at the diocesan's residence in Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.

Finally, there are the excellent series of volumes issued by the Surtees Society and the antiquarian manuscripts of Allan, Hunter, and Randall in the Dean and Chapter Library. Both of these collections are useful in that they make one aware of what might be found in the primary documents themselves. Neither should be used in isolation from those documents. The series of Wills and Inventories published by the Surtees Society are very interesting, but in a great many cases they omit that initial bequest of one's soul, which has become the barometer by which historians have attempted to gauge religious belief.

By these means I have attempted to address an important problem in English Reformation history: the degree to which anti-clericalism may be considered a factor in the Reformation at the parish level. The results follow.

## Chapter Two

## Durham County in the Early Sixteenth Century

In one of his frequent letters to his diocesan in 1518, William Frankleyn, the archdeacon of Durham, detailed some of his many activities for Ruthall. He had not been idle. Among other things he had written

. . . to dyv's curatts and baylis dwellyng in townys adjoynng to the hylands that they shuld openly gif warnyng in their churchies that ev'y man that had cause to co'playne of the . . . hylands men to be at Aukeland at the sessions wt bills of their greves and in lyke man' I caused proclamacyon to be made in ev'y markett town wtin the bishoprick . . .<sup>1</sup>

Not content with his own efforts, he concluded by declaring his "trust in God & Saynt Cuthbert we shall so hondle this mat' that yor lordship shall have bothe honor and also the hartly prayer to good myendes of yor contrie for ev'". By the sixteenth century, this invocation had become a highly ritualized expression of medieval piety, not yet devoid of all meaning for those who used it. Just as the name of St. Hugh was readily familiar to the natives of Lincolnshire, so was St. Cuthbert especially revered by the inhabitants of the north country. Keith Thomas has written that "The patronage of saints gave a sense of identity and of corporate existence to small and otherwise undifferentiated institutions"<sup>2</sup> and it is with the area commonly known as the patrimony of St. Cuthbert, the region between the Tyne and Tees, that this study is concerned. Durham admittedly was a small county, but its palatine status goes far toward saving it from the ignominious description of an "undifferentiated institution". The shire's position as the administrative seat to deal with the Borders does so as well.

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/16/313.

<sup>2</sup>Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1971), p. 28.

In other matters it was not so well distinguished. The county was not particularly populous and was divided between the hilly uplands and forest where settlements were few and far between, and the lowlands where most of the population was concentrated. Estimates of the population have been made for the later sixteenth century. James arrived at a figure of a little over 30,000 for 1569, based on the total number of men turning out for a muster held in that year, to which he applied a multiplier of four.<sup>1</sup> A similar computation for 1615 yielded a total of 33,280.<sup>2</sup> Frankleyn reported the holding of a muster to Wolsey in 1523 but gave no indication as to how many attended: ". . . on tuysdaie last we causid Musters to be taken thourought the bishoprliche whiche daie chaunced to be very fowle and therfor thassemblie of pepull was moche the lesse . . ." <sup>3</sup>

In 1548, however, within the chantry certificates were recorded the number of "howseling people" within each parish.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately these certificates survive for only 32 of the 49 parishes in Durham county, and even then there are some difficulties. Several of the certificates are incomplete. Those for Darlington, Chester-le-Street, Kirkmerrington and Dalton give no population figure.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly unfortunate in the cases of Darlington and Chester-le-Street, both sites of collegiate churches whose amenities would presumably have attracted a larger number of people to

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<sup>1</sup>M.E. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society (Oxford, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>PRO: SP 1/27/142.

<sup>4</sup>James Raine, ed., The Injunctions and Other Ecclesiastical Proceedings of Richard Barnes, Bishop of Durham (Surtees Society, 1850), vol 22, Appendix, pp. 59-76. Hereafter referred to as SS 22.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Appendix, pp. 63, 70, 73-74.

those townships. Darlington, along the Tees, is known to have had a grammar school; no evidence remains for Chester-le-Street in this regard. In addition, a certificate exists for "The Parrishe of Hutton, having in yt of howseling people abowte cexxiij."<sup>1</sup> Of the 49 parishes in Durham county none is called Hutton, and the other possibilities, Haughton-le-Skerne and Houghton-le-Spring, have their own separate certificates. The small town of Hetton-le-Hole is another possibility although it did not have the status of a parish but of a chapelry. Finally, the Durham city parishes are all represented with the unfortunate exception of St. Mary in the South Bailey.

Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn from the figures available. The certificates yield a total of 18,340 people, 2599 of whom belonged to the parishes of Durham City in that small area of the loop in the River Wear. The two massive parishes of Stanhope, extending to 54,870 acres, and Middleton in Teesdale, comprising 10,434 acres<sup>2</sup>, together yield a little over half of that total, 1440 persons to be precise, and give adequate proof that whereas, in the eastern half of the county people lived more closely and in greater contact, in the western regions, more wild and hilly at the foot of the Pennines, the settlement pattern was more erratic. James maintains that the county population remained fairly stable despite famines and plagues and even showed a slow rise between the musters of 1569 and 1615 of approximately 10.9%.<sup>3</sup> The inadequacy of the chantry certi-

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<sup>1</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Fordyce, vol. 1, p. 648; vol. II, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>James, p. 7. James estimates a rise in population between 1569 and 1615 of 3,280 people, which yields a rate of increase of 10.9%.

ificates is telling when one speculates that, based on those certificates, the population showed a jump of nearly 50% between 1548 and 1569. The population is known for only 65.3% of the parishes, and while it is certainly wrong to assume that we know of only that percentage of the population, it is just as inadvisable to determine the rate of increase from 1548 to 1569, and then to extrapolate backwards from 1548 to arrive at a figure for circa 1523, the year of Frankleyn's muster. Such a mechanical exercise gives a population of 26,720 for 1548, and one of 23,808 for circa 1523. It ignores the successively bad harvests known to have taken place in the three years prior to 1522, ushering the inhabitants into that well-known cycle of deprivation, malnutrition and high prices,<sup>1</sup> and the bad harvests of the late 1520's. Such a method may be more reasonable for areas less densely populated and less prone to disease through close association with other humans. It also ignores the absence of several key returns for 1548. Significantly, Bishop Wearmouth, which included the port of Sunderland, had a total of 1200 people.<sup>2</sup> Gateshead on the Tyne, in the coal and lead districts, similarly had a population of 1000.<sup>3</sup> One wonders about Jarrow and the chapelry of South Shields on the same river to the east. On the southern border of the county 700 people<sup>4</sup> were attributed to the parish of Norton, but its neighbors on the Tees, Stockton and Billingham, are not represented among the certificates. Such conspicuous omissions in areas of known commercial activity advise caution in any demographic generalizations.

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/26/24; in May 1522 Dacre wrote to Wolsey that ". . . whete costeth 2 s. 4 d. the bushel, malt 18 d. the bushel, otes 10 d. the bushel . . .", BL: Calig. B. II. 252; see also PRO: SP 1/52/20.

<sup>2</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Appendix, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Appendix, p. 69.

old foliation (ms. f. 269)

The landscape had its corresponding effects on the way the inhabitants managed their lives. James reports great dependence on one's kinsmen in the wilder, rolling hills of the western portion of the county, while those along the eastern seaboard more readily recognized their neighbors in their wills.<sup>1</sup> But in addition to this lateral dependency, there was the recognition of a hierarchichal structure, again based on the institution of the family, but more particularly upon those who were the natural leaders of society: men of long lineage, the nature of whose dealings with others has been variously termed "good lordship"<sup>2</sup> and, collectively, a "lineage society".<sup>3</sup> Loades' definition is more specifically attuned to the duties and obligations between subject and sovereign yet the give and take nature of the relationship is essentially the same for the interplay of groups lower down the social scale in Durham county:

The emphasis in this society was on the cult of 'lordship', the exercise of which in the course of time had come to be thought the natural and inherent prerogative of the leading lineages. The tough persistency of the lineages over the generations received recognition in the reverence accorded 'ancient blood'. Inherent in lordship were claims to service, fidelity, and obedience, not only from the servants and tenants who occupied the family lands, but also from the dependent gentry who constituted its 'affinity'. In return patronage and protection were made available.<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Strangeways made bold to plead for several favors from the King through Cromwell in 1528; after reciting his previous services, in particular in the "fenischyng of the . . . workes att Awkland", and pleading his causes, he concluded "I trust . . . your Lordship may parceve that I

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<sup>1</sup>James, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>D.M. Loades, Politics and the Nation Obedience Resistance and Public Order (London, 1974), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>James, p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

rather esteme / your favor and good lordship / then any oy' (other) Advantage / and while I leve I will Never Reffuse your s'vice / so long / as I cane be any meaynys / have your good lordship."<sup>1</sup> That certain families and men wielded very real and beneficial power in maintaining the natural order of things is obvious in the following lamentation of Thomas Tempest to the Duke of Norfolk in 1537:

My lorde yor Commyng to thies Northe partyes is moche Comfort to All good Subgettes / ffor never was so moche nede as nowe / Thabsence of the bushoppe of Duresme and off therle of Westmerlande Sette all this Contree of Duresme owt off good ordre . . . <sup>2</sup>

As if to ensure that Norfolk understood the full enormity of the situation, Tempest added gravely that "My Lady off Westmerland with suche Cownsell as shee takethe to hir steyethe the contree here ffor a tyme // I assure your lordship Shee Rather playeth the parte of a knyght thenne of a Ladye / . . ."

The Nevilles, Earls of Westmorland, were the foremost family in the county with their power based at their seats of Raby, Brancepeth, Sheriffe Hutton and Middleham. They had attained their earldom in 1397 under Richard II; their influence in the sixteenth century amounted not only to that of leadership in the secular sphere, noted by Tempest above, but in the realm of piety as well. Four advowsons to Durham churches lay in their hands: Brancepeth, Staindrop, Cockfield and St. Mary in the South Bailey in Durham City. In addition, they were responsible for the foundation of the chantry of Jesus in Brancepeth parish church. The Lumleys, second in standing to the Nevilles, did not possess the patronage of any benefices in the county, but they had had sufficient means to have founded two chantries in the parish church of Chester-le-Street, those of St. George and of the Virgin. The

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/52/16r-v. The "workes att Awkland" were evidently quite lengthy. Strangeways had written to Ruthall about them as early as 1519. See PRO: SP 1/19/9-10.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/115/197. 6 February, 1537.

Nevilles had had more political influence in the fifteenth century; the Lumleys were similarly having difficulty in maintaining theirs in the sixteenth. Traditionally warden of the Bishop's forest of Weardale, in 1509 Lord Lumley had written to the newly elevated Bishop Ruthall to protest the order "to delyvere the kyes of my Towre of Westgate wt the Rolles of my Courtes ther remaynyng to the baron hylton,"<sup>1</sup> head of another influential Durham family based at Hilton Castle. Lumley was particularly concerned because, in addition to the instructions he had received, he had also heard rumors through the Bishop's chancellor that Ruthall had plans to retain the office of forester to himself.<sup>2</sup> It was only rumor on that occasion, but rumor became fact in 1524 with the passing of the office to one Richard Pemberton.<sup>3</sup>

A perusal of the officers of the palatinate expands the size of the list of influential families. Among the names of the sheriffs and escheators for the county occur the names of Bowes, Bulmer, Tempest, Brakenbury, Eure, Bellasis, Hilton and Conyers.<sup>4</sup> All of these names except one, that of Bellasis, appear in Tonge's heraldic visitation of 1530, and can consequently claim membership among the leading families of the county society.<sup>5</sup> One hundred years earlier, during Langley's episcopate, only the names of Eure and Bowes appeared in the above group.<sup>6</sup> The offices of the palatinate in the

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/9/271.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 271.

<sup>3</sup>James, p. 44, note 3. A similar trend was evident in the appointment of Sir William Eure as lieutenant deputy of the Middle Marches. See PRO: SP 1/27/116.

<sup>4</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS., vol. 13, ff. 18r-20v.

<sup>5</sup>W. Hylton Dyer Longstaffe, ed., Heraldic Visitation of the Northern Counties in 1530 by Thomas Tonge Norroy King of Arms (Surtees Society, 1863), vol. 41, passim.

<sup>6</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS., vol. 13, ff. 14v-15.

sixteenth century were being increasingly given to members of this gentry group. Significantly, they were not the most powerful families in the county.

Tempest had identified the bishop as another individual whose presence in the palatinate ensured the keeping of good order, but in terms of a lineage society it would perhaps be wiser to stipulate that his power to awe and control lay more in the lineage of the twin institutions of bishopric and county palatine than in the person of the diocesan himself. The lineage of the county palatine is sufficiently ancient for there to be controversy over its origins. It has been posited that the franchise was the result of a royal grant, possibly by Alfred or William the Conqueror;<sup>1</sup> another alternative suggests a latter-day resistance on the part of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria at being swallowed into the larger kingdom of England, a bid for a degree of independence and autonomy which was, by the thirteenth century, successful.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence which points definitively to either hypothesis. Suffice it to say that the obscurity of the palatinate's origins was almost all that was necessary to ensure the continued reverence for its institutions, a reverence shared by its successive heads, as well as the tenacity with which its inhabitants clung to its privileges over the centuries. The presence of St. Cuthbert, whose body, after some initial vacillation at Chester-le-Street, chose Durham as its final resting place in its flight from the Danish raiders, completed the mystical aura of this ancient place. His incorruptible body, in combination with the cult of the saints of medieval piety, provided the palatinate

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<sup>1</sup>G.T. Lapsley, The County Palatine of Durham A Study in Constitutional History (New York, 1900), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

with the immunity necessary to its survival. Any threat to it would be akin to sacrilege.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever its origins, the palatinate boasted extraordinary privileges which the lord bishop as its secular and religious head wielded. In Lapsley's discussion of the powers which set the palatinate apart from other shires in England, he addressed the question "Was the bishop as king in Durham?" and quoted the Latin adage "Quicquid rex habet extra episcopus habet infra."<sup>2</sup> But there were important exceptions. A definition of the attributes of a sovereign state, albeit in another time and place, included "full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and . . . all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do."<sup>3</sup> These were precisely the powers which did not fall within the bishop's scope. To be sure, the bishops were responsible for the security of the northern borders and doubtless this did, on occasion, result in the defense of the diocese by armed force, but the bishops were in no way able to formulate a policy against the Scots or to carry out campaigns fulfilling the ends of any such policy without the express consent and instructions of the king. The case was similar in the matters of concluding peace and contracting alliances. Fox, bishop from 1494-1501, was one of the foremost diplomats of his day and played a prominent part in concluding several treaties for the king, among them the Treaty of Etaples (1492) and

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<sup>1</sup>Lapsley himself finally came down in favor of a sanctified immunity. "It seems reasonable to infer . . . that before the Conquest there was a body of men holding land under the church of St. Cuthbert and known in the vernacular as men of the saint, and that at some period earlier than the twelfth century the complex of these holdings was so intense and exclusive within a certain district that, as had been the case in Norfolk and Suffolk, the collective name of the inhabitants was transferred to the district." p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 75, 31.

<sup>3</sup>"The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America", in Congress, July 4, 1776, in C.A. and M.R. Beard, The New Basic History of the United States (New York, 1968), Appendix, p. 493.

the Intercursus Magnus (1496).<sup>1</sup> Full recognition of his diplomatic skills came in 1499 with his assignment to the Scottish marriage negotiations. Here, as in other cases, he was chosen to make arrangements for policies which had already been formulated. Where it might be argued that in securing the peace of the borders by resorting to a truce, as occurred in 1497,<sup>2</sup> he was taking the initiative, it should be noted that he was empowered to defend the palatinate, not necessarily by force of arms, and that a truce along the Border was a purely local matter and involved no obligations on the part of the realm and the sovereign. As a matter of fact, the foreign diplomatic dealings of the bishops of Durham were too narrowly circumscribed by this very local problem of the Scottish Border to ever develop the wider scope characteristic of a sovereign state.

A case could be made for the promotion of commerce by the bishops, but it would be tenuous indeed. They did not, of course, conclude commercial treaties like the Intercursus Magnus; however, the bishop could to a certain limited extent stimulate economic activity within the palatinate. The bishopric had the privilege of running a mint in Durham City on the Palace Green, from which were issued royal as well as episcopal coinage. It would be going too far to suggest that the bishops pursued any coherent form of monetary policy. More important were the lead, coal and iron mines within the regality, assessed in 1535 at an annual value of 185.00.00.<sup>3</sup> The lack of parliamentary taxation in the bishopric, as well as the exemption of certain areas of the diocese from the clerical taxation voted by the Northern

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, "Richard Fox" in The Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1885), vol. 20, p. 151. Hereafter referred to as DNB.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Valor Ecclesiasticus Temp. Henr. VIII Auctoritate Regia Institutus (Record Commission, 1825), vol. V, p. 299. Hereafter referred to as Valor.

Convocation, at first glance seems to indicate a supply of unencumbered capital which could be used toward other economically sound purposes. It ignores the fact that this tax-free status owed its existence to the ever-present threat of Scottish raids; nor would the money saved by the clergy have been likely to have found its way into economically productive and expansive undertakings. This freedom from lay taxation has also to be balanced against the fact that Durham county was not represented in Parliament.

In other things the bishop was indeed as king in Durham. Not only did the Conyers family of Sockburn and the Bulmers of Brancepeth hold their lands of the bishop, but the Nevilles did as well. The Bishop's peace, and not the King's peace, was enforced in the palatinate, and although the county was not represented at Westminster, the laws passed there were applicable within the franchise. It was the bishop's duty to enforce them, not the king's. He was entitled to all lands forfeited within the franchise by treason, to a share in the spoils of the border warfare, and to primer seisin until the identity of the heir had been established by means of an inquisition post mortem. In addition to possessing all the mines in the county, he held the wardship of the land of children and idiots.

Not only did the palatinate display these characteristics usually attributable to an independent sovereign, but it had a similar governmental machinery, and to all of its offices the bishop had the right of appointment. The palatinate possessed its own chancery, exchequer and courts. With an annual income valued at 2398.07.10.,<sup>1</sup> the receiver-general of the exchequer was certainly not idle. It was an income composed of the bishop's feudal dues and farms, the revenues from the mines and grants of money from the

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 299.

clergy. The receiver-general was in charge of the collection of all forms of revenue save one: the grants made by the Northern Convocation to the King were normally collected by the prior of Durham, who then sent the sum to St. Mary's Priory in York, for which deliverance an acquittance would be issued.<sup>1</sup> Manorial dues paid in kind were subsequently sold and their profits were paid in at the exchequer. The drains on this income consisted, among other things, of officials' salaries and payment for the upkeep of the Border defenses, as well as for the bishop's four residences in the county at Stockton, Darlington, Bishop Auckland and Durham. An additional expense, again in connection with defense, was contemplated by Wolsey, who apparently intended to give wages to those inhabitants of the bishopric who served against the Scots, a practice not hitherto followed.<sup>2</sup>

The chancery, over which presided the temporal chancellor, principally oversaw the bishop's feudal rights within the county. This official was also required to give competent legal advice when the bishop acted in his capacity as judge. In 1509 Thomas Castell, the prior of Durham, sang the praises of Hugo Asshton, the temporal chancellor at that time, to Ruthall:

Wher i' yor lordshipes laste lettre to me yor lordship desyred  
me to assiste yor gud and honorable chaplen mastr' chau'eller whys  
busynessies for yor lordship My lord. . . hys wysdom sadness  
and discrecon ar so grete yt lytle or nowght he hath nedett my  
assistence or counsell . . . the lytle . . . I may or can do  
hath beane and shalbe att hys owne comaundment iff itt shuld  
be att mydnyght yor lordship hath in my powr mynde as greate  
a jewell of hym as I trow any lord or powrman in all yngland  
hath of any s'v'nt . . . yor diocess may . . . be full quiett  
he beynge y'in boyth towards god and man . . . I hafe beane . . .  
ev' glad of hys presence . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: See especially Locelli 18 & 19.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/30/254. 21 March, 1524, William Frankleyn and Sir William Bulmer to Wolsey.

<sup>3</sup>PRO: SP 1/229/9.

Thus the prior signified his satisfaction with the appointment<sup>1</sup> of so able a man to the chief administrative post in the bishop's household. Closely associated with the chancellor was the escheator,<sup>2</sup> appointed at the bishop's pleasure. It was this officer who conducted the inquisitions post mortem of the bishop's more substantial tenants. Only after the discovery of the true heir to the estate did they receive a writ from the bishop instructing them to vest the livery in that heir. They also conducted inquisitions ex officio in cases of alienation. If the lands of one of the bishop's tenants changed hands without the bishop's licence, the diocesan, through his escheator, could seize those lands and take the profits from them until a fine had been levied on the offender.<sup>3</sup>

It was the sheriff who was the principal agent in seeing that the laws were enforced within the palatinate. He had the rather onerous tasks of arresting and imprisoning criminals as well as receiving the judicial fines levied within the courts. Members of the local gentry were the usual occupants

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: DURH. 3/70/membrane 1, no. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Escheators: Richard Hansard, Esq. 1494-1497  
 John Perkykson 1497- ?  
 Michael Wharton, Esq. 1501, sede vacante,  
 1502-1505  
 Thomas Redmayn, Esq. 1505- ?  
 Michael Wharton 1505 supersedeas  
 Thomas Reidman, Esq. 1505-1507 (same as Redmayn ?)  
sede vacante  
 John Perkykson 1507- ?  
 1509-1518  
 John Bentley 1518- ?  
 William Eure, Kt. 1523-1525  
 Robert Bowes, Esq. 1529, sede vacante  
 1530-1543

From D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS, vol. 13, ff. 18r-20.

<sup>3</sup>R.L. Storey, Thomas Langley and the Bishopric of Durham 1406-1437 (London, 1961), p. 123.

in both the posts of escheator and sheriff.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, no members of the county gentry served as temporal chancellor, one of the posts of greater responsibility within the palatine administration and which did not necessarily have to go to a man in orders. James<sup>2</sup> has suggested that the bishop's influence was not as great as his lands and holdings might suggest, as they were in the main administered by the local gentry, who regarded such offices as their right and due owing to their social position. If that is true, then it seems likely that the choice of so many non-Durham based administrators for the post of temporal chancellor may have been the bishop's bid at extending his influence and control in the county. The Crown certainly pursued a similar policy, successively excluding the Percies and the Nevilles from the wardenships of the Marches in favor of families less influential within the diocese.

The process by which the king gradually whittled away political influence from the likes of the Nevilles was eventually turned on the bishop himself in 1536, when it was enacted that:

. . . Cuthbert now Busshopp<sup>3</sup> of Durham and his successours Byshopes<sup>p</sup> of Durham and theyr temporall Chauncellour of the Countie Palantyne

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|                        |  |        |           |
|------------------------|--|--------|-----------|
| <sup>1</sup> Sheriffs: | Ralph Bowes, Kt.                                       | occurs | 1494      |
|                        |  |        | 1502      |
|                        | William Bulmer   |        | 1502      |
|                        |  |        | 1507      |
|                        | Ralph Bowes, Kt.                                       |        | 1516      |
|                        | Roger Lumley, Esq.                                     |        | 1516      |
|                        | William Eure   |        | 1518      |
|                        | William Bulmer, Kt.                                    |        | 1523      |
|                        | William Bulmer, Sen., Kt.,<br>and John Bulmer, jointly |        | 1527      |
|                        | John Bulmer, Kt.                                       |        | 1529-1530 |
|                        | William Hilton, Kt.                                    |        | 1530- ?   |

From D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS, vol. 13, ff. 184-20.

<sup>2</sup>James, p. 35.

of Durham for the tyme beyng and ev'y of them, shall fromehensforthe be Justices of Peace within the said Countie Palantyne of Durham, and shall exc'cyse and use all maner thinges within the same Countye Palantyne that apperteyneth or belongeth to any Justice of Peace within any Countie of this Realme of England to do exc'cise and use, by vertue and auctoritie that they be Justice of Peace, in as ample and large maner as any other Justice of Peace in any<sup>1</sup> Countie within this Realme have or myght do exc'cise or use . . . ✓

Justice  
= Justices

Among the most important provisions of the act was that limiting the bishop's patronage in the secular government of the county:

. . . no p'sonne or p'sonnes of what estate degree or condicion so ev' they be . . . shall have any power or auctoritie to make any Justices of Bire Justices of Assise . . . of Peace or Justices of Gaole delyv'ey, but that all suche Officers and Ministers shalbe made by letters patentes under the Kinges greate seale in the name and by auctoritie of the Kinges Highnes his Heires, Kynges of this Realme, in all Shires Counties Counties Palantyne and other Places of this Realme . . .<sup>2</sup> ✓

f/

In most instances this demotion to the status of a mere justice of the peace made little practical difference in the way the routine business of the palatinate was actually performed. It would perhaps be more correct to say that the operative changes brought about by the act lay more in the realm of the bishop's influence than in his legal power. Aspiring office-seekers no longer had any need to pay suit to the bishop. No more was his the final voice in the matter of appointments. Here was a diminution in the diocesan's power which even Tunstall's appointment to the presidency of the Council of the North could not salvage. That post did not possess the antiquity and therefore reverence which had been accorded to the diocesan as lord bishop, and its power was only temporary at best. Furthermore, pardons would henceforth be obtainable only from the Crown. The source of

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<sup>1</sup>Statutes, vol 3, p. 558, 27 Henry VIII. c. 24, "An Acte for recon-  
tynuyng of c'tayne lib'ties and franchises hertofore taken frome the  
Crowne." ✓

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 556. ✓

justice was now relatively far away in Westminster. Once again, this may have made little difference in the actual outcome of cases subsequently brought forward in Durham county. The impression of the king, however, was hazy and perhaps unreal to the likes of the Border thieves and the Scots. The lord bishop had been flesh and blood and a power with which to contend. While it defies measurement, it was probably true that with the Act of 1536 the bishop lost some of his credibility with the Scots. He lost, moreover, the profits from the judicial processes which in the future would operate in the Crown's name, and concomitantly, a degree of independence of action which these added revenues had previously made possible.

There remained only the diocesan machinery itself, typical of practically every other English see, but which, acting in concert with the palatine government, had at times strengthened the authority of the bishop. The law meant little or nothing to the Tynedale and Redesdale thieves. The denial of all sacraments except, ominously, the last rites, was first necessary to humble those "famosos latrones" and bring them to justice.<sup>1</sup> In addition to such disciplinary action it was the duty of the bishop to ordain men to the priesthood sufficient in number to meet the needs of his diocese and to collate men to the benefices in his gift. Tunstall was especially mindful of the former of these duties. He had to fill the gap caused by several

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<sup>1</sup>The thieves remained a problem throughout the period. See PRO: SP 1/32/205 for just one example; FR, "Monicio contra Famosos Latrones de Tyndall et Byddall", pp. 80-84; see also chapter one in S.M. Keeling, "The Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Border Counties, 1534-1572" (Durham University Ph.D. Thesis, 1975) for a good brief discussion of the volatility of the Borders. She dispenses with "the traditional romantic view of the Borderers, which regards them as warlike through no fault of their own, violent certainly, but in a highly colourful way, and atoning for this to a large extent by a reluctance to kill, a strong sense of honour which led them always to keep their word, and of course a strong streak of nationalism.", p. 18.

years in which no ordinations had taken place within the county.<sup>1</sup>

His resumption of this lapsed duty partly explains the decrease in ordinations at York of men bearing letters dimissory from Durham.<sup>2</sup> In superintending the spiritual welfare of his diocese the bishop also had the right to make a visitation every three years and to investigate such matters as the education and non-residence of the clergy, the complaints of the parishioners, the quality of the preaching, if any took place, and the maintenance of the church buildings themselves. No bishop of Durham during this period seems to have availed himself of this opportunity, although there are several indications that visitations were contemplated from time to time.<sup>3</sup> The archdeacon also had the right of annual visitation, but there are no records to suggest that these were ever carried out. The only known visitation to take place was undertaken by the bishop's provincial superior, the archbishop of York, in 1501, when the episcopal see was vacant. In doing so he exercised a right which was frequently disputed by the prior and convent of Durham.

To aid in the smooth running of his diocese the bishop had a hierarchy of officials, the most prominent of which were the vicar-general, the commissary or sequestrator-general, the official, registrar, suffragan and the archdeacon. Least important was the suffragan, whose main duty was the

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<sup>1</sup>Ann Foster, "Bishop Tunstall's Priests" in Recusant History (The Catholic Record Society, 1967-68, vol. 9), pp. 175-204. "Between 1531 and 1535 he ordained in all 100 seculars and 31 regulars."

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 28, passim.

<sup>3</sup>Tunstall's valuations of the benefices in his gift appear to have been drawn up in anticipation for such a proceeding, and he issued five preliminary warnings of a visitation in 1532. Gladys Hinde, ed., The Registers of Cuthbert Tunstall Bishop of Durham 1530-1559 and James Pilkington Bishop of Durham 1561-1576 (Surtees Society, 1952), pp. 19-30. Hereafter referred to as TR.

ordination of candidates to the priesthood in the absence of the diocesan.<sup>1</sup> The vicar-general carried out many of the bishop's duties in his absence, but his authority only lasted so long as the bishop remained outside the diocese. The registrar dealt with the diocesan archives and prepared replies to official correspondence and diocesan commissions. The man did not have to be in orders. Christopher Chaytor served as notary public and registrar to Bishops Tunstall, Pilkington, and jointly with his son, to Bishop Barnes.<sup>2</sup> A more permanent member was the official or official principal. He presided over the Consistory Court, in Durham held in the Galilee Chapel of the Cathedral, and heard cases ex officio and those brought in by plaintiffs, as well as dealing with probates and administrations. He definitely required some knowledge of canon law. Both men known to have been officials at this time, John Walker, vicar of Merrington in 1494, and Edmund Cowper, rector of Washington from 1520-21, had respectively the qualifications of LL.B.<sup>3</sup> and Decr. Lic.<sup>4</sup> The sequestrator, or commissary-general, for a good part of this period was Christopher Werdale.<sup>5</sup> The nature of this office's duties goes far in explaining the choice of a local man for the post. Not only was it in his capacity to sequester the fruits of benefices when vacant or when their incumbents did not keep them in a decent state of repair, but he also had the delicate duty of dealing with the probate of wills. In particular, his testamentary jurisdiction included

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Sparke, Suffragan Bishop of Berwick. Charles Sturge, Cuthbert Tunstall (London, 1938), p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>TR, preface, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford (Oxford, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 1963-4.

<sup>4</sup>Donaldson, "Patronage . . .", vol. 2, p. 286.

<sup>5</sup>D.S. Boutflower, ed., Fasti Dunelmenses (Surtees Society, 1926), vol. 139, p. 138. Hereafter referred to as SS 139.

the disposal of the goods of people who had died intestate, as well as jurisdiction over moral offences. It was a wise political move to appoint a local man to deal in matters which touched the inhabitants so near.

The main responsibility for the running of the diocese, when the bishop was absent, fell to the archdeacon. Theoretically he exercised a spiritual jurisdiction over the area within his competence, the archdeaconry, of which there were two in the diocese, corresponding to the counties of Durham and Northumberland. In addition to annual visitations, he was supposed to oversee the discipline of the parish clergy, as well as to induct clerks into their new benefices. It has been said that most men desired this post only for the lucrative revenue it brought in.<sup>1</sup> Tunstall estimated the value of Durham archdeaconry with its accompanying rectory of Easington at 100.00.00.<sup>2</sup> Any thoughts that this post would be a leisurely and profitable sinecure must have been quickly dispelled for William Frankleyn, archdeacon of Durham from 1515-1555 and temporal chancellor from 1514.<sup>3</sup> Until Tunstall's episcopate the bishops were frequently absent, a fault for which Wolsey was notorious, and Ruthall's duties as diocesan did nothing to keep him away from the king's service at such places as the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the ordinary spiritual jurisdiction exercised by the archdeacon, Frankleyn found himself increasingly engaged in the defense of the Bishopric and repairs to Norham Castle, the holding of musters and worry over the victualling of troops, and the politics of the Border. His letters describe in detail the facts of life with which an official on the Borders

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<sup>1</sup>R.L. Storey, Diocesan Administration in the Fifteenth Century (York, 1959), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>TR, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>SS 139, p. 47; PRO: DURH. 3/70/membrane 19, no. 68.

<sup>4</sup>DNB., vol. 50, pp. 3-4.

had to deal. In 1518 he wrote of the " co'tynuall drowt the last yere and of the hard wynter folowyng catell is ded & goan and the few catell that hav lefte ben so po'r and weake that es yet no man will offer any monye for theym which is a sore hyndraunce to o'r resaytes . . ." <sup>1</sup> In 1522 he continued:

. . . I assure your Lordship your Bushopriche men be very joyous and glad in this and all other busynes, and especyally even now to do the Kinges Grace and your Lordship the best plesur and service that lyethe in theyr power. How be it, they be not so hable now by moche as they were within theis thre yeres by past by reason of the gret dethe that was lately here, for within theis two yeres ther is ded within the Bushopriche above the number of 4000 peple, wherof in Duresme towne and Darnton parishe only ther dyed thre thowsand. And also they be very lothe to have any meddlyng with that contrie men about Bewcastell Dale and Carlyle, by cause they did as moche or more noyaunce to Englishemen than in maner was doon unto theym by the Scottes at the last feld, as they saye. . . . And besydes that ther is (moch) harnes lyeng in howses infectyd<sub>2</sub> with siknes, where with no man dare or will medle . . .

The thieves were a problem throughout the period. In 1525 Frankleyn attributed their activities to political incitement, "Whiche thinge as it is thought bye wysemen of thies quarters is doon uppon sinistre policie of entent to maike the kinges highnes and youre grace too beleve / that without the speciall helpe of the lord dacre and other his adherentes theye cane not be reducede too good Rewll and soo, of necessitie ye muste be enforcedede too restoore hyme too have the govern'nce of the cuntreie lyke as he haith hade heretofore . . ." <sup>3</sup> Finally, in 1528, Frankleyn instructed Ralph Hungate

. . . to shewe maister Cromwell there is so gret pov'tie in the countrie for fayling of corne and dethe of catell theis iij yeres

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/16/314. 25 June, 1518, William Frankleyn to Bishop Ruthall.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/26/24. 10 September, 1522, William Frankleyn to Bishop Ruthall.

<sup>3</sup>PRO: SP 1/34/113. 30 March, 1525, Anthony Fitzherbert and William Frankleyn to Wolsey.

past that I can not see howe the reragis of the last yere of my lorde Rowthall can be levyed wtout utterdoing of the countrie. Wherefore I can be contentid to compownde wt my lordes grace for it upon a reasonable some and to sell suche po'r stufe plate and catell as I have and to paye it of my owne goodes And if maister cromwell woll advyse me so to do I will come shortly up to be at a clear syde wt my Lordes grace for the same.<sup>1</sup>

The unceasing raids of the Tynedale and Redesdale thieves, the bad harvests and poor stock, the "great death" and its consequent effect on the Bishopric's ability to defend itself: all speak eloquently to the precariousness of life in the sixteenth century, an instability accentuated in this case by the geographical proximity to the Borders, a region meant to be a buffer zone, a "muris lapideus contra Scottos."<sup>2</sup> It was the archdeacon's job to secure it, and to do so he had to be both ubiquitous and tireless in his efforts.<sup>3</sup>

The clerical community over which this hierarchy presided included six collegiate churches and the monastic community. Most of the monastic houses lay in Northumberland. The only exceptions were Durham priory with its cells of Finchale, Jarrow and Monkwearmouth and the nunnery at Neasham. The influence of the nunnery is difficult to assess. Its most frequent appearance in the records is in the ordination lists where it provided the titles necessary for many a young man to be ordained priest.<sup>4</sup> The Benedictine

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/52/20.

<sup>2</sup>Lapsley, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>There is little reference to the archdeacon of Northumberland undertaking similar secular duties in his jurisdiction. This seems rather odd, as the Border problem was certainly more pressing in that shire.

<sup>4</sup>See Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23-28, passim.

priory played a more active role in the community, collecting the clerical tenths, providing educational stipends for secular scholars at Durham College, Oxford, and collating to the benefices in its gift. It also headed what might amorphously be called a third archdeaconry in the diocese, more properly called the "officialty",<sup>1</sup> which consisted of those parishes in which the Cathedral owned the rectory, parsonage and the landed estates which were appendant to them. The priory never seems to have had a recruitment problem. The total number of men in Durham and its cells was usually maintained at an average of seventy.<sup>2</sup> Northumberland could boast communities of Cistercians, Austin canons and Premonstratensions, but the Benedictines reigned supreme in the palatinate. It has been categorically stated that no Durham monks held benefices before the dissolution,<sup>3</sup> but there would seem to be reason to doubt that statement. A Robert Bennet, B.D., D.D. from Cambridge, appears as vicar of Gainford in 1538. He is also variously described as bursar of the Convent of Durham and a monk of that body.<sup>4</sup>

Founded originally to counter the influence of the priory were the collegiate churches at Chester-le-Street, Lanchester and St. Andrew Auckland. Darlington and Staindrop were both founded in the early fifteenth century. Staindrop was a rather different case. It was founded by Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, and was less a college than a hospital for the elderly

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<sup>1</sup>David Marcombe, "The Dean and Chapter of Durham 1558-1603" (University of Durham Ph.D. Thesis, 1973), p. 311.

<sup>2</sup>R.B. Dobson, Durham Priory (Cambridge, 1973), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, p. 726.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, p. 12; Foster, p. 181; The Durham Household Book or The Accounts of the Bursar of the Monastery of Durham from Pentecost 1530 to Pentecost 1554 (Surtees Society, London, 1844), vol. 18.

members of the Earl's household. Norton, another collegiate body, was founded in the thirteenth century. Its prime purpose was educational, but it had little effect on the educational level in the surrounding area. Its eight portions were designed to support students at the universities, and were in no way responsible for any pre-university education at the parish level. Lanchester and Chester-le-Street were relatively new foundations (1284 and 1286 respectively), while Auckland College underwent a revamping of its organization in 1294. All arose out of the strained relations between Anthony Bek, then bishop of Durham, and his rival the priory. These institutions were headed by a dean, who alone had the cure of souls in the parish, and maintained a number of prebends, whose occupants were frequently non-resident and who provided substitutes to perform their duties for them. It was small wonder, as they seem singularly uninspiring. The Statutes of Lanchester College prescribed their obligations, probably typical of most of the collegiate bodies, and the "don'ts" cited therein may be taken as some indication of the boredom likely to set in:

Let the Vicars read and also sing aloud, distinctly, with full voice, and without ever skipping or cutting the words, making a good pause in the midst of every verse, beginning and ending altogether, not protracting or drawing the last syllable too long; not hastily running it over, much less intermingling any strange, variable, profane, or dishonest speeches. <sup>1</sup>

More important, perhaps, was the influence in terms of patronage which these colleges afforded to the bishops. Auckland was composed of a deanery and twelve prebends, Chester-le-Street and Lanchester each had a deanery and seven prebends; Darlington had a deanery with four prebends and Norton was composed of a vicarage and eight portions, for a total of forty-three places at the diocesan's disposal.

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<sup>1</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 309.

At the very bottom of the diocesan hierarchy scattered about the four wards of Durham county were some 240 clergy serving in forty-nine rectories and vicarages along with 250 of their lesser colleagues attached to another forty-nine chantries and seventeen chapels.<sup>1</sup> A more informative picture is given of the clerical population for 1501.<sup>2</sup> At that time 117 unbeneficed clergy answered the call to the visitation as opposed to forty-nine beneficed men. With 100% of the beneficed clergy accounted for in some way, there is little reason to doubt the accuracy or thoroughness of these visitation returns. The unbeneficed outnumbered the rectors and vicars by a ratio of more than two to one. However, that ratio was not maintained in each parish. St. Nicholas, Durham, in addition to the vicar there, listed thirteen unbeneficed, only five of whom could be assigned to a chantry or gild within the church.<sup>3</sup> The geographical area encompassed in a parish was apparently no guide to the number of men necessary for the cure of souls and masses for the dead. Stanhope, for example, had only two unbeneficed priests in its service.<sup>4</sup> Extrapolating dangerously over another twenty year period, the total of the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy for 1501 made up

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Book of Royal Charters . . . to the See of Durham, Part D. The subtraction of the four gilds listed as chantries in this survey gives Wilson's total of forty-five chantries. Similarly, the addition of "Ecc. Whitworth", "Ecc. Croxdale", "Ecc. Denton", the "donative of Muggleswick" and eight other benefices listed as "Parish churches & chapels without incumbents, & served only by stipendiary priests" to the seventeen listed merely as chapels again gives Wilson's figure of twenty-nine "chantry chapels or free chapels."

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, ff. 148r-155v.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 148v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., f. 154r.

only .93% of the total population of the county.<sup>1</sup> It remains to be seen how the clergy carried out their duties in a regional society in which, well before the Reformation, the traditional bulwarks were in the process of being undermined.

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<sup>1</sup>See page 17, this chapter. The clerical percentage of the population for 1501 equals the total number of beneficed and unbeneficed clergy (166) divided by 23,808-(10.9% x 23,808).

## Chapter Three

## Origins, Education and Social Standing

## I. Origins

In a letter to Wolsey in April of 1523, William Frankleyn went to great pains to warn the recently elevated Bishop of Durham of the duplicity of one of his clergy, the Dean of Auckland. William Strangeways had spoken so effectively against the latest subsidy demanded of the clergy that "it (his speech) hyndred' the collectors A hundrethe poundes at lest."<sup>1</sup> Provoked by this and other of Strangeways' offences, Frankleyn further declared that

. . . albeit the said dean des'vid gret punyshement for his misdemeynor in that behalfe yet his Act & dealyng was not farre discrepant from' his own' nature & kyende for his fader grandser & all other of his progenie wer scottishemen borne & wheder he be so or not I stand in dowt . . .<sup>2</sup>

Frankleyn's statement is amenable to a number of interpretations. In part, it is indicative of the animosity born by the Border peoples towards the Scots, and in the archdeacon's case this factor should not be ignored. In his role as one of the chief administrators in the diocese, Frankleyn's denunciation of Strangeways, who was on the verge of offering his services to Wolsey, might also have had a two-fold purpose: to displace from himself the blame for the slowness and difficulty with which the subsidy had been collected, as well as to quash any aspirations to Wolsey's favor which Strangeways, a potential rival, might have had.

A simple report of the dean's obstreperousness would have been enough for that purpose, however, without drawing attention to his supposed Scottish

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<sup>1</sup>BL: Titus B. I. f. 295v. — *old foliation (now f. 301v)*

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 295v. See chapter one, page 4, for the exact details of the dean's offences.

descent. In the context of the social background of the parochial clergy, Frankleyn's statement shows that there were certain traits which a man brought to the priesthood, characteristics about himself from which he could not escape and which were noticeable by his parishioners. Birth and family background, educational opportunities lost or taken, and one's social standing both before and after entering the priesthood: these were all factors which might influence the closeness of clergy-lay relations within that area of most concentrated contact, the parish. The conclusions of other historians working on regional studies for the sixteenth century reflect this well. Haigh compared the anti-clericalism noted by Dickens for York diocese with its apparent lack in Lancashire and observed that the Lancashire clergy were "usually local men working in the parishes of their birth, and there was no marked antipathy towards them."<sup>1</sup> Bowker felt that a priest's ability to get along with his parishioners was probably of more concern to those people than the amount of education he had,<sup>2</sup> and one could probably extend that to include social status as well.

What geographical area did the Durham beneficed clergy come from? Bearing Haigh's conclusion in mind, how many of them were local? It has proven useful to study three sets of beneficed clergy. The first is the entire beneficed population for the period 1494-1540, the second includes the beneficed clergy for Durham city, 1494-1540, excluding curates in charge of chapels of ease such as Croxdale, and third group is composed of the entire beneficed population for the year 1501. In the following analysis, "local" refers to men originating within Durham diocese, i.e., within the counties of Durham and Northumberland. Due consideration is also given to

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh, pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup>Bowker, The Secular Clergy . . ., p. 56.

those men designated as coming from the North parts. Briefly, those shires include Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire, the main criteria being their rather inconvenient distance from the capital and the consequent difficulty this posed for the clergy in effectively taking part in the governance of the realm while based, in most cases, north of the Trent.

Table One  
The Beneficed Clergy 1494-1540

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total Identifiable                                      | 79 |
| From Durham Diocese                                     | 45 |
| A specific place  | 20 |
| -by place name  | 4  |
| -by family names/known relations from secondary sources | 9  |
| Outside Durham Diocese                                  | 34 |
| In the North parts                                      | 15 |
| -by place name  | 1  |
| -by family names/known relations from secondary sources | 5  |
| Aliens  | 3  |

Of the approximately 240 beneficed clergy in Durham county during the period 1494-1540, the origins of only 79 of these men, or 32.9% of the total, can be traced. Forty-five of these men came from within Durham diocese, while thirty-four originated outside of the Bishopric. Of the latter number, only three appear as aliens. John Boernius of Geneva appeared as Master of Kepier and served as archdeacon of Durham by papal provision, holding the accompanying rectory of Easington for eleven years before his rather lucrative resignation in 1515.<sup>1</sup> He owed these posts as much to the fact that his father, John Baptista, was physician to King Henry VII as to

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<sup>1</sup>SS 139, p. 16; Hutchinson, vol. 2, p. 220. Hutchinson states that Boernius resigned with a pension of 50 l. per annum.

any papal favor.<sup>1</sup> He was probably yet another example of Henry's tight-fisted habit of rewarding his servants with ecclesiastical preferments. John Sixtine, born in Phrygia, was rector of Eggescliffe from 1515 until his death from the plague in 1519.<sup>2</sup> Both he and Boernius were excused from paying a subsidy to the king in 1513 along with other aliens such as Erasmus and Polydore Vergil.<sup>3</sup> The third man, Alexander Legh, rector of Houghton-le-Spring from 1490 to 1500 and Master of Sherburn from 1471 until his resignation in 1500, was said to have been born in Scotland and was granted a patent in 1480, confirmed in 1484, allowing him to live in England.<sup>4</sup> His subsequent record was one of service to the English crown as the king's resident ambassador in Scotland. He died in 1501. William Strangeways, the afore-mentioned Dean of Auckland, has not been included among the aliens, nor has Edward Strangeways, presumably a relative. Frankleyn, after all, could only say that the dean's ancestors were "scottishemen borne", not with any certainty that he himself was. Both William and Edward have been included, however, in the categories "Outside Durham Diocese" and "In the North parts". Frankleyn did stress that Strangeways was untrustworthy and attempted to offer his "foreignness" as proof of this. Furthermore, a record of letters dimissory issued to "Edwardo Strangways de harlesey" in 1487 argues for a possible Yorkshire connection.<sup>5</sup>

Probably the most tenuous conclusions are involved in the category

<sup>1</sup>DPK: Loc. 18, no. 15, Loc. 19, numbers 10 and 11.

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 119. - *don't say he d. of plague.*

<sup>3</sup>See note 1 above.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, p. 78; DNB, vol. 32, p. 419.

<sup>5</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23, f. 76r.

inferred by place names, both within and outside of Durham diocese. Within the diocese, Thomas Farne, vicar of St. Oswald's, Durham City, is attributed to "Durham Diocese",<sup>1</sup> but his name strongly suggests a more specific connection with Northumberland. One could entertain similar though more positive speculations about the origins of Robert Hertburn, rector of Kimblesworth in 1526.<sup>2</sup> A Robert Hertburn appears as a secular scholar at Durham College, Oxford in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup> If both men are one and the same, there is a strong possibility that he came from the parish of Hertburn in Northumberland. The same type of hypothesis should be posed for the one man listed under this category outside of Durham diocese, a William Applyby,<sup>4</sup> perhaps from Appleby in Westmorland. The place name category should not be taken as indicative of any definitive conclusions, merely as a recognition of one factor which can in some instances in conjunction with other evidence help in placing a priest.

There is better luck to be had when one turns to locally well-known families. Among the Randall MSS. in the Dean and Chapter Library is a list entitled "Familiae Comitatus Palatini Dunelmensis."<sup>5</sup> On that list occur the names of Bellasis, Claxton, Fulthorpe, Surtees, Swinburne, Tong and Wilberforce. Men bearing all of these names appear among the beneficed

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<sup>1</sup>SS 139, p. 44; Emden, vol. 2, p. 668.

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>Emden, vol. 2, p. 919.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 42; SS 139, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS, vol. 5, pp. 1-2.

clergy in the early sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Known relations further narrow down the likelihood of whether a particular man was from Durham diocese or not. Bishop Fox came from the Grantham area in Lincolnshire. His nephew Thomas Colston appears as archdeacon of Durham and rector of Easington from 1497 to 1499.<sup>2</sup> Colston succeeded Ralph Bothe of Barton, Lancashire, whose relative, Bishop Laurence Booth of Durham, came from the same place.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Lancelot Collynson, the vicar of Norton from 1518 to 1538, was a nephew of Archbishop Bainbridge, who is known to have come from Hilton in Westmorland.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately one can move out of the realm of inference and speculation with an examination of the primary documents extant for the period. The Durham clergy seem in general to have had well-established family connections within the diocese. Thomas Bentley, for example, held the vicarages of Staindrop and Billingham. He appears in a Chancery enrollment, albeit deceased, in 1540, at which time commissioners were appointed to receive the lands of "Matilde Baillez de Dunelm vidua sorore et herede Thome Bentley clerici defuncti fratris et heredis Johannis Bentley de Trillesdon

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|                               |           |                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> Anthony Bellasis | vicar     | St. Oswald's, 1533-39 ✓ |
|                               | rector    | Whickham, 1533-40 ✓     |
|                               | "         | Brancepeth, 1539 ✓      |
| Peter Wilberforce             | rector    | Redmarshall, 1533 ✓     |
| William Tong                  | vicar     | Heighington, 1499 ✓     |
| Roland Swinburne              | portioner | Norton, 1531 ✓          |
| William Fulthorpe             | vicar     | Gainford, 1531 ✓        |
| Lancelot Claxton              | rector    | Winston, 1458-1496 ✓    |
|                               | dean      | Lanchester, 1495-1532 ✓ |
| John Surtees                  | rector    | Dinsdale, 1498-1526 ✓   |

From SS 139, pp. 12, 26, 48, 125, 130, 141, 126. ? - J. 1529

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 29; Emden, vol. 1, p. 715; DNB, vol. 20, p. 150; Hutchinson, vol. 2, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup>John Venn and J.A. Venn, ed., Alumni Cantabrigienses (Cambridge, 1922), vol. 1, p. 180; Hutchinson, vol. 2, p. 220.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, pp. 10-11, 28-9; Emden, vol. 1, p. 91.

defuncti fratris et heredis Johannis Bentley de Trillesdon defuncti."<sup>1</sup>

The family of Christopher Werdale has been well documented and had several branches in Durham diocese as well as connections with the Claxtons, another family boasting clerical members at this time.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps John Surtees best exemplifies the tendency of the clergy to be strongly locally based. Surtees, rector of Dinsdale, was the second youngest son of seven children, and belonged to that branch of the Surtees family descended from the barons of Gosforth.<sup>3</sup> Through the marriages of his siblings he had connections with Darlington, Middleton-One-Row, the Killinghall family of Middleton St. George and the patrons for that benefice, and the Conyers of Sockburn. Genealogical evidence reveals that his grandmother was one Margaret, a daughter of James Strangeways of Harlesey, Yorkshire, perhaps a relation of the previously mentioned Dean of Auckland. Christopher Conyers, father-in-law to John's brother Thomas, referred to the Surtees family as "comed of knights and of old ancestry and his father (John's and Thomas') is my sister's son."<sup>4</sup> Family connections were widespread and went back several generations. John Surtees himself first appears in the official record of the Durham Chancery in 1513 with one "Margerie Curtes wedowe" to settle "the title of inheritance of Thomas Surtes late deceased" (his nephew) . . . "touching landes and tentes' in felling morton middleton and other places under their custody within the

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: DURH. 3/78/membrane 12. A John Bentley appears as escheator in Durham county in 1518. See page 26, footnote 2.

<sup>2</sup>Wills and Inventories from the Registry at Durham, Part III (Surtees Society, 1906), vol. 112, p. 79, Will of Robert Claxton, 10 May, 1579; Werdale Family History, Durham Department of Palaeography, South Road.

<sup>3</sup>W. Percy Hedley, Northumberland Families (Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1968), pp. 58-61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

manor of dedynsale";<sup>1</sup> and once again in 1526 with Marmaduke Surtees, "armiger", in connection with the settlement of some more lands and debts.<sup>2</sup>

Wills would seem to be the obvious source in determining family connections. Unfortunately their numbers, especially before 1540, and the information provided therein are nothing so precise as the information for John Surtees. The wills of the laity do not always designate the exact relationship of the testator to the beneficiary. A case in point is the will of William Todd of Monk Hesledon. In it he declared his

hartly desire is that mr doctor Todd would take my sone  
Nicholas with his filial portion, forseeing . . . that  
if (it) shall chance the said Nicholas . . . to dye  
. . . er he come to the years of discretion, that his said  
portion not expended to . . . returne to his brother  
William Todd . . .<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Doctor Todd's exact relationship to William and his sons is not given. It is here merely assumed that William is referring to Ralph Todd, vicar of Hart from 1537 to 1554 and subsequently vicar of Hartburn.<sup>4</sup>

It is much easier to gain knowledge of family members through the wills of the clergy themselves. In comparison with the laity, they had a tendency to be more precise in making their bequests. Accordingly John Emson, vicar of Gretham, saw fit to mention his sister "Thomassing Emson daughter" in 1558.<sup>5</sup> Anthony Farell, vicar of Dalton-le-Dale, was particularly anxious to provide for his sister Margaret Robinson and her

<sup>1</sup>PRO: DURH. 3/70/membrane 7, number 34.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: DURH. 3/74/ membrane 14.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR I, f. 4.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>Wills and Inventories . . . of the Northern Counties of England from the Eleventh Century Downwards, Part I (Surtees Society, 1835), vol. 2, p. 169.

children, in addition to mentioning at length his cousins Ellen Kent, Thomas and Richard Farell and Margaret Watson.<sup>1</sup> However advantageous it is to have clerical wills, their real liability lies in their numbers. Only about twenty wills survive for the clergy, both beneficed and unbeneficed, and all are post-1540. They provide only a glimmer of the family ties which many of the clergy undoubtedly had with the locality, but for which there is now little proof. One can only postulate at this stage that such close ties between clergy and laity had beneficial effects.

Donaldson argued, over a longer period and for the entire diocese, that "the local clerks were in a considerable majority as incumbents of Durham benefices."<sup>2</sup> At first glance the figures in Table One do not reflect this. There the local clerks make up only a little over 50% of the men identifiable for the period. A few cautionary notes are in order, however. The lack of evidence on the majority of the beneficed men in no way indicates their unfamiliarity with the area. Furthermore, if any conclusion is to be drawn at all from these statistics, that conclusion should be based on the sum of the men clearly identified as being within Durham diocese plus those men designated as being from the North parts, the counties of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Sixty men, or 73% of the beneficed clergy in this small sample, appear to be drawn predominantly from the northern parts of the realm and of those coming from the northern counties just over half came from Yorkshire.

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: PR II, ff. 299r-301. Will of Anthony Farell, priest, vicar of Dalton in the valley, 16 October, 1560.

<sup>2</sup>Donaldson, "Patronage . . .", p. 315.

Table Two  
County Breakdown

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Durham Diocese | 45 |
| Yorkshire      | 8  |
| Cumberland     | 4  |
| Westmorland    | 2  |
| Lancashire     | 1  |

A similar breakdown for 1501,<sup>1</sup> the year of the archiepiscopal visitation, does not yield drastically different results, although one might be tempted to call it more accurate, dealing as it does with the entire clerical population for one year. For that year the origins of some 38%

Table Three  
The Beneficed Clergy, 1501.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total Identifiable                                      | 19 |
| From Durham Diocese                                     | 11 |
| A specific place  | 6  |
| -by place name  | 2  |
| -by family names/known relations from secondary sources | 5  |
| Outside Durham Diocese                                  | 8  |
| In the North parts                                      | 2  |
| -by place name  | 0  |
| -by family names/known relations from secondary sources | 0  |
| Aliens  | 0  |

can be traced as opposed to the 32% for the entire period. Once again, there seems to be no clear majority of those from Durham diocese as opposed to those outside it. However, the operative total of Durham men plus those in the north parts yields a figure of some 68.4% originating in the northern part of the realm. This percentage is somewhat lower than that for the whole population for 1494-1540. The actual truth may lie, in fact, somewhere

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, ff. 148v-155v. The visitation returns are also partially printed in SS 22, Appendix, p. 17.

between these two figures, as the first findings deal with the later years of the period when much more evidence is extant as compared with the scant offerings of the early sixteenth century. Of the two men coming from the North parts, one, Roger Layburn,<sup>1</sup> the future bishop of Carlisle, was born near that town while Robert Sornebie came from Yorkshire.<sup>2</sup> The local clerks do indeed maintain a majority, although one might hesitate to call it a considerable one.

Professor Dickens, in his studies of York city and diocese,<sup>3</sup> has identified what has been referred to as a "theme of regional diversity"<sup>4</sup> in connection with heresy cases and the laity's beliefs as gleaned by a study of wills. Briefly the York city clergy were found to be more conservative than those of the countryside. Leaving heresy and clerical beliefs aside, a question suggests itself for Durham City. Did the clergy of St. Oswald's, St. Mary in the South Bailey, St. Mary in the North Bailey, and St. Nicholas parish churches deviate in any significant way from the findings for the county as a whole?

Seventeen men appear as rectors and vicars, and in the case of St. Nicholas parish, as curates, of whom only seven or 41% are identifiable. This is already higher than the findings for the previous two samples. Moreover, 100% of those men were from Durham diocese and the North parts. The two men who originated outside the diocese came from Cumberland and Westmorland. Adding primary evidence to the above, two more men who were

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<sup>1</sup>Venn, vol. 3, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup>See Dickens, Lollards, and "Secular and Religious Motivation in the Pilgrimage of Grace", in Studies in Church History IV, ed. by G.J. Cuming (Leiden, 1967), pp. 39-64.

<sup>4</sup>Palliser, p. 20.

previously unidentifiable could probably come under the category, "Dunelmensis diocesis." George Bayts, formerly rector of St. Mary in the North Bailey, made bequests in 1548 to several men bearing the name of Baites,<sup>1</sup> while Hugh Snell's longevity of service in the diocese went back to 1478, when he was described as the "Bishop's sole commissary and judge."<sup>2</sup> The beneficed clergy for Durham City appear overwhelmingly to have been local men, a fact doubly underlined by the observation that in the vast majority of cases their ecclesiastical preferments did not extend outside of Durham diocese. William Appleby, M.A., held the vicarages of Norton and St. Oswald's;<sup>3</sup> Hugh Snell was successively rector of Haughton-le-Skerne and vicar of St. Oswald's.<sup>4</sup> Even Anthony Bellasis, vicar of St. Oswald's and a notable pluralist, held all of his preferments involving the cure of souls within the diocese of Durham.<sup>5</sup> The money accruing from these Durham City benefices was not great. Only that of St. Oswald's exceeded 10.00.00 per annum, while the others hovered between four and five pounds.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, many priests supplemented that comparatively meager income with other, more lucrative benefices within the diocese.

The bishopric obviously had some attraction to be able to keep its local clerks within the area. Whatever their ambitions may have been, the diocese must have helped to satisfy them in some way. The supposed poverty

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, George Bayts, vicar of Kellow, 1548.

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>Valor, V, p. 314.

of the area, based on the continual vigilance necessary to deal with the Scottish raids, at first glance argues against any sensible parson remaining in the area, until one remembers that it was because of that very poverty that Durham was among those counties exempt from royal taxation. With a laity free from royal taxation, perhaps it was easier to collect clerical dues. Lapsley has described the county palatine as " . . . a group of institutions reproducing all the essential characteristics of the central government . . . a microcosm of the kingdom."<sup>1</sup> Dobson has also noted the existence of a clerical as opposed to the merchant elite found elsewhere, involved in the process of government.<sup>2</sup> If so, then the ambitious local man had less reason to leave the north country and seek preferment in the more influential circles of London and the court. Moreover, the strong local family ties, already demonstrated for a number of clergy, undoubtedly provided the contacts one needed when seeking those first preferments. Prolonged service within the diocese did not necessarily check the ambitious local clerks. Witness the case of Roger Layburn, who held several Durham benefices before being elevated to the bishopric of Carlisle in 1504.<sup>3</sup> It appears from the records that several local men did attempt to follow what Bowker has called "the path to the episcopacy."<sup>4</sup> Their entrance upon that path came to some extent with the help of their local connections.

Rather different tactics must be used in considering the origins of

<sup>1</sup>Lapsley, pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Dobson, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>SS 139, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Bowker, "Non-Residence . . .", p. 50. Anthony Bellasis held many canonries and prebends, and so did the archdeacon, William Frankleyn, who was not himself a local man. Neither one of them received a bishopric, however, and in the case of Frankleyn, one wonders whether he made himself too indispensable as archdeacon.

the unbeneficed clergy. These men are diabolically difficult to trace, there being no successions of clergy for the various chantries and chapels which they served. Indeed, it is even difficult to give a final total of the unbeneficed for the period. Some men appear only obscurely as witnesses in wills and then disappear entirely from the records. Even attempts to deal with the unbeneficed for 1501 yield few conclusions. Of 117 men, only twenty-eight, bearing letters dimissory and described as "Dunelmensis diocesis", can be traced through the bishops' registers and ordination lists, and even then none too certainly.<sup>1</sup> Dominus John Smyth, cantarist at Gainford in 1501, provides a typical illustration of this difficulty. Recourse to the ordination lists shows that a John Smith attained all of his clerical orders in 1493, and for good measure, that of subdeacon twice. A further search shows that John Smyth was also proceeding through orders in the 1480's as well.<sup>2</sup> Clearly there was more than one man from Durham bearing this nondescript name. The historian is left with the impossible task of deciding which man it actually was, a task complicated by the fact that John Smyth did not even have the good grace to make a further, more definitive, appearance in the records after 1501.

It has been pointed out by other historians that the higher the salary of the priest, the more likely he was to be non-resident.<sup>3</sup> The relatively poor stipends of a chantry priest or chaplain argue for the strong likelihood that a large majority of the unbeneficed clergy, in addition to being non-graduates and resident, were local men. Perhaps the true test of origins for the unbeneficed would be longevity of tenure.

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<sup>1</sup>For the ordination details of clergy appearing at the 1501 visitation, see FR, passim; Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23-25, passim.

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23, passim.

<sup>3</sup>Bowker, The Secular Clergy, p. 92.

If a man had education and the right contacts, why would he travel out of his locality to take on a relatively poor chantry? Far better it would be to take on a comparatively lucrative benefice, leaving the lower paid posts to the less-well qualified and -well-connected priests. It is therefore fair to postulate that the longer a priest held a particular chantry and remained bound to a particular area, the more likely he was to have come from that very area.

Table Four  
The Unbeneficed Clergy, 1494-1540

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total                                    | 250 |
| Appear only once in the records          | 153 |
| Appear over a one to five year period    | 27  |
| Appear over a five to ten year period    | 12  |
| Appear over a ten to fifteen year period | 19  |
| Appear for more than fifteen years       | 39  |

Table Four gives a breakdown of the unbeneficed clergy according to the timespan over which each man occurs in the records. The total number of men considered is the minimum possible for the period. It does not include those men among the ordination lists, both diocesan and archiepiscopal, who do not appear as serving in some capacity after their ordination. Nor does it include those curates and chaplains named in wills and documents dated after 1540, who do not also appear in any of the records for the period itself. Moreover, the time spans are calculated from a curate's first appearance as serving in some official capacity, such as acting as a proctor in the Consistory Court or witnessing a will, not from the date of his ordination.

The figures seem deceiving. One would initially be lead to believe, from the number of men appearing only once in the records, that the unbeneficed

were a fairly mobile lot. After all, more than half of the total make a solitary showing. It is essential to understand the state of the evidence upon which these figures are based. The bulk of these 153 men are mentioned in the visitation of 1501. Although some information can be gleaned from the registers of Durham priory and from the records now housed in the Public Record Office, there is no other collaborative evidence available for the early sixteenth century. Fox's episcopate ended with his translation to the see of Winchester in 1501. After that date there are no episcopal registers extant until that of Tunstall for 1530-1559. No doubt quite a few of the 153 men in this category served at various chantries and curacies for several years. Ordination lists, although not conclusive, are helpful. For example, Thomas Curwen, who appeared at the visitation as a chaplain at St. Nicholas, Durham, and for whom there is no further reference in the Durham diocesan records, appeared at York in 1493 bearing letters dimissory and was ordained to the orders of acolyte, subdeacon and deacon.<sup>1</sup> The case is similar for Dominus Simon Hetherington. He also appeared at Savage's visitation. He had been issued letters dimissory by Fox and had received his final orders at York during 1499-1500.<sup>2</sup> Clearly some men's association with Durham diocese went further back than the figures in Table Four show.

Similarly, the total of the last two categories in Table Four reflect the abundant evidence available at the latter end of the period, in particular for the 1530's. The documents survive for a wider variety of situations in which the clergy might have become involved. Perhaps the most systematic record of incumbents during that decade occurs incidentally in

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v; AR 23, f. 196r.

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r; AR 23, ff. 466v-467v; FR, p. 127. ✓

the Valor Ecclesiasticus. A comparison of these unbeneficed clergy with the chantry returns for 1548<sup>1</sup> reveals that almost 50% of the men appearing in the 1535 records recur in 1548. Almost all of them were still serving at the same chantries and chapels. The case of Thomas Saunderson is probably not atypical. In 1535 he occurs as "Thomas Saunderson cap'nus cantarista" at the Chantry of the Twelve Apostles in the chapel within Barnard Castle. He was still there in 1548. Further research shows that he was present in the diocese somewhat longer than those thirteen years. He was ordained priest by Tunstall in 1532, prior to which, in 1530, he had received the aforementioned chantry as a grant from the king on the death of the previous incumbent, Christopher Appulby.<sup>2</sup> Evidence over the longer period is sparse but not lacking. In 1501 Germanus Creighton appeared as a priest at Gateshead. Thirty-four years later he was still serving in the same parish at the Chapel of the Holy Trinity.<sup>3</sup> In brief, 38.7% of the unbeneficed clergy spent varying amounts of time in their chantries and of that number, 64.5% remained for what seems like exceedingly long time spans. Vicars and rectors might come and go, but the unbeneficed clergyman, the local parish priest, tended to be a rather well-established fixture in the parish.

Other evidence, although limited, supports the argument for local origins. Extremely few wills survive for this group of men, in fact, only four. Yet all four individuals named relatives among their beneficiaries. William Blenkinsopp and William Blunt both left bequests to their brothers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, pp. 312-326; SS 22, Appendix, pp. 59-76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Appendix, p. 67; Valor, V, p. 321; TR, p. 42; PRO: C 66/657.

<sup>3</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r; Valor, V, p. 322.

<sup>4</sup>Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 102; DSR: Orig. Will, William Blunt, Priest, Croxdale, 1558.

Richard Towgall of Gateshead in his will of 1541<sup>1</sup> established his relationship to another unbeneficed priest called John Huchenson by referring to him as "my sister's son", and Edward Athey<sup>2</sup> named what seems like a legion of men of the same surname, some of whom were based in Longnewton and who seem to have been nieces and nephews rather than siblings. A reference to an "Edwardo Adthe consanguindo Roberti Adthe nuper de Dunelm defuncti" appears among the Chancery enrollments of 1536<sup>3</sup>, although this Edward is not in any way identified as being in orders.

The majority of the clergy, beneficed and unbeneficed, came from the northern part of the realm. In congregating around Durham City, they did not need to leave the area in order to gain high ecclesiastical preferment. For the unbeneficed clergy in particular, their parishioners were frequently the neighbors among whom they had grown up, and if not, these men often found themselves within a rural setting similar to many another in northern England. In many an instance, these men were an integral part of that remote region well before ordination.

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Wills, Richard Towgall, priest, Gateshead, 1541.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 225, Edward Athey, clerk, 1565.

<sup>3</sup>PRO: DURH. 3/78/ membrane 4, no. 111.

## II. Education

A certain amount of learning was a desirable characteristic no less in the local parish priest than in the ecclesiastical administrator.

Accordingly, on 21 January, 1496-7,

. . . in Capella maiori infra manerium de Auckelande episcopi situata coram venerabili viro magistro Ricardo Nykke utriusque iuris doctore iudicialiter ibidem sedente comparuit quidam dominus Johannes Wotton capellanus, quem dictus venerabilis vir post examinationem eiusdem monuit quod de cetero non celebret infra diocesim dunolmensem .<sup>1</sup> . . . quousque melius instruatur in arte gramaticali . . .

The official line was expressed in somewhat more flowery language when Magister Thomas Farne, vicar of St. Oswald's, was granted a dispensation for non-residence in May of 1498 by the papal nuncio for the purpose of spending seven years in university study. It was fitting that priests be well educated "Ut tanquam lucerna super candelabrum posita luceant atque in alias luminis sui radios diffundant . . ." <sup>2</sup> This hopeful sentiment expresses clearly the viewpoint of the church that the clergy were meant to be set apart from their parishioners, even if they were only more thoroughly grounded in the trivium and quadrivium of the local grammar schools than those of their flocks lucky enough to have attended these institutions. All men progressing through orders had to satisfy the officiating bishop of their educational soundness, but it must be noted that the characteristics which passed their scrutiny varied with the recruitment picture at any particular moment. <sup>3</sup> The ordination lists at York and Durham scrupulously state the degrees attained by the university graduates, but

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Rosemary O'Day, "The Law of Patronage in Early Modern England" in JEH (vol. 26, 1975), p. 251.

the extent to which the education of the lower clergy had progressed rarely receives a mention. A variety of means have been attempted toward discovering the true educational level of the clergy. Among the most notable are those involving the study of wills and bequests of books, as well as attempts to measure the "latinity" of the clergy from visitation records and the chantry certificates of a later date.<sup>1</sup> These methods deal with the results of the educational process, but what of the various stages of the process itself?

The first stage consisted of pre-university education, in the form of grammar or almonry schools, or schools maintained by chantry priests. Traditionally these institutions taught the seven liberal arts: grammar (i.e., Latin), rhetoric and logic (the trivium), and arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy (the quadrivium). Throughout the fifteenth century and well into the 1530's the grammar schools maintained a rather stultifying method of instruction, rote memorization, in no way conducive to any actual intellectual grappling with the subject matter. No doubt this had its consequences in an age when schooling was not compulsory and had to fit into the agrarian schedule when and if it could be arranged. Simon very succinctly characterized the period as one of "expansion rather than advance" in which "there are few signs of any fresh thinking."<sup>2</sup> Teaching seems to have been singularly uninspiring, nor do the inventories of books in the chantry certificates do anything to contradict this impression. The returns in question are for Appleby and Burgh-under-Stainmore, both in Westmorland. No such detail exists for the Durham schools. Among those few books which appeared were a mass book, several dictionaries, the Bible

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<sup>1</sup>Purvis, "The Literacy . . .", pp. 147-165.

<sup>2</sup>Joan Simon, Education and Society in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 52, 59.

in Latin and a glosa ordinaria.<sup>1</sup> Pre-university education also involved a certain amount of specialization, if one dares to use the term. Accordingly, almonry schools, maintained by monasteries, were frequently the paths upon which future entrants into the regular clergy might embark. Another institution of elementary education was the song school. Although they taught reading and writing in addition to singing, they enabled the grammar schools in the near vicinity to omit music from their curricula.

A.F. Leach regarded the grammar schools, and in particular those taught by chantry priests, as the panacea to the educational ills of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the strength of sheer numbers alone. He reasoned that the proportion of people having access to grammar schools in early modern England was greater than in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The Durham evidence argues against him in a two-fold way. Leaving population figures aside,<sup>3</sup> difficult enough to assess in any case, there is the matter of geographical distribution of those schools which did exist in Durham diocese. To put it mildly, they were not sprinkled evenly at convenient intervals, but occurred in a string along the eastern half of the diocese, the only exception being the twin schools of grammar and song at Barnard Castle in the Guild of the Trinity, located six miles from the parish church. Young boys in the north western part of Durham county, in the areas surrounding Stanhope, Middleton in Teesdale, and Wolsingham, and intent upon learning

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<sup>1</sup>A.F. Leach, English Schools at the Reformation 1546-1548 (New York, 1972), pp. 251-253.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>The chantry certificates give some population figures. Barnard Castle was credited with 1017 "howsling people", Gainford with 900, Stanhope with 1000, and Middleton with 440. See SS 22, Appendix, pp. 59-76.

grammar in preparation for a clerical career, had a fair distance to travel to attend the schools. The town of Stanhope, for example, was twenty miles from Barnard Castle, fifteen from Bishop Auckland, and twenty miles west of Durham City.<sup>1</sup> John Hamsterley, rector of St. Mary in the South Bailey in 1537,<sup>2</sup> and a local man to judge from his surname and the proximity of his patron the Earl of Westmorland, probably attended the Barnard Castle school, unless Neville had taken sufficient interest in him at an early enough age to have sent him to one of the other schools in the eastern half of the county. Open to him were the Chantry of All Saints in Darlington which maintained "a free school of Grammar for all maner of children thider resortyng."<sup>3</sup> Durham City itself offered a wider selection, including the grammar and song schools founded in the fifteenth century by Bishop Langley<sup>4</sup> and taught by Robert Hertburn and William Cockey, priests at the Chantry of Our Lady and St. Cuthbert in the Galilee Chapel of Durham Cathedral, and the schools maintained by the monastery for poor secular scholars. Perhaps the educational picture in Durham county would not look so grim had more of the records of the collegiate churches survived.<sup>5</sup>

Across the border in Northumberland only two schools come to light in the chantry certificates of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Northernmost was Alnwick, in which were "Lands and possessions belonging to the use and stipend of two priests, the one Master of a grammar school, and the other master of a song school . . ."<sup>6</sup> In 1547 the two priests were accounted "well learned,

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<sup>1</sup>Fordyce, vol. 1, p. 649.

<sup>2</sup>SS 139, p. 55. ✓

<sup>3</sup>Leach, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>However, "Since the majority of canons were non-resident, ancient collegiate churches, particularly those which originated as royal free chapels, often had little corporate life or local influence." Simon, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>Leach, p. 156.

of honest conversation and qualities." The other school, this time only a grammar school, was located in Morpeth<sup>1</sup> and was maintained by the Chantry of All Saints within the same town. Goerge Folberry, a Northumberland native, afterwards canon and prebendary of Lanchester and master of Durham School, and William Greveson, vicar of Pittington from 1499-1507, may have received their pre-university education at either Alnwick or Morpeth. No doubt some of the chantry priests in Durham county who spent unusually long amounts of time in the same cure received what education they had in the near vicinity of their chantry. Leach may be supported by some authorities as to the proportion of people to schools.<sup>2</sup> The real question is one of accessability, particularly relevant for the western half of the diocese.<sup>3</sup>

The education offered to the future chantry and beneficed clergy within Durham diocese was distinctly limited. To what extent was education offered by clerics, in particular chantry priests, after their ordination? Leach emphasized the role played by chantry priests. Fortified by his published evidence from the chantry certificates, he not only said that at least 200 chantry priests were involved in teaching but that, owing to defective survival of the documents, many more were as well.<sup>4</sup> Wood-Legh and Dickens in their respective studies dispute this,<sup>5</sup> and the Durham records support their

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<sup>1</sup>Leach, p. 155-6.

<sup>2</sup>VCH, vol. 1, p. 365.

<sup>3</sup>One wonders whether it was common for students from Durham diocese to cross county boundaries to attend grammar schools. Such schools existed in Northallerton, Yorkshire, and in Appleby and Brough in Westmorland. In western Durham county the only bridge across the Tees was at Barnard Castle, and connected the town with the village of Startforth in Yorkshire. Fordyce, vol. II, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Leach, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>A.G. Dickens, The English Reformation (London, 1966), p. 211; K.L. Wood-Legh, Perpetual Chantries in Britain (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 269-270.

contention that teaching was not the widespread duty among chantry priests which Leach represented it to be. Of the approximately 248 to 250 unbeneficed clergy known to be active in Durham county from 1494-1540, only seven men were involved actively in education.<sup>1</sup> One is forced to the conclusion that, just as few opportunities for learning were available to would-be clerics in the remoter areas of the diocese, so these men, when they had finally obtained a chantry, would similarly be able to offer little in the way of education.

Upon his entry at Durham College in Oxford Robert Hertburn had transcended a line of demarcation which in the vast majority of cases separated the beneficed from the unbeneficed clergy. Few chantry priests ever aspired beyond the grammar schools. William Cockey, B.A. 1516 from Oxford,<sup>2</sup> a frequent proctor in the Durham Consistory Court and a school master in Durham, and Henry Tailboys, B.A. and a chaplain of the chantry in Dinsdale from 1513 to 1515,<sup>3</sup> were two of the few men who did. That line of demarcation was given verbal expression with the use of the title Magister for the graduate members of the clergy while the lower ranks were known simply as Dominus. The differentiation was as indicative of the long years spent in study as upon the social status thus conferred. The bachelor of arts degree was attained

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<sup>1</sup>At the Chantry of Our Lady and St. Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral:  
Robert Hertburn  
William Cockey

At the Guild of the Trinity in Barnard Castle:  
Peter Coward

At Bishop Langley's school:  
John Hotchinson  
William Dossey  
Thomas Sanderson  
Edward Watson

Leach, pp. 60-61; VCH, vol. 1, pp. 373-4.

<sup>2</sup>C.W. Boase, Register of the University of Oxford (Oxford, 1885), vol. 1, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 194v; FR, p. 127.

only after four years spent in opponency. Upon determination the candidate might wish to spend another three years in intensive study toward the degree of master of arts and thus earn the salutation of Magister. At that time the candidate was expected to lecture in schools for one further year after his inception. The B.Can. L. and B.Civ.L. degrees had different and more lengthy requirements. Cambridge University required the candidate, if already a graduate in arts, to have spent eight years studying civil law, prior to incepting. If he were not a graduate, the candidate would have to resign himself to the fact that the next ten years of his life would be spent immersed in civil law. If the man considered his time precious, however, he might opt for Oxford, where the graduate and non-graduate need remain for the comparatively short times of four and six years respectively. The requirements for the B.Can. L. were similar. If a historian wished to devise a test to determine how ambitious the clergy were, length of stay at the universities would probably not be a bad start. The most aspiring man might spend a total of seventeen years to earn the degree of doctor of divinity, and his dedication could not be doubted if he had to finance himself by means of relatively meager exhibitions.

Who were these ambitious men among the Durham beneficed clergy? More importantly, it has been suggested that educated priests were preferred by like-minded men.<sup>1</sup> To what extent were the members of the graduate clergy preferred by the more educated patrons? The bishops had by far the greatest potential influence, holding the patronage of some 25 benefices with the cure of souls, not to mention innumerable canonries and prebends. All six men to hold the see from 1494-1540 were extremely well educated. Fox, Bainbridge, and Tunstall had experience of both Oxford and Cambridge, as well as several foreign universities, while Ruthall and Sever had links with Cambridge and

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<sup>1</sup>O'Day, "Clerical Patronage . . .", p. 162.

Oxford respectively. Wolsey alone held only an M.A. from Oxford. The cathedral ran second to their diocesan in terms of patronage. Thomas Castell, prior from 1494-1519, and Hugh Whitehead, his successor and the first dean, both had attended Durham College at Oxford and earned D.D.'s. The Neville's, Earls of Westmorland, held the advowsons for four benefices, but only one of their family, Thomas Neville, rector of Brancepeth from 1456 until Edward Strangeway's collation to the benefice in 1498, is known to have spent any time at university.<sup>1</sup> In terms of sheer volume, these were the individuals who had potentially the most influence. Did they use it to bring forward a more educated group of clergy?

Table Five  
The Patrons and Education

|                                       |                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Graduates holding benefices 1494-1540 | 91*            |
| Graduates preferred, 1494-1540        | 71             |
| Opportunities for preferment:         |                |
| Bishops                               | 52/79 or 65.7% |
| Priors                                | 23/40 or 57.5% |
| Nevilles                              | 6/15 or 40.0%  |
| St. Mary's, York                      | 6/11 or 54.5%  |
| Others                                | 4/4 or 100%    |

| Patron             | Oxford | Cambridge | Both | Unknown |
|--------------------|--------|-----------|------|---------|
| Fox 1494-1501      | 6      | 10        | 2    | 5       |
| Sever 1502-05      | 1      | -         | -    | -       |
| Bainbridge 1507-08 | -      | -         | -    | -       |
| Ruthall 1509-22    | 5      | 5         | -    | 1       |
| Wolsey 1523-29     | -      | 2         | -    | 2       |
| Tunstall 1529-40   | 1      | 10        | -    | 2       |
| Priors             | 13     | 6         | 1    | 3       |
| Nevilles           | 2      | 4         | -    | -       |
| St. Mary's, York   | 1      | 5         | -    | -       |
| Others             | 1      | 2         | -    | 1       |
| Totals             | 30     | 44        | 3    | 14      |

<sup>1</sup> See Venn, vol. 3, p. 244.

\* This figure includes neither the men holding only canonries and prebends, nor those preferred prior to Fox's episcopate. The initial figure of 91, repeated in the table below, does include the canons and prebendaries.

Ninety-one graduates appear among the beneficed clergy from 1494-1540, seventy-one of whom were preferred to benefices involving the cure of souls during that time. As the leader in patronage, it should come as no surprise that the bishops used 52 out of 79, or 65.7% of their opportunities for preferment, to bring forward graduates of the universities. Priors Castell and Whitehead preferred graduates in 57.5% of their advowsons falling vacant and St. Mary's Priory did so in 54.5% of their benefices. The Nevilles, chief lay patrons in the county, lagged behind all these ecclesiastical patrons with 40% of their advowsons being conferred on graduates. Cambridge men outnumbered those from Oxford, quite in keeping, however, with the fact that Cambridge drew most of its students from the northern and eastern parts of the realm.<sup>1</sup>

Any attempt to determine whether the bishops favored one university over the other seems rather fruitless. Bainbridge promoted no graduates while Sever was responsible for only one. Neither man was bishop long enough to make much impact on the patronage scene. Ruthall, based on the bare figures, appears to have been rather neutral on the whole issue, promoting five graduates each from Oxford and Cambridge, while Wolsey did little in the way of promoting graduate clergy during his six year episcopate. To be fair, the bishop could only act when benefices fell vacant. Fox and Tunstall, both of whom had experience of each university, had ample opportunity to exercise their patronage rights and at first glance it would appear that they both favored men coming out of the younger of the universities. In Fox's case, however, the five graduates to whom no university can be assigned negate the persuasiveness of that argument. Only Tunstall showed an

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<sup>1</sup>Barratt, p. 49; J.J. Scarisbrick, "The Conservative Episcopate in England 1529-1535" (University of Cambridge Ph.D. Thesis, 1955), p. 23.

apparent preference for graduates from what was, by then, the less conservative of the two universities.

Oxford held its own among the graduate clergy of the county but it did so largely through the patronage of the Benedictine priory of St. Cuthbert. The monastery maintained at Durham College, Oxford, eight secular scholars, four of whom were to come from the city or diocese of Durham, and two each from the peculiars of Howdenshire and Allertonshire. When examining the recipients of the monastery's patronage it becomes obvious that Whitehead and Castell, on behalf of the brethren of their community, had other factors to consider besides the education of the candidate. Despite the obvious importance which they attached to learning, certain factors went far in narrowing down the ultimate choice to one particular cleric over another. Christopher Werdale received the benefices of Merrington (1505), St. Oswald's (1519) and Aycliffe (1520), all of which were in the patronage of the monastery. Christopher Barnes received Merrington in 1517, and Ralph Whitehead and William Whitehead served, respectively, in Pittington (1528); and Pittington (res. 1530) and Heighington (1529), all in the gift of the priory. Was it any coincidence that among the brethren of the monastery were Robert Werdall, feretrar, Thomas Barnes, sub-sacrista, and Hugh Whitehead, the prior himself?<sup>1</sup> Quite obviously, the monks were looking after their own, and perhaps insidiously, as previous bishops of Durham whose relationships with the monastery were stormy might view it, extending the influence of the monastery at the expense of the bishop.<sup>2</sup> Far from suggesting at this

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<sup>1</sup>Hutchinson, vol. 2, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Dobson, p. 203. "Of the thirty bishops of Durham between the 'reformation' of 1083 and the Dissolution very few had any native connection with the diocese, and only three . . . were monks of St. Cuthbert. Not unnaturally, the monks of Durham came to see themselves rather than their bishop as the true champions of their saint, determined to preserve in a later age what vestiges still remained of a once extensive and unchallengeable freedom."

point the continued existence of any such quarrels between bishop and monastery, it is perhaps wiser to maintain that patrons saw some value in an aspiring incumbent who was both educated and had local connections. Of the six graduates promoted to livings in the Neville's patronage, four went to men of proven northern origins: Anthony Bellasis to Brancepeth in 1539; Thomas Bentley, son of a Thomas Bentley of Durham and a secular scholar at Durham College, Oxford, to Staindrop in 1537; Roger Lupton of Sedbergh, North Yorkshire, to Brancepeth in 1503; and Edward Strangeways of Harlesey, again to Brancepeth, in 1498. Where possible there was an attempt to combine learning with an affinity for the locality.

In criticism of university education William Tyndale wrote that

. . . they have ordained that no man shall look on the scripture, until he be noselled in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles; with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the scripture . . . And when he taketh first degree, he is sworn that he shall hold none opinion condemned by the Church; but what such opinions be, that he shall not know . . .<sup>1</sup>

Just as Tyndale complained of the insufficiency of university education in preparation for the bachelor's degree, making it necessary to spend further years in study if one were ever to become knowledgeable in divinity, so have modern historians commented upon the misdirected education upon which men embarked after acquiring their first degree. Reid noted that all of the five members of the Council of the North were lawyers.<sup>2</sup> Another has declared that "the study of theology was at a discount, while skill in civil law was at a premium, and ensured rapid promotion."<sup>3</sup> Barratt concluded

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<sup>1</sup>William Tyndale, "The Practice of Prelates" in Works ed. Henry Walter for the Parker Society (Cambridge, 1849), vol. II, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup>Reid., p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>H. Maynard Smith, Pre-Reformation England (London, 1938), p. 30.

in a similar vein for the clergy of Oxford, Worcester and Gloucester:

Throughout the period a large majority of the graduates had arts degrees. Thus even in a diocese surrounding a university only a few clergy had studied theology at a university, for this subject was still a post-graduate study and not included in the arts curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

The Durham evidence agrees with these conclusions in two ways, but not in a third. Divinity was indeed unpopular. Only seventeen men had acquired degrees in the subject. Secondly, as if to make up for this deficiency, thirty-seven men held degrees of one kind or another in civil and canon law. Either their ambitions went no further than a particularly lucrative career as an ecclesiastical lawyer, or they did not have the stamina or means to remain for further years of study toward a degree in theology. Despite efforts made in the fifteenth century, encouragement to study theology over law had had little effect. Where the Durham graduates depart from Barratt's conclusion is in the number of men holding arts degrees, B.A.'s and M.A.'s. They were no more numerous than those who had earned further degrees in divinity. If income was at issue, then it appears that an arts degree was sufficient to maintain a graduate comfortably. Of the seventeen men with arts degrees, only two received less than ten pounds per annum from their benefices, and the highest stipend was 89.18.0.<sup>2</sup>

Aside from the relatively objective criterion of the graduate versus the non-graduate clergyman, little evidence survives to show the results of whatever educational process the members of the Durham clergy had undergone. Many chantry certificates state, in addition to the age of the incumbent, the commissioners' general estimation of his educational abilities. While the Durham documents are extraordinarily silent on this matter, the Northumber-

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<sup>1</sup>Barratt, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 313. ✓ - note of  
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land certificates feature four chantry priests ordained under Fox and Tunstall. John Cowper, Matthew Swane, and Cuthbert Bayliff, of the ages of 76, 50, and 34 years respectively, were all accounted "meanly learned" but "of good and honest conversation and qualities."<sup>1</sup> Roland Pratt, 48 years of age and ordained priest by Tunstall in September of 1533, was alone to be considered "well lerned, of honest conversation and qualities."<sup>2</sup> His will and inventory of 1565 make no mention of either books owned or any bequests for educational purposes.<sup>3</sup>

Latinity is similarly inconclusive. Palliser has suggested that the majority of wills, because they employed the same phraseology in the opening bequests, were probably written by the priests whose names were subscribed as witnesses.<sup>4</sup> One fact should be noted. The majority of Durham wills, clerical as well as lay, are in English, and the only exceptions are those testaments extant for the very early part of the sixteenth century, covering the period from April through September of 1507. These are preserved in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Durham. The see was vacant on the death of Bishop Sever in 1505 and continued so until Bainbridge attained the post in 1507. He did not receive the temporalities until 17 November, 1507.<sup>5</sup> The priory obviously continued some of the routine business of the bishopric in lieu of the archbishop of York. The urgency of the moment may well have precluded the rendering of many wills into Latin, particularly if the priest's fluency in the language made it an obviously time-consuming chore. The brethren

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<sup>1</sup>SS 22, Appendix, pp. 79-86.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Roland Pratt, Washington, parson, 1565.

<sup>4</sup>Palliser, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Emden, vol. 1, p. 92.

of the priory, however, had mastered the language to such an extent as to be able to use it, not only in their official and sometimes highly legalized and technical registers, but in such mundane matters as the "do et lego" of last wills and testaments.

In the sixteenth century the possession of books was the mark of an educated man. They were also an investment, evidence of which historians traditionally seek in wills. A study of the Yorkshire clergy disclosed that liturgical works predominated prior to 1540, and gradually disappeared after that date to be replaced by renaissance writings. Fifteen sixty proved to be another watershed in terms of clerical reading matter, for after that date theological works, particularly the works of Calvin and Beza, became common.<sup>1</sup> Only six of the Durham clerical wills mention books, either generally or by name. William Blenkinsopp, successively chantry priest in Durham Castle (1534), at St. Nicholas Church, Durham (1535), and at Gateshead (1548), made provision that "my bookes shalbe given and distributed as . . . William Smyth, clerke . . . shall thinke good."<sup>2</sup> Nowhere does he become more specific. Only Humphrey Gascoigne, master of Gretham Hospital in 1522 and canon and prebendary of Chester, and Richard Towgall became more detailed. Gascoigne had several books but only chose to describe "one book of latten of a large volume named Sermones Discipuli",<sup>3</sup> a book of sermons. Towgall enumerated "a mesbooke . . . a manuell . . . all his books . . . a dirige book . . . to Sir Stephan Tomson sermonis discipuli S'r Thomas Chilton Sermones parati . . . S'r thomas huchinson Assencius sir robart bakar Guler- nus",<sup>4</sup> all of them liturgical books and sermons. Clement Cockson, priest at St. John's, Newcastle upon Tyne, at the end of the sixteenth century

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<sup>1</sup>Purvis, "The Literacy . . .", pp. 147-165.

<sup>2</sup>Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 28, ff. 182v-183r.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Richard Towgall, priest, Gateshead, 1541.

bequeathed books of an intellectually more rigorous nature. Ordained in the 1530's under Tunstall, in 1598 he listed among his possessions a "book of cuppers sermons of the visitation . . . his sermons . . . Calvin's Institutions . . . a book of presidents . . . Mr. Udall his sermons and bezza his questions . . . the bible . . . cuppers dictionnaire . . . a book called the Golden Epistles."<sup>1</sup>

Where books were not specifically mentioned, there is the occasional recognition and encouragement of further learning. Accordingly, Anthony Farell, vicar of Dalton-le-Dale, in 1560 bequeathed "to Rauf Key a poor scholar . . . 6 s. 8 d. to by him bookes,"<sup>2</sup> while Thomas Wall, clerk of Bishopton, hoped by his bequest "to keep (John Umfray) at school during his minority."<sup>3</sup> Gascoigne made similar bequests to maintain the exhibitions of two scholars at the university. Some didn't wait until their deaths to make educational contributions. Roger Lupton of Sedbergh, rector of Brancepeth in 1503, founded the Sedbergh School in North Yorkshire in 1527.<sup>4</sup> He died in 1539.

In contrast to the relatively simple fare offered by the general parish clergy, the books delivered to Auckland collegiate church in an indenture of 1499, "pro usu, commodo et utilitate dicte ecclesie sive capelle collegiate predicte ac in libraria eiusdem perpetuis futuris temporibus remanendos et salvum custodiendos",<sup>5</sup> in some instances reflected

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Clement Cockson, clerk, curate of St. John's, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1598.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: PR II, ff. 299v-301.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PRV, f. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Leach, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup>FR, p. 93.

the standard works used at the universities. Boethius, one of the authors of the "Old Logic"<sup>1</sup> whose works were compulsory reading in the arts program, was represented by his "de consolatione philosophie cum commentario" and his "Opus de disciplina scolarium." Similarly, divinity was represented by Peter Lombard's Liber Sententiarum and copies of the Bible with commentaries. Special note should be given to the "Textus Biblie cum expositione domini Nicholai de Lira in quattuor voluminibus." Lyra was a French medieval Franciscan and a professor at the Sorbonne. He was adamant upon the literal meaning of scriptural texts, as opposed to the use of allegories to elucidate their intent. His teachings, notably the "Postillae" on the Bible, inhibited creative thought and merely counselled acceptance of the written word. Descending the intellectual ladder to the level of the parish priest, there occurs once more that basic work, the Sermones Discipuli.

Only two works in this list betray a fleeting acquaintance with the humanist movement: "Petri Marci interpretacio in Officio Ciceronis" and the "Epistole Ciceronis cum commento qui cum imperio et Cilius Ytalicus super bella Punica in eodem libro." No doubt this influence would be greater with a more extensive knowledge of Bishop Shirwood's library. During the last quarter of the fifteenth century Fox's predecessor in the see had spent much of his time in Rome and had collected some thirty volumes.<sup>2</sup> His collection contained little theology. Rather, he bought volumes of Cicero, history and even some works on architecture. No Greek books are known to have been among his collection, although Greek works may have been

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<sup>1</sup>Clara P. McMahon, Education in Fifteenth Century England (New York, 1968), p. 71, footnote 223.

<sup>2</sup>P.S. Allen, "Bishop Shirwood of Durham and His Library" in EHR (1910, vol. 25), p. 453.

present in manuscript form. Certainly Tunstall found some at Bishop Auckland during his episcopate. In this particular inventory, however, no mention is made of any Greek works. The previous dean of Auckland, a William Shirwood who died in 1497 and was presumably a relative, may well have been responsible for the addition of the Bishop's books to the collegiate library's collection. Many volumes, principally the Latin ones, however, did not remain accessible in Durham. Fox transferred them to the library of his newly founded Corpus Christi College in Oxford.<sup>1</sup> He apparently felt that there was a place for education, and that place was in the university. However, the bulk of the volumes in this particular list were concerned with canon and civil law: copies of the Decretals, Liber Sextus and Liber Clementis and a Vocabularius utriusque iuris. McMahon mentions the university stipulation that students of canon and civil law were required to use the same set of books continuously throughout their university careers.<sup>2</sup> In most cases this meant actual ownership. No doubt some of the legal tracts came as bequests from members of the collegiate body who had studied law at the universities. A further category of books comes under the heading of natural philosophy studied in the arts courses: tracts "de herbis, de animalibus, de avibus, de piscibus, de lapidibus et de urinis." While this was only a selection of books at Auckland College, the titles clearly identify them with university careers. The educational evidence for Durham county reveals two extremes, the very literate university graduates and those who showed little or no interest in the written word. Homogeneity was conspicuously lacking in the intellectual attainments of the clergy of Durham county.

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Charlton, Education in Renaissance England (Longon, 1965), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>McMahon, p. 75.

### III. Social Standing

In the visitation of 1501 Rokeby prefaced the names of twenty-two of the beneficed clergy with the word Magister. Of those men, the biographical registers of the universities contain the names of sixteen. There were obviously other criteria for crediting the six remaining men with a salutation traditionally reserved for graduates, men of higher status than the bulk of the domini. The biographical data on three of these men, Robert Chamber, Lancelot Claxton and John Surtees, provide a clue. Claxton and Surtees were from old and established families within the locality. Harkening back to a letter by Christopher Conyers, it should be remembered that the Surtees family was "comed of knights and of old ancestry."<sup>1</sup> In this particular case, lineage was the answer. Robert Chamber, rector of Haughton-le-Skerne, Stainton-le-Street and Dean of Chester, held several diocesan offices of responsibility. He served as treasurer of the bishop's household and surveyor of lands, as well as temporal chancellor from 1501-1507. He may have been a graduate, but there is no record of that fact or of his having belonged to a family of gentle birth. Social standing depended on lineage, education and service. The question is, which of these factors, or combination of factors, was the most influential?

So many of the Durham clergy make their first appearance in the records only with their ordination or initial collation to a benefice or chantry that it is difficult to know in exactly what social strata they moved prior to their entry into the priesthood. There is virtually no information on the social class of the unbeneficed clergy for the period, and that in itself

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<sup>1</sup>Hedley, p. 59.

is telling. Significantly, there are extremely few records of land transactions involving the unbeneficed clergy. Most of them seem to have fallen below the status of yeomen or husbandmen. For all men, entry into the priesthood took them out of the traditional class structure, and for some, especially, it would seem, for the unbeneficed, this meant a technical gain in status. Family history is more easily obtainable for the beneficed clergy, and in particular for the 71 graduates among that group. This group automatically attained gentry status with the conferral of a degree. Several had influential relatives among the church hierarchy. Others are known with certainty to have been the younger sons of the family. Anthony Bellasis was the younger son of Thomas Bellasis of Henknowle, Co. Durham.<sup>1</sup> The family held properties which, by the law of primogeniture, went to an elder brother. Rarely are the families of the clergy described specifically as yeomen or gentlemen. John Claymond, the vicar of Norton in 1498, was born in Frampton, Lincolnshire. His parents were described as "sufficient inhabitants" of that shire.<sup>2</sup> William Bell, in his 1558 testament, described his brother as a "citizen and cowp' of London".<sup>3</sup> Limited biographical data exists on the pre-ordination lives of seventeen members of the beneficed clergy, but the information is singularly lacking in detail. It is probably safe to say that for many of the beneficed, the possession of landed property, and therefore the status of husbandman and yeoman, was not uncommon in their families.

The graduate clergy, as was seen earlier, can be divided into three groups: those holding only arts degrees (17), those with degrees in civil

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<sup>1</sup>DNB, vol. 4, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., vol. 11, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR I, f. 2.

and canon law (37), and those with degrees in divinity (17). All were well qualified. It remains to be seen to what extent the members of each particular group were given posts of responsibility above the normal cure of souls. If a man were well qualified, his future posts would reflect not only his abilities, but the esteem in which he was generally held. One further test: of those men attaining such posts, how many were local and from old established families? Was there a sharp division between lineage and service?

With the seventeen men who earned arts degrees one can deal rather summarily. None of them appear to have been involved in diocesan administration at any time. Nine of these men, or 52.3%, were from Durham diocese and the surrounding areas. Only five held more than one benefice within the diocese in the course of their careers. The values of the livings held by this group seem to have been comfortable enough, although no one served in that most rewarding of cures, Houghton-le-Spring.<sup>1</sup> The average stipend appears to have been in the area of ten to forty pounds, the only exception being the 67.06.08 received by Denby and Ogle and the 89.18.00 by Wyatt.<sup>2</sup> Robert Hertburn was among this group and received only 3.06.08 for the rectory of Kimblesworth,<sup>3</sup> but it must be remembered that he had additional income from other sources.

It is among the two groups of civil and canon lawyers and the graduates in divinity that one at last meets with the bulk of known diocesan administrators, and proportionately less of the local men. Of the divinity

<sup>1</sup>Tunstall estimated its worth at 100.00.00. TR, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>John Denby and Cuthbert Ogle were rectors of Stanhope; Richard Wyatt was rector of Bishop Wearmouth. The values come from Valor, V, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

graduates, 35.4% were of northern origin. Of the three men holding administrative posts, only one, Thomas Pattenson, proctor of Durham Priory at the York convocation, dean of Auckland from 1511 through 1522 and rector of Bishop Wearmouth in 1520, was a native of the diocese.<sup>1</sup> Among this group were two archdeacons of Durham, Frankleyn and Layburn. Stipends began at a low of 17.18.00 and reached their highest point with those of the archdeaconry of Durham and Houghton-le-Spring.<sup>2</sup>

Pecuniary gains, however, do not really serve to make this group any different from the other two. The lawyers received salaries varying on a range of 10.09.00 to 100.00.00. The theologians and lawyers were no different from each other in terms of the canonries and prebends which they held, a feature much less noticeable among the B.A.'s and M.A.'s. Proportionately similar to the theologians, 32.4% of the lawyers were of northern origin, with only three of the ten men holding diocesan office coming from the diocese itself. Just as the number of diocesan officials increased with a greater level of education, so the number of local men, especially those coming from well-established families in Durham county, decreased. Both education and birth ensured a certain measure of status, but education in the form of a university degree seems to have been the more operative factor, particularly at the level of B.C.L. and B.Can. L. These degrees increased the probability that jobs involving a greater amount of administrative responsibility might come their way.

Simon described the humanist movement in the following way:

The humanists roundly affirmed that education and learning themselves confer nobility, a nobility of mind ranking higher than any nobility of blood . . . the true evidence of nobility in this sense is quality of service to the public

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<sup>1</sup>Venn, vol. 3, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 318. The rectory of Redmarshall was valued at 17.18.00.

good. . . . the traditional view that honour and worth rested on long lineage began to appear manifestly out of date and in need of replacement.<sup>1</sup>

Long lineage did not ensure a place in the diocesan administration, but education did. However, it was education of a particular kind, that leading to a degree in civil and canon law. Partial humanist influence was making itself felt here, but not that part that emphasized "the formation of character and not . . . the acquisition of knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Simon, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

## Chapter Four

### The Structure of the Clerical Career

#### I. The Race to the Priesthood

On 17 August 1533 John Redemayne, M.A., was collated to the rectory of Redmarshall,<sup>1</sup> a small parish in the southeastern part of the county, and variously valued at 17.18.00<sup>2</sup> and 10.00.00<sup>3</sup> per annum. In the following September at Stockton,<sup>4</sup> however, he was ordained not to the full priesthood, but to the order of subdeacon, the lowest of the three major orders. Canonically this was rather irregular. The law provided that a man could be instituted to a benefice while still a deacon, provided that he could proceed to priest's orders within twelve months time. Redemayne adequately fulfilled the age requirement. Born in 1499,<sup>5</sup> he exceeded the minimum age necessary to become a priest (24) or to be instituted as a deacon (23). He held several degrees, including a doctorate in divinity and had spent time at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as at Paris. Later in the decade he would be appointed for a six year stint as the Lady Margaret Professor at Cambridge. With his education one could find little lacking. As for being of "honest life and conversation", that could only have been judged by the bishop on this particular occasion.

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<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>TR, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>Venn, vol. 3, p. 436; DNB, vol. 47, p. 382.

As a matter of fact, the irregularity of this collation and subsequent ordination was probably due to the fact that Redemayne was a kinsman of Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of Durham at this time. Redmarshall was the first of Redemayne's clerical appointments. There are also no records of any previous or subsequent appearances for ordination.<sup>1</sup> The rapidity with which Redemayne attained his benefice and became sub-deacon indicates a certain degree of nepotism with a corresponding lack of vocation at the parish level. This same "race to the priesthood" was evident at the level of the parish chaplain and chantry priest. Sometime after July 1498 Roger Claxton entered the subdiaconate, and later attained the orders of deacon and priest on 30 March 1499 and 25 May 1499 respectively.<sup>2</sup> The very next day he was collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the chapel of St. Margaret.<sup>3</sup>

Such a nine month gallop through the three major orders was in marked contrast to the apprenticeship, extending over five and six years,<sup>4</sup> served by the monks of Durham cathedral priory. For the Durham novices this was a time for the testing of and reflection upon their vocation. For the aspiring secular clergy, it was a swift entry into a potentially lucrative career. This chapter deals principally with the difference in attitude so readily visible between the seculars and regulars, that of career versus calling. It was a dichotomy which existed no less within the ranks of the seculars themselves. There is, of course, little direct evidence as to the degree of idealism or pragmatism with which a priest might enter

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., see footnote 5, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> FR, pp. 84, <sup>85,</sup> 88.

<sup>3</sup> DPK: PReg. V, f. 46v.-47.

<sup>4</sup> Dobson, p. 64.

upon his duties, except in those cases where the priest also happened to be a virtual royal servant. It was as a humble "prest" that William Frankleyn signed himself in 1532 when he informed Cromwell of what seemed, on the whole, his commendable intention to take up residence in his prebend at York.<sup>1</sup> He also expressed concern for a "certain grassy ground lying beside my prebend . . . for the necessary fyndyng of my howse."<sup>2</sup> The archdeacon's worry was a trifle late in its manifestation, however. He had been in possession of the prebend of Stillington since February of 1525/6.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will attempt an examination of the less blatant evidence for this difference in approach to the priesthood, beginning in particular with ordination.

There were certain conditions which had to be fulfilled before the candidate could advance through the various stages to the priesthood, among them legitimate birth, sufficient learning and age, an exemplary life and an adequate title. Much of this involved rather subjective judgements on the part of the diocesan, and this lack of objectivity is emphasized by the fact that even the faintest whisper of deficiency in any of these areas, however unsubstantiated, could result in the bishop's refusal to confer holy orders on the individual. Certain traits were less of a barrier to this sacrament than others, among them illegitimacy. Accordingly, both Ralph Lee, the son of a priest, and Gerard Lilborne received dispensations from the impediment of bastardy "ut dicto non obstante defectu singule

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/69/179.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 179.

<sup>3</sup>DNB, vol. 20, p. 197.

earum ad omnes eciam sacros et presbiteratus ordines promoveri possint . . ."<sup>1</sup> Also left to the discretion of the officiating bishop was the observation of the interstices, the time meant to elapse before the reception of the next order. In fact one is forced repeatedly to return to the discretionary powers wielded by the diocesans in the recruitment process. The question is whether this reliance upon the bishop allowed less deeply committed men to advance to positions of influence within the parishes.

There were five stages in the process of becoming a priest.<sup>2</sup> The first two were the so-called minor orders of first tonsure and acolyte, and until the thirteenth century there had been a third, that of subdeacon. It was only with the conferral of the order of subdeacon as a major order that one became a consecrated person. Until one reached that point, the candidate was still free to change his mind. With the final conferral of priesthood the cleric left behind his role as a mere assistant at the mass, preparing the proper vessels for the altar, and assumed the pivotal role in the miracle of transubstantiation. In attaining this semi-magical position, the would-be priest was theoretically meant to spend one year as acolyte before becoming a subdeacon, after which three further months were supposed to elapse. More than one major order was not meant to be conferred on the same day, and similarly, a candidate was not allowed to receive all of his minor orders on the same day.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible to trace the progress of 41 men through all or part of the ordination process. Tables Six and Seven represent the men,

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<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 65-67, 138-139.

<sup>2</sup>F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London, 1974), second edition, p. 709.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 709.

beneficed (16) and unbeneficed (25), for whom the interstices actually observed by the officiating bishops are known. It is important to realize that they deal not only with the men for whom the entire progress through orders is known, but also with those for whom only their entry into the subdiaconate and diaconate, or the diaconate and priesthood, is traceable. This to a certain extent explains the high proportion of unbeneficed clergy included in the samples. Less mobile, they tended to take most or all of their orders in one diocese and are thus easier to trace from acolyte to priest. It logically follows that the bulk of the evidence for the unbeneficed clergy comes from the Durham registers of Fox and Tunstall and the archiepiscopal registers at York. The ranks of the beneficed clergy are "swelled", if one may use the term, by the information gleaned from the biographical registers. This applies in particular for men ordained in places other than Durham and York dioceses. Accordingly, Christopher Barnes, successively vicar of Merrington and rector of Washington and a native of Durham diocese,<sup>1</sup> was ordained acolyte in February of 1505 at Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford,<sup>2</sup> and appeared four years later, in March of 1509, in Lincolnshire<sup>3</sup> where he received the order of deacon. Barnes illustrates well the mobility of the future beneficed clergy. He is also one example of a man who cannot fit any of the categories of Tables Six and Seven, as there is no record of a steady consecutive progression from one order to the next. Better for this purpose are Robert Kent, rector of Houghton-le-Spring in 1500,<sup>4</sup> and John

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<sup>1</sup> Emden, vol. 1, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> SS 139, p. 72. ✓

Denby, rector of Stanhope in the same year.<sup>1</sup> Of Coventry and Lichfield diocese, Kent received the order of acolyte in that diocese on 21 December 1476.<sup>2</sup> Four months later he appeared in Rotherham's Lincoln register as a priest.<sup>3</sup> Denby attained his orders while at Oxford. He became acolyte on 20 September 1477, and deacon and priest on 16 May and 19 September of 1478 respectively, on the title of his fellowship at New College.<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of men not native to the north provides a useful check on the ordination practices in other bishoprics.

Table Six  
The Beneficed Clergy  
Observation of the Interstices  
Total Men: 16

| Order             | No. of Months | No. of Men | % of Men |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| First tonsure     | 7.00          | 1          | 6.25     |
| Acolyte           | 3.50          | 4          | 25.00    |
| Subdeacon         | 2.56          | 8          | 50.00    |
| Deacon            | 2.13          | 11         | 68.75    |
| Acolyte to priest | 9.40          | 5          | 31.25    |

Table Seven  
The Unbeneficed Clergy  
Observation of the Interstices  
Total Men: 25

| Order             | No. of Months | No. of Men | % of Men |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| First tonsure     | 3.60          | 3          | 12.00    |
| Acolyte           | 6.36          | 11         | 44.00    |
| Subdeacon         | 2.76          | 15         | 60.00    |
| Deacon            | 3.76          | 13         | 52.00    |
| Acolyte to priest | 18.60         | 6          | 24.00    |

<sup>1</sup>SS 159, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Emden, vol. 2, p. 1037.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1037.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 567.

Tables Six and Seven show the number of months which elapsed between the conferral of one order and the next. The figure given is the average number of months. For neither the beneficed or the unbeneficed group was there much deviation from the three months ruling between the orders of subdeacon and deacon. On the average the future beneficed clerk spent 2.56 months, and the future unbeneficed man 2.76 months, waiting to take the next step toward becoming fully priested. In fact it is only in the interval between first tonsure and acolyte that the men destined for the parochial cure of souls spent a greater amount of time than the unbeneficed, but this is a finding that needs some qualification. The figure for Table Six is deceptive in that only one man is represented. That for Table Seven is probably closer to the truth as it is based on a higher percentage of men traced in the sample. Both groups fall far below the year established by canon law and meant to elapse between the orders of acolyte and subdeacon. The beneficed clerks spent an average of 3.50 months in this state, and the unbeneficed a little over six months. Similarly, the future chantry priests and chaplains spent approximately twice as much time as the parish vicars and rectors in the entire process, from acolyte to full priesthood. The bishops' discretion was clearly at work, and no doubt the educational soundness of the candidate was one factor which kept the unbeneficed from attaining full priesthood sooner. Of that group, only one man, Henry Tailbois, is known to have earned a B.A.,<sup>1</sup> and he progressed from acolyte to deacon, bearing letters dimissory, at York in little less than two months!<sup>2</sup>

However, it is interesting to note that the unbeneficed men still fell far below the one year designated for this minor order. Dobson reported

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 127.✓

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23, ff. 466v, 467r, 468r.

that there was a considerable shortage of men willing to take up chantry posts and chaplaincies.<sup>1</sup> Educationally, the bishops probably found that these men could not be advanced as quickly as their university-trained brethren, yet neither could they afford to hold them back for that full year without danger of discouraging them with the prospect of a long apprenticeship. In order to prevent a falling away of candidates, the relatively immediate reward of priesthood, followed by collation to a chantry or chapel, was necessary.

The beneficed clergy certainly spent less time in progressing through orders than did the unbeneficed. Did the Durham clergy bearing letters dimissory at York proceed more quickly through orders than did those who remained in Durham? In a large diocese such as York, is there any evidence that the conferral of holy orders was dealt with in a more perfunctory fashion, especially when the bishop was faced with large numbers of men every September, December, March and June? How do the men included among the beneficed and ordained in other dioceses compare in the time elapsed as they progressed to full orders? Do they push the average number of months spent at each stage up or down, or do they have no effect whatsoever?

Table Eight  
The Beneficed Clergy  
Ordained outside York and Durham  
Total: 6

| Order             | No. of Months | No. of Men | % of Men |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| First tonsure     | -             | -          | -        |
| Acolyte           | 3             | 1          | 16.66    |
| Subdeacon         | 1             | 3          | 50.00    |
| Deacon            | 1.75          | 4          | 66.66    |
| Acolyte to priest | 8             | 2          | 33.33    |

<sup>1</sup>Dobson, p. 165.

Six of the beneficed clergy in Table Six obtained orders outside of Durham and York dioceses. Nothing is known of the time spent in the first tonsure, but a brief comparison between Tables Six and Eight shows that the time spent in any particular order by members of the clergy ordained outside the northernmost parts of England was, on the whole, shorter. Purely in terms of time, the northern bishops were more exacting than their southern counterparts. One cannot discount, even among the beneficed clergy, that they may have had less promising material to deal with. Greveson, Denby, Kent, Tonge, and Werdale, regardless of their place of origin, all had university degrees.<sup>1</sup> Of the remaining ten men in Table Six, ordained in York or Durham, only four could boast any prior affiliation with a university.<sup>2</sup> For the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy, there may have been failings in their personal lives which held them back, in cases where they were not refused outright, and of which no record was made or has survived.

Table Eight also provides some clues as to whether a candidate bearing letters dimissory received greater or less scrutiny than a clerk native to the diocese. Werdale, Tonge and Greveson all at one time or another sought ordination in different dioceses bearing such letters. On this basis Werdale was ordained subdeacon, deacon and priest in Lincoln, London and York respectively.<sup>3</sup> Tonge took his two final orders in Oxford and London,<sup>4</sup> and Greveson appeared for ordination in Sarum diocese and Oxford.<sup>5</sup> Their

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<sup>1</sup> Emden, vol. 1, p. 567; vol. 2, pp. 823, 1037; vol. 3, pp. 1885, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> They were John Claymond, Thomas Farne, John Robinson, and Thomas Pattenson.

<sup>3</sup> Emden, vol. 3, p. 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 1885.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 823.

progress through these orders took three, two and one months respectively.

Table Nine  
The Unbeneficed Clergy  
Bearing Letters Dimissory at York  
Total: 19

| Order             | No. of Months | No. of Men | % of Men |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| First tonsure     | -             | -          | -        |
| Acolyte           | 8.06          | 8          | 42.10    |
| Subdeacon         | 2.50          | 13         | 68.42    |
| Deacon            | 3.40          | 12         | 63.15    |
| Acolyte to priest | 20.75         | 4          | 21.05    |

The findings for the unbeneficed clergy bearing letters dimissory at York seem to indicate that they received greater scrutiny. As opposed to the average 6.56 months normally spent by a chantry priest as an acolyte in Table Seven, the men in this category ordained outside of their native diocese normally spent a good two months longer in that minor order. The time spent in the subdiaconate and diaconate are roughly comparable in the two tables: 2.76 as opposed to 2.50 months as subdeacon, 3.76 as opposed to 3.40 months as deacon. Such fractional differences, usually only a matter of days, were probably due to the varying dates of the ordination ceremonies themselves. The entire process, however, was longer by almost two months for those men bearing letters dimissory who took all of their orders in York. The archbishop may well have hesitated to hasten the ordination process of these men in the early stage of acolyte. He certainly would not have been as familiar with them as would their local diocesan, were he resident in the bishopric. He may well have opted for a longer career as an acolyte in case anything unsavory in the candidate's past should subsequently come to light.

The influence of the bishop was also apparent in the consideration of two other qualities sought at ordination, an adequate title and proper age.

Theoretically the bishop could be held responsible for the support of a man in orders if he had not ensured that the candidate could maintain himself to an acceptable standard.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally one had to be able to present a title of the value of at least five marks.<sup>2</sup> This might take a number of forms. Like Redemayne, men could be ordained on the title of his benefice. Patrimony, or one's private property, was another, although dwindling, alternative. Another was the title of one's fellowship at one of the universities. William Greveson obtained all of his major orders on the title of his fellowship at Merton College, Oxford, in 1498.<sup>3</sup> By far the most popular form of title appears to have been those granted by the monasteries and nunneries. The popularity of this form of title is evident in any random look at the ordination lists. At the ordination ceremony in Darlington in 1499 held by the Bishop of Ross all of the secular clergy above the order of acolyte displayed the titles of various monasteries. The sole exception was Roger Claxton who had obtained his support from Gretham Hospital.<sup>4</sup> The same holds true for the ordination at Auckland in March 1533,<sup>5</sup> and any ordination record to be found at York.<sup>6</sup> A. Hamilton Thompson suggested that the less well-off monasteries, and particularly the nunneries, may have maintained an agency in titles, selling them for a fee and thereby bolstering up their own

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<sup>1</sup>H.S. Bennett, "Medieval Ordination Lists in the English Episcopal Registers" in Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. by J. Conway Davies (London, 1957), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Imden, vol. 2, p. 823.

<sup>4</sup>FR, pp. 87-88.

<sup>5</sup>TR, pp. 44-45.

<sup>6</sup>See Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23-28.

faltering finances.<sup>1</sup> In fact, titles proliferate from communities known to be among the poorest, while the more financially stable institutions issued titles but rarely.<sup>2</sup> The agency theory is difficult to prove, but if it did exist, it is hard to imagine how the bishops could have acted in ignorance of it, given the scope of the archdeacon's examination of the candidates prior to ordination. If Thompson is right, the bishops' tacit acceptance of these titles reduced their worth to a mere legal fiction. They ensured a steady supply of new ordinands while at the same time absolving the diocesan of any obligation to provide support.

There remains the question of age. Of the forty-one men in this sample, it is possible to determine the age of only thirteen at the time of their ordination. Of these men, the oldest was John Claymond, one of the beneficed. Born in 1468,<sup>3</sup> he was admitted as a demy to Magdalen College at the age of sixteen. He was ordained subdeacon in 1498 and priest in February of 1499 in York, at the grand old age of thirty-one.<sup>4</sup> If one has to make a generalization about the age at ordination of the beneficed as opposed to the unbeneficed, it must be that the beneficed appeared to attain the final major orders when they were in their mid-twenties, while the unbeneficed chose their early twenties to enter the priesthood. The difference, however, is exceedingly slight and perhaps not much should be made of it. Of the unbeneficed, the oldest was Robert Claxton who entered priest's orders at the age of twenty-six. He appeared in 1548 at the chantry of Farnacres in Whickham parish at the age of forty.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thompson, The English Clergy, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>Purvis, "The Registers", p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>Enden, vol. 1, p. 428. The DNB gives 1457 as his date of birth. See vol. 11, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Enden, vol. 1, p. 428.

<sup>5</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 72.

Edward Adthe, ordained by Tunstall in 1534,<sup>1</sup> appeared in 1548 at the age of thirty-six.<sup>2</sup> He was several years below the canonical age for priesthood when ordained. Similarly, Henry Tailbois, B.A., and Thomas Atkinson obtained the order of deacon at at least the age of 21 and 23 respectively.<sup>3</sup> Only John Bateson seems likely to have entered the priesthood at the age of 24 or 25. In 1548 his age is given as 70.<sup>4</sup> In 1501, at the age of 23, he became acolyte.<sup>5</sup> Of the seven beneficed men, only Bentley and Pattenson fell short of the canonical requirement, Bentley at the age of 21 and Pattenson at the age of 23.<sup>6</sup> The division once more appears to be between the men with higher education and those without. Men who did not go on to university appeared to be applying to the priesthood at marginally younger ages than did the beneficed.

The question of length of tenure within a given chantry has already been raised in an attempt to discover the origins of the incumbents. This same information comments adequately on the stability of the clergy within the community. Can the same be done for the beneficed clergy?

<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Tailbois already held a bachelor of arts in March 1499-1500 when he received letters dimissory. He was ordained deacon at York on 18 April 1500. Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23, f. 468r. Thomas Atkinson was admitted to King's College at the age of sixteen and was ordained deacon in September of 1533. Venn, vol. 1, p. 54; TR, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup>FR, p. 151. ✓

<sup>6</sup>Pattenson obtained a B.A. in 1492-3. Three years later he became a priest on 17 December 1496. Venn, vol. 2, p. 319. Bentley was nominated as a secular scholar to Oxford in 1499. Assuming that he was sixteen years old, he would have been 21 years of age when he became a priest on 1 June 1504. Emden, vol. 1, p. 170; Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 124v.

Tables Ten and Eleven give a breakdown in the tenure for the beneficed clergy, non-pluralists and pluralist, respectively. In all, a total of 184 men are considered. The remainder of the 248 beneficed clergy held only canonries and prebends, benefices without cure of souls which are not included in this survey. All men holding more than one benefice involving the parochial cure of souls were considered pluralists. The tenures considered in these tables, however, are only for their Durham benefices, and not for those outside the county.

Table Ten  
The Beneficed Clergy  
Length of Tenure  
Total Clergy: 124  
Total Terms of Office: 132

|                      |    | % of 132 |
|----------------------|----|----------|
| Unknown              | 28 | 21.21    |
| One to five years    | 17 | 12.87    |
| Five to ten years    | 17 | 12.87    |
| Ten to fifteen years | 21 | 15.90    |
| Over fifteen years   | 49 | 37.12    |

Table Eleven  
The Beneficed Clergy, Pluralists  
Length of Tenure  
Total Clergy: 60  
Total Terms of Office: 92

|                      |    | % of 92 |
|----------------------|----|---------|
| Unknown              | 5  | 5.43    |
| One to five years    | 23 | 25.00   |
| Five to ten years    | 15 | 16.30   |
| Ten to fifteen years | 18 | 19.56   |
| Over fifteen years   | 31 | 33.69   |

The raw data reveal little which is surprising. For the pluralists there was an average ratio of three benefices for every one clergyman, while the non-pluralists maintained a fairly consistent one to one correspondence between rector or vicar and the benefice. There were, of course, several men, who, while not pluralists, held several benefices consecutively,

among them George Baites, Thomas Dobson, and Lancelot Claxton.<sup>1</sup> Table Ten shows everything one might expect from men who held only one benefice. For the majority, in fact for 70 of the 104 men whose length of tenure is known, benefices were held for ten years or more, and 70% of those 70 men held them for well above fifteen years. Twenty, twenty-five and thirty year stints were not unusual for men who could hope for only one benefice in their lifetime. They consequently held on to it once they obtained it. Thomas Lynn, for example, spent a total of twenty-three years as the vicar of Hesledon,<sup>2</sup> while John Stayndropp spent a total of thirty-five years as the vicar of Heighington after his preferment to the post by the prior and convent of Durham in 1463.<sup>3</sup>

It is from a comparison of the percentages shown in the two tables that the real conclusions should be drawn. In Table Ten, 49 men or 57.12%, held a single benefice for over fifteen years. For the pluralists, the figure was almost 5% lower for the same category. Similarly, in Table Ten again, relatively few men, only 12.87%, held their cures for five years or less. For the pluralists, however, the same category shows a swelling of the ranks. While fewer of the pluralists held their benefices for over fifteen years, conversely, more of these same men, in fact 25% of them,

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|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> George Baites | rector, St. Mary-le-Bow, 1520-1535 |
|                            | vicar, Kelloe, 1535-1547           |
| Lancelot Claxton           | rector, Winston, 1458-1496         |
|                            | dean, Lanchester, 1496-1532        |
| Thomas Dobson              | vicar, Merrington, 1490-1494       |
|                            | vicar, Billingham, 1494-1501       |

SS 139, pp. 10, 26, 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

twice the percentage in Table Ten for the same category, remained officially attached to their cures for one to five years. For many more of the pluralist group, the attainment of a benefice was regarded as much more of a stepping stone to higher things, rather than as the journey's end. In the final analysis, the priesthood was a prize for which both the beneficed and unbeneficed men eagerly vied. Both groups usually spent less time than was canonically required in the various orders, but the bishops' discretion acted positively in favor of the swifter advancement of the future beneficed clergy.

## II. Duties and Deficiencies

The final arrival in the priesthood consisted of a variety of duties: the saying of mass and other devotions, the hearing of confessions, the maintenance of hospitality and the farm of the glebe, to name but a few. Some institutions had their duties prescribed for them. This was particularly true of the chantries and collegiate churches. The Chantry of Farnacres in Whickham parish is just one example. Founded in 1429, it was

Une Chanterie d'un Maistre Chapellain et un autre Chapellain a luy associer, chauntantz divines en la Chapell de Farnacres checun jour a l'autre de St. Jean Baptiste et St. Jean l'Evangeliste, pour le bon estat de nouz (Langley) et les . . . Robert Unfravile, Chivaler, et Isabelle sa feme, tancome viverons, et pour noz almes apres notre decesse, et pour les almes de Henry Quart et Henry Quint nadguirs Roys d'Engleterre, et pour toute cristens ames au merci de Dieu <sup>1</sup>

After this initial statement of purpose the chantry statutes went on to stipulate the duties incumbent on the chaplains. In the 1530's these men were, successively, Richard Greathead<sup>✓</sup> and Robert Claxton.<sup>2</sup> They were to celebrate regularly the canonical hours, all of which were to be done according to the use of Sarum, and special services of Placebo, Dirige, and mass were to be held on every anniversary of the founder's obit.<sup>3</sup> It was also specifically stated that the chaplains were not to take on any form of secular employment, "quia frequenter dum colitur Martha expellitur Maria."<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence that either Claxton or Greathead contravened this particular requirement. In addition they were to live continually

<sup>1</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 323; TR, p. 72; SS 22, Appendix, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

within the quarters provided with the chantry. The terms are a bit ambiguous in this, as Surtees states that they were to live "constantly under the roof of the chantry."<sup>1</sup> They were also not to consort with females, not even as servants, and were allowed two months absence every year from the chantry. After all of the qualifications were made as to their mode of living, their prime purpose remained one of intercession, of offering up services to the Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist for the souls of the founders and their kin. This belief in the efficacy of the intercession of the saints continued unabated to within years of the ultimate dissolution of the chantries. John Jackson of Easington set forth instructions in his will of 1526<sup>2</sup> for the foundation of a chantry in Easington parish church, worth three pounds to its incumbent. He awarded the patronage of the chantry to the prior of Durham. The endowment was not only to benefit the souls of Jackson and his wife with sundry relatives, but also a former archdeacon of Durham, one Thomas Hobbes, the then archdeacon, William Frankleyn, Hugh Whitehead the prior, and one John Bentley. Although Jackson was writing almost a century after Langley and Umfravile, his provisions differed little from the early fifteenth century regulations for Farnacres. The incumbent was to be continually resident although he might have forty days absence each year for the purpose of pilgrimage or to visit friends. Matins, mass and evensong were to be his particular duties, as well as attendance at all festival days within the parish church of Easington. Jackson did not trouble himself unduly about the company which his chantry priest might keep, but he did issue the warning that if the incumbent paid too much attention to farming and the

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<sup>1</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup>DPK: PReg. V, ff. 218v-219v. ✓

selling of grain and cattle, to the detriment of his intercessory duties, he would risk replacement by the prior of Durham. ✓

The duties of the collegiate clergy were roughly similar. Only the dean of these establishments had the cure of souls. Their behavior was similarly circumscribed. According to the Statutes of Lanchester Collegiate Church,

None of the . . . vicars shall without some sufficient cause go into any common taverne nor tarye in the same; neither exercise wrestlinge, dauncinge, or any other hurtfull gaymes, nor (frequent) such spectacles or syghtes, which ar comonly called Myracles; neither lett them be helpers to any that practise the same.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, they were not to visit the homes of "anie lay person in their habit, unlesse the occasion be godlie and honest."<sup>2</sup> Theoretically, then, the collegiate clergy and chantry priests were forced to remain rather aloof from their lay brethren.

There is little evidence that preaching was carried out within the county, even though the clergy were meant to supply sermons four times a year, either by themselves or through a deputy. Copies of Sermones discipuli occur in several of the extant clerical wills, however. There was the clear recognition of this duty, if not the initiative to provide some original preaching for one's parishioners. This duty was fulfilled, in part, not by secular clergy but by preaching friars. In 1551, for example, Robert Hyndmer gave permission to a friar of Yarm to preach "verbum Dei publice sermone latino et vulgari clero et populo in quibuscunque ecclesiis et aliis locis . . . infra diocesim Dunelmensem . . ."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 309

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 509.

<sup>3</sup>TR, p. 32.

The further edification of the laity through education in chantry schools was in large part a myth perpetuated by those who bemoaned nostalgically the passing of the monasteries and the chantries.

It has been suggested that, aside from the prime rites of passage: baptism, marriage and extreme unction, the laity had very little to do with the church and its representatives.<sup>1</sup> The surviving evidence seems to affirm this. For example, in York, a city of some forty parish churches and eighty to one hundred chantries<sup>2</sup> the clergy made their presence known most often in wills, not only in the uniform wording alluded to in chapter three, but as witnesses and beneficiaries as well. Significantly, these men were the parish priests, not the rectors and vicars of the benefices. The same is true for the Durham wills and lower clergy. John Bainbridge was one of the unbeneficed clergy appearing in 1501 at Middleton in Teesdale.<sup>3</sup> Confirmation of his continued service in the parish is obtainable on only two more occasions. On 12 February 1501<sup>4</sup> he appeared as one of the supervisors in the will of Henry Richardson of Egglestone, and in October of 1557<sup>5</sup> he appeared as the witness, "my curet Johannes Baynbrig clerke", in the will of John Lonsdale of Newbiggin. Similarly, Richard Collison made only two further appearances after the 1501 visitation.<sup>6</sup> He was a witness and a beneficiary of Thomas Robynson of St. Margaret's parish in

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, passim.

<sup>2</sup>Palliser, pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.

<sup>4</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 158r; SS 22, Appendix, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, John Lonsdale, 24 October 1557.

<sup>6</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.

1506,<sup>1</sup> and served as witness again in the following year for Richard Bowman of the same parish.<sup>2</sup> Many more examples could be given of the ubiquitous nature of the unbeneficed clergy at the crucial moment of death. One wishes to be able to test their continued attendance at baptisms and marriages. Unfortunately the parish registers are not available at so early a date.

One must balance the supposed distance of the clergy from the laity in all things save these three sacraments by a brief look at the obligation to provide hospitality. Once again, it is impossible to say the extent to which the clergy fulfilled this duty. The inventories which accompanied clerical wills, however, show that the clergy were not unmindful of this duty. In particular, the number of sheets, beds and blankets indicate frequent gatherings in the vicarage or rectory. John Semer, vicar of Stranton from 1559 until his death in 1561, owned "3 featherbeds 2 mattresses 3 bolster (valued at 33 s. 4 d.), 3 coverings of bedes (8 s.), 8 hewed coverlettes 6 blanketts (17 s.), 6 lynning sheets and one bordercloth (15 s.)," and "6 harden sheites and one bordercloth (5 s.)."<sup>3</sup> He was also the proud possessor of ten silver spoons and one silver "piece" valued at 26 s. 8 d., which he distributed in his will to various friends.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, George Reyde, the rector of Dinsdale from 1529, could offer good accomodation when necessary. For a total of 53 shillings, he owned "3 mattresses and 2 stand beddes with bowsters 4 bed coverings 2 coverings 3 blankets 2 linne sheates 6 hardon sheates 3 lin sheates and a lin towell."<sup>5</sup> He subsequently

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: Loc. 37, no. 16.

<sup>2</sup>DPK: Loc. 37, no. 14.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 7.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 6v.

<sup>5</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 335v.

disposed of them in his will:

I give to Agnes Wesse a bed . . . I give to Agnes Sober a bed standing in the aple chamber . . . a mattress a pair of sheets . . . I give to my servant Elizabeth Person the bed that she lyethe in the best bed coverings a mattress 2 coverlettes 2 sheets . . . a pair of bed stockes which is in the priest's chamber .<sup>1</sup> . I give to Thomas West the bed that he lyeth in . . .

The provision of hospitality was not the sole province of the beneficed clergy, but it was more amply fulfilled by them. The few extant wills for the unbeneficed show little of the same proliferation of bed clothing. At his death in 1565, Edward Adthe, one of the "clerici jurati" in the Durham Consistory Court of the 1530's, was found to possess two mattresses, two featherbeds and bowsters and a "stand bed", as well as numerous sheets and blankets.<sup>2</sup> His apparent wealth, however, may have been due to the fact that he had become vicar of Lesbury in 1556.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Richard Towgall in Gateshead had only enough bedding for himself.<sup>4</sup>

One other area in which the clergy made a more than fleeting appearance was in the court system, and in particular in the Durham Consistory Court, held in the Galilee Chapel of the Cathedral. Graduates in civil and canon law abounded at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; they took little part in the doings of the Consistory. Leaving aside the clergy who were the actual parties to suits, the class of clergy who were most conspicuous in the court were those members of the unbeneficed group who appeared in the capacity of proctor in various cases, the most frequent being Ralph Todd and William Cokey.<sup>5</sup> A further ten men appeared on 29

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: PR I, ff. 10v-11

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 75v; PR II, f. 225v.

<sup>3</sup>TR, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Richard Towgall, Gateshead, Priest, 1541.

<sup>5</sup>DSR: CCAB, for Cokey see ff. 7v, 37r, 60v, 66v-67r, and 69r; for Todd see ff. 1r-62v.

May 1535 under the collective description "clerici jurati", three of whom made individual appearances as proctors.<sup>1</sup> There were probably more men who served in this capacity in the Consistory, but many of the entries in the Act Book simply state the presence of the proctor without mentioning his name. Service in the ecclesiastical courts in some instances seems to have ceased with the reception of one's first benefice. For the 1530's in Durham seven men - Ralph Todd, John Langhorne, John Clerke, William Cokey, Lancelot Smith, George Thompson, and Edward Adthe - made identifiable appearances in various suits. Todd was the most active of these men. He held an LL.B. from Oxford.<sup>2</sup> Active in the Consistory from at least the first of July 1531, at which session the Act Book commences, he last appeared in March of 1533 as the proctor of Bartholomew Hardwick.<sup>3</sup> He next appeared in the records in 1535,<sup>4</sup> when he was in the possession of the Chantry of the Virgin and Saint Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral and its precincts. William Cokey's fairly heavy duties as proctor also abruptly ceased with the attainment of a chantry. He was active in the Consistory from October 1531 until March of 1534; he appeared at the same chantry as Todd in 1535.<sup>5</sup> If Cokey and Todd did hold this chantry while conducting suits in the court, their frequent appearance is perhaps explained by the proximity of their holding to the Galilee Chapel itself. After taking on a chantry such participation in the church courts seems fitful at best.

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 73v. They were Lancelot Smith, George Thompson, and Edward Adthe.

<sup>2</sup>Forster, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 62v.

<sup>4</sup>Valor, V, p. 324. ✓

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 324. ✓

Edward Adthe became fully priested in September of 1534.<sup>1</sup> In 1548 he appeared as a chaplain at the Gild of St. Cuthbert in Durham Castle, a post he may well have held in May of 1535 when he made his sole appearance in the Consistory.<sup>2</sup> Lancelot Smith made his only appearance on this same occasion with Adthe. He was probably already in possession of the Chantry of St. James in St. Nicholas parish church and the chantry-chapel of St. James and St. Andrew on Elvet Bridge, also within the same parish.<sup>3</sup> Unless a cleric was especially close to the court, it does not seem likely that he would have allowed himself to become involved in much litigation. With only two exceptions all of the proctors traceable to a subsequent chantry or benefice were settled in the environs of Durham City. The exceptions were George Thompson,<sup>4</sup> a chaplain at Boldon and not only a proctor but a frequent party to suits, and John Langhorne,<sup>5</sup> who had connections with Sedgefield and appeared in a probate case of the rector of Sedgefield in 1531. Both of these men were located in the eastern lowland regions of county Durham. Proper qualifications therefore must be made as to the extent of the clergys' participation in the ecclesiastical courts. The opinion that the church had a "tendency to be run by lawyers rather than theologians"<sup>6</sup> may have been true in the upper reaches of the hierarchy, but it was not so at the parish level in Durham county in the 1530s.

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<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>SS 22, Appendix, p. 62; DSR: CCAB, f. 75v.

<sup>3</sup>Valor, V, pp. 324+325.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: CCAB, ff. 29r, 52r, 75r.

<sup>5</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 1v; Orig. Will, John Barforth, Sedgefield, 1548.

<sup>6</sup>Bowker, The Secular Clergy, p. 5.

Similarly, one cannot categorize the unbeneficed clergy together as a group of "pettifogging attorneys."<sup>1</sup> Only fifteen men are known to have served as proctors in the Durham Consistory, out of a total of 250 unbeneficed clergy, and that number was further restricted by geographical location.

Inevitably, in any consideration of the amount of time the clergy spent in their benefices, one comes to the twin topics of pluralism and non-residence. While pluralism might result in non-residence, one did not necessarily follow as a result of the other. Approximately one in four men (60 out of 248), or 24.19%, were pluralists from 1494-1540. Almost the same percentage, 24.48% (12 out of 49), were pluralists at the 1501 visitation. Absenteeism, however, amounted to only one out of every seven men or 14.3% of the total. Bowker found a similar proportion of non-residence for Lincoln diocese in 1514-1521.<sup>2</sup> In that diocese there were 236 reports of non-residence out of the 1085 parishes visited, out of a total of 1738 parishes in the diocese. To that number she added 48 more cases of non-residence reported independently of the visitation proceedings. For the entire diocese 16% of the clergy were absent from their cures. Had she based her calculations solely on the visitation returns, this percentage would have risen to 22%.

In order to say anything about pluralism and non-residence for Durham county, one is forced to deal exclusively with the very early part of this period, specifically with the episcopate of Richard Fox (1494-1501). In his register alone are recorded dispensations to hold incompatible benefices,

<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup>Bowker, "Non-Residence . . .", p. 42.

monitions to reside, and dispensations for non-residence. It was also immediately after his translation to Winchester that Savage of York instituted proceedings for an archiepiscopal visitation of the entire diocese of Durham. One can therefore make some comment on the effects of episcopal intervention in these two issues of pluralism and absenteeism. Although the Durham register for Tunstall in the 1530's has survived, there is not one instance where he at any time issued monitions or recorded dispensations such as those found in Fox's register. The situation was somewhat different when Fox held the see, however. Had he wished to limit pluralism, he would have been considerably hampered by the number of dispensations available from Rome. In all, there are four such documents recorded in his register. Two of them concern Roger Layburn<sup>1</sup>, rector of Longnewton, Wolsingham and Sedgfield, and one-time archdeacon of Durham. In January of 1497-8 he received the first one to hold two incompatible benefices, those with the cure of souls. In December of the same year he received his second dispensation to hold three incompatible benefices. Granted that the majority of his posts were in Durham county, they were still geographically in widely disparate areas of the county. As the law stood, if a man took up a second benefice without first obtaining a dispensation to do so, his tenure of the first benefice became, ipso facto, void. All of that, however, was necessarily changed with the Pluralities Act of 1529 "For the more quyte and vertuouse increase and mayntenaunce of Dyvyne servyce, the prechyng and techyng the worde of God with godly and good example gyvyng, the better dyscharge of Curates, the mayntenaunce of Hospitalite the relefe of poore people, the encrease of devocyon and good oppynyon of the Lay Fee toward the sp'uall persons . . ." <sup>2</sup> After the first

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<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 78-79, 121-3.

<sup>2</sup>Statutes, vol. 3, pp. 292-296, 21 Henry VIII, c. 13.

of April 1530 any cleric who held a benefice valued at 8.00.00 or more was debarred from taking a second benefice. Should he do so, then, as before, "the fyrst benefyce shalbe adjudged in the lawe to be voyde."<sup>1</sup> The act further provided that "ev'y such lycence . . . dispensacion had or herafter to be opteyned contrary to this p'sent Acte of what name or names qualitie or qualitees so ever they be, shall be utterly voyde and of none effecte."<sup>2</sup> The act also sought to provide a sufficiently persuasive deterrent to any continued seeking of these dispensations in the form of a 20.00.00 fine, plus the loss of all profits obtained from any benefices thereby gained. Pluralists who had obtained their benefices before 1 April 1530 could keep no more than four of them, and dispensations for non-residence were also declared illegal and would incur a 20.00.00 fine in the future.

The visitation of 1501 provides some interesting information on non-residence. Of the seven men accounted non-resident, only three were not pluralists as well. All except one were either rectors, or deans of collegiate churches. All held university degrees with the exception of John Hackforth, rector of St. Mary in the South Bailey, and Magister John Surtees, rector of Dinsdale. In fact, the annual income of these two men was by far the lowest of any of the seven non-residents, being 4.13.04 and 4.11.04 respectively.<sup>3</sup> The other men all had more than adequate stipends and conformed to the expectation that the higher the stipend, the more likely the incumbent was to be absent. Robert Kent as

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<sup>1</sup>Statutes, vol. 3, p. 293, 21 Henry VIII, c. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>3</sup>Valor, V, pp. 314, 317.

rector of Houghton-le-Spring received the highest in the diocese, with an annual income of 124.00.00.<sup>1</sup> The lowest was John Claymond at Norton, who received 31.11.04.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for Hackforth's absence are rather difficult to fathom. He did not possess another benefice, nor in the face of trends already uncovered was he likely to do so. Witness his low annual income and the fact that he occurs in the records again in 1515 and 1531, still attached to the same benefice. The case of John Surtees is potentially more revealing. In the section under Dinsdale parish where the parishioners normally declared "omnia bene" or listed their complaints, there is the following: "Magister Thomas Surtes, parochianus ibidem, non comparuit, qui solus est parochianus ibidem et non plures infra eandem parochiam."<sup>3</sup> Dinsdale had all the appearance of a rotten borough with none of the saving grace of a Pitt.

One can discern certain reasons for non-residence, not all of them apparent in the visitation returns alone. One would have forgiven Master John Balswell had he not appeared for visitation. He was attached to Middleton in Teesdale and was described as "mente alienatus nec aliquibus gaudet lucidis intervallis."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Thomas Farne, vicar of St. Oswald's, also appeared, even though Fox had confirmed his dispensation for non-residence in January of 1499-1500.<sup>5</sup> He intended to spend seven years in university study. Also in 1499 Fox had issued four monitions to reside to the vicars of Heighington and Aycliffe and to the rectors

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 315. 307

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., f. 150v.

<sup>5</sup>FR, pp. 153-154.

of Hurworth and Washington.<sup>1</sup> Not one of these individuals is accounted non-resident in 1501, although it seems probable that one of them should be. Magister Edmund Cowper, the rector of Washington, was one of those described simply as "non comparuit."<sup>2</sup> He had been admonished to reside as recently as 20 November 1499, and the visitation took place in November of 1501. Indeed, the only man whose reason for non-residence was explicitly stated was Magister Ralph Lepton, who was "in servitio domini Winton, Episcopi."<sup>3</sup>

There is always the question of whether greater neglect resulted in the parishes where the incumbent was non-resident. There are no court books extant for this early period so that it is impossible to discover whether the chaplains left in charge of the benefices and commonly believed to be more troublesome, did in fact consume vast amounts of the courts' time with their indiscretions. Haigh reported very few problems with the unbene- ficed clergy of Lancashire.<sup>4</sup> The tendency of the Lancashire parishes to have two or three assistants was repeated in Durham county. This was cer- tainly true of such outlying parishes as Middleton in Teesdale with three chaplains and Stanhope with two.<sup>5</sup> St. Nicholas parish, within Durham City, had the extreme number of thirteen priests, five of whom were attached to various chantries.<sup>6</sup> As one proceeded further east into the smaller parishes, however, the number of these assistants dwindled. Dominus John Feld of

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<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 104-109, 110.

<sup>2</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 154v.

<sup>4</sup>Haigh, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., f. 148v.

Dalton only had one assistant while Thomas Dobson had no help whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> In the cases of the seven absentees of 1501, all of the men were covered to varying degrees except for Surtees of Dinsdale, but then, with so small a congregation, he didn't really have to be.

Of those seven benefices where the incumbents were absent, for only one did the parishioners lodge any complaints and that was for the collegiate church of Darlington where it was stated that the "*fenestrae vitriae in cancello sunt confractae, et injunctum est proprietariis quod emendentur sufficienter citia festum Natalis Domini proxime futurum sub pena x s.*"<sup>2</sup> It was hardly a fault for which the unbeneficed clergy of the parishes were solely responsible. Similar complaints were heard at Egglecliffe and Conniscliffe,<sup>3</sup> for both of which the rectors had not appeared as opposed to being non-resident. Nor was this failing confined to benefices where the incumbent was either permanently non-resident or simply temporarily absent. At Heighington the chancel was in poor repair,<sup>4</sup> and at Hurworth the cemetery was not well looked after.<sup>5</sup> All such deficiencies fell under the general category of dilapidations for which the incumbent himself was responsible, if he could not prove that he had inherited them upon his collation. There does not seem to be any positive correlation between laxadaisical unbeneficed priests and non-resident incumbents. In fact the only instance of a complaint regarding the actual spiritual functions of the unbeneficed clergy came from Gateshead. There the parishioners not

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R: AR 25, ff. 149v, 150r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 154r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ff. 155r-v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., f. 155r.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., f. 155r.

only denounced the various sexual proclivities of their neighbors, but bemoaned the behavior of one John Turpyn, a chantry priest there. It was alleged

quod dictus Johannes Turpin, capellanus cantariae Beatae Mariae Virginis in ecclesia parochiali ibidem, non reparat domus et edificia cantariae suae predictae pertinentia, sed eadem ad terram collabi et ruinis deformari permittet, et magnus dilapidator cantariae suae predictae existit; et dicunt quod non observat ordinationem eiusdem interessendo divinis in ecclesia ut tenetur . . .<sup>1</sup>

Turpyn was then summoned and excused himself from the first of these faults only, saying that the "defectus et ruinae dictae cantariae non devenerunt nec acciderunt tempore incumbentiae suae in dicta cantaria."<sup>2</sup>

The entry ends with the ominous warning "Et monitus est quod de cetero quolibet anno exponat in reparacionibus dictorum defectuum xx s. sub pena privacionis ab eadem cantaria."<sup>3</sup>

On the whole, the Durham clergy do not seem to have been especially negligent in the performance of their duties, but neither were they particularly zealous. There is no easy line of demarcation between the faults of the beneficed and those of the unbeneficed. For both groups, however, moral failings were conspicuous by their absence.

<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 151r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 151r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 151r.

## Chapter Five

### The Economic Position of the Clergy

#### I. Income

In no area was there greater room for mutual misunderstanding between the clergy and the laity than in the realm of ecclesiastical revenue. In uneasy juxtaposition with each other stood two facts: that the clergy were motivated to serve in their cures by Christian charity, and the shockingly mundane reality of the situation, that this spiritual comfort, whatever its form, could be reduced to a service for which one had to pay. Whether the man was a bishop, rector, vicar or a mere chantry priest, there was no getting away from the fact that for his efforts there had to be some form of recompense, monetary or in kind. With the advent of the Reformation, the formerly intermittent grumblings against the clerical estate became more frequent, reaching a crescendo with the official policy of threatening the English clergy in an attempt to apply pressure to the pope. Simon Fish's "Supplication" is just one example of the vituperative level to which this polemic had been raised. He immediately set forth an inundating barrage of criticism in terms easily understandable to the common laborer. He summarized the clergys' activities in economic terms:

. . . setting all laboure aside (they) have begged so importunately that they have gotten ynto theyre handes more then the third part of all youre (Henry's) Realme . . . what money get they by mortuaries, by hearing of confessions (and yet they will kepe therof no counceyle) by halowing of churches, altares, superaltares, chapelles, and belles, by cursing of men, and absolving them agein for money? . . . they have the tenth part of all the corne, medowe, pasture, grasse, wolle, coltes, calves, lambes, pigges, gese, and chickens . . . the tenth part of every servauntes wages, the tenth part of the wolle, milke, hony, waxe, chese and butter. Ye, and they loke so narrowly upon theyre proufittes, that the poore wyves must be countable to theym of every tenth eg, or elles she gettith not her ryghtes at ester, shalbe taken as an heretike.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fish, pp. 2, 10.

Finally, "they pray for us to God, to delyver our soules out of the paynes of purgation; without whose prayer, they say, or at least without the popes pardon, we could never be delivered thens."

To men like Fish the clergy did not work for their livings. To be sure, the parson or vicar farmed his glebe - it was this activity which involved the physical labor identifiable to one's parishioners as "work" - but that was precisely not the labor for which the vicar or rector or chantry priest received remuneration. His spiritual services also had the unfortunate drawback of frequently not showing an effect definitively assignable to his efforts and intercession. More often than not the priest counselled his flock in the gracious acceptance of their misfortunes rather than urged them to act to actually avert them. That some people believed the clergy to have this semi-magical power speaks to their misapprehension of the precise nature of the clerical estate.<sup>1</sup>

The clergy were in a position to know the worst about their parishioners through the confessional, and to make their profits in the laity's time of sorrow and distress. Fish made specific reference to the issue of mortuaries and later mentioned Humne's case.<sup>2</sup> They also helped draw up the wills in which they were often the beneficiaries. Fish found them always hovering in the wings on the eve of a disaster, and no doubt he would have made much of one of the Durham wills. Agnes Horsley seems to have been prompted to make her will by her curate Thomas Brown, for in 1545 she declared herself to be "of perfect remembrance and wholly in my body without sickness fearing death because my house is infected with the plague . . ."<sup>3</sup> Fish's description of tithe and the goods it encompassed

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<sup>1</sup>See Thomas, passim; Luxton, passim.

<sup>2</sup>Fish, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Agnes Horsley, 1545.

more than implied a niggling and parasitical attitude to the laity on the part of the clergy, and he capped it all by declaring that the indispensability of the clergy rested in the fact that man's redemption was impossible without their intercession, for which the parishioner must needs pay. "So bald der Gulden im Becken klinget, Im hun die Seel im Himel springt."<sup>1</sup>

Fish represented the laity as so many meek and helpless victims on the altar of clerical avarice. The clergy themselves would probably have laid the blame squarely on the side of the parishioners. As ministers of God they had to be maintained to a certain standard to avoid the degradation of begging, and no doubt some indignantly felt that they were well entitled to be paid after venturing into a house infected with plague. Indeed, some might have guffawed loudly at the supposed tractability of their parishioners. Ralph Todd was one of the few unbeneficed clergy to attain a benefice. He made many appearances as a proctor in the Durham Consistory Court,<sup>2</sup> dealing with a number of tithe cases. He died as vicar of Hartburn, Northumberland, in 1569.<sup>3</sup> Almost a year after his death, his successor in the vicarage appeared in a suit for dilapidations, attempting to prove that the faults had not occurred during his own tenancy. During the course of the suit, one James Chambre of Boldon, a nephew to Ralph Todd, testified that his uncle had, on the contrary, done much in the way of improving the structure of the vicarage, despite terrific odds:

. . . the said Rauff Tod . . . haith not receyved all manner of xths, proffects, and commodities, the tyme that he the said Rauf was vicar ther, that dyd grow or renew within the said parish; for that the parishioners ther ar verye evill payers of

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<sup>1</sup>Hans J. Hillerbrand, The Reformation in Its Own Words (London, 1964), woodcut, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, passim.

<sup>3</sup>TR, p. 168.

of their duties, being at this time owing to this examate, his the said Rauff executour, above 40 l.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt such parsimoniousness was especially difficult to understand when some of the clergy made large bequests to their parishes, all the more remarkable in cases where the incumbent had been non-resident. John Sixtine, for example, left a total of 30.00.00 to the parish of Eggescliffe, from which he had surely been non-resident, in 1515.<sup>2</sup>

What, then, was the economic position of the Durham clergy? Were they grasping and covetous, as Fish portrayed them, to enable them to leave such a bequest as that of Sixtine? Or were they constantly engaged in a never ending battle to eke out a decent stipend for themselves from their cure, in constant contention with tight-fisted parishioners jealous of every penny that went their way? This chapter will deal first of all with the sources of wealth available to the clergy, their income and its breakdown; secondly, with the debit side of the clerical slate, expenses; and finally, with the manner in which they lived.

Before one can even begin to delve into the issues of tithe and glebe, a look at the status of the parishes themselves is necessary. How many of the Durham county parishes were appropriated? In other words, how many were vicarages and how many rectories? A parish was considered to be appropriated if the income of that particular church was delivered to a monastic body, such as Durham Priory or the Augustinian Priory at Guisborough, which would then appoint a "vicar" to serve the cure of that parish.<sup>3</sup> Of the rectorial

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<sup>1</sup>James Raine, ed., Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham (Surtees Society, 1845), vol. 21, p. 212. Hereafter referred to as SS 21.

<sup>2</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Allan MSS., no. 11, "Eggescliffe".

<sup>3</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, p. 78.

dues, the incumbent would only be given a portion by the monastery, which in this instance stood in the place of an absentee rector. The term impropriation denoted essentially the same financial arrangement, except that in the place of the monastic rector stood a lay person or corporate body.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, as the appropriators of the benefices, the Benedictine Priory of Durham collected the income for the parishes of Aycliffe, Merrington and Pitlington and awarded a portion of that gross income to the man whom they, as patrons, presented to that cure as the vicar. The Augustinian Priory of Guisborough and the Benedictine Abbey of St. Alban's had the same relationship to the vicarages of Hart and Conniscliffe respectively. Guisborough had the right to present one of its own canons to the cure, and St. Alban's, while continuing to enjoy the rectorial dues, no longer acted in the capacity of patron after 1314-15,<sup>2</sup> when this right seems to have passed to the Bishop of Durham. Appropriation, however, gained its definition from the collection of the parish living, not from the patronage rights.

Within Durham County there were twenty-two livings which were appropriated, nineteen of which were vicarages. The other three, St. Nicholas, Hunstonworth, and Muggleswick, had been demoted from rectories to chapelries within the previous two centuries, the first two being appropriated to Kepier Hospital.<sup>3</sup> Of the vicarages, nine were appropriated to Durham Cathedral Priory, four to Sherburn Hospital, one to Gretham Hospital, and five to monasteries outside of the county. Consequently, for only five

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<sup>1</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, p. 695.

<sup>2</sup>Donaldson, "Patronage . . .", vol. 2, see entries for Hart and Conniscliffe.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., vol 1, pp. 174, 178.

cures did a portion of the income of the parish - estimated at two thirds of the value of the tithes<sup>1</sup> - leave the parish and county altogether without ever having been at the disposal of the vicar and with no hope of being plowed back into the parish. In such an instance, as with non-residence and the financing of university men, the parishioners may well have felt that this was so much money lost to the parish, if they ever actually stopped to think of the mechanics involved in the payment of their vicar's stipend. As was seen in the last chapter many more of the vicars tended to hold only one benefice, and that one cure for an exceedingly long time. If appropriation served to keep the vicar resident in his cure, then perhaps it was good value for money.

A comparison of Donaldson's results for the diocese as a whole with those of the county yield some interesting facts. Donaldson reported that about 60% of the bishopric's parishes were appropriated.<sup>2</sup> The county shows a much lower percentage. Nineteen out of forty-nine parishes, or 38.77%, were in the hands of appropriators. Northumberland drastically raised the percentage for the entire diocese. The wars with Scotland, culminating with Flodden in 1512, were an obvious factor. Whether or not the Scots actually got the chance of overrunning this northernmost county and more seriously threatening the county palatine, the threat itself always loomed ominously near. The royal and palatine governments were only too well aware of this fact and the defence of Norham Castle on the Tweed was a source of constant concern to officials. Appropriation in such instances probably worked to the good of the incumbents. Their fields might be overrun, vicarages plundered and stock stolen, yet they were guaranteed

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<sup>1</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, p. 1456.

<sup>2</sup>Donaldson, "Patronage . . .", vol. 1, p. 98.

a stipend of some sort from the appropriating house.

This argument works adequately for Northumberland. It does not for Durham county. Had the monasteries a truly benevolent purpose in appropriating rectories, one would expect to find most of these parishes in the area of the Tyne in the northernmost parts of the county, and more particularly, in the northwest regions where one had not only the Scots to worry about, but the Tynedale and Redesdale thieves as well. Frankleyn wrote of such danger in 1525:

Pleas yt your most honorable grace too understande uppon Tewsday last the xxvijth day of marche the hylandes theves withe banyshede men too the nu'br of fowre hundrethe men accompenyede withe manye Scottes came too yngr<sup>o</sup> and kirkeheton' in northumberland and over rane the contreye too within eght myles of newcastle / where theye slewe seven men' owt of hande and hurt dyvers moo in perell' of dethe settinge fyere on' the saide townes and drove Awaye all' the goodes and catall' lyinge in there waye . . . And belykehode within breve tyme if theye be sufferde shall' so<sup>o</sup> increase that harde it wyll' be too represe theym' without sume difficultie - Hexhamshire / Wardale / withe other countreys of the bushoppriche adioyn<sup>g</sup> too the hyghelandes be everye howre in dangeor utterelye too be destro(yed).<sup>1</sup> ✓

Tunstall, writing to Cromwell in 1537, remarked on similar dangers and difficulties experienced by the clergy at the height of the Pilgrimage:

Many p'stes have ben at thys comotion spoyled and their corn by force takyn out of their barns and the peple in many places be slow to pay their offringes in tithes by reson off lossys that they have suferryd at thys comotion spe'ially in northu'berland who have ben to sore spoylyd by Tyndal and redisdal . . .<sup>2</sup>

Northumberland bore the brunt of any commotions caused by the Scots, thieves, or political uprisings, and Durham county was not immune to these disturbances, particularly from the North. Yet oddly enough, all of the appropriated parishes in Durham county were clustered along the Tees, the northernmost parish being that of Seaham. In terms of square miles, these

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<sup>1</sup>BL: Calig. B. III. 158. <sup>old foliation (now f. 159)</sup> 1 April, 1525, Frankleyn to Wolsey.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/116/188. 4 March, 1537, Tunstall to Cromwell.

were also among the smallest parishes, not a single one of them approaching anywhere near the size of such massive - and rich - cures as Stanhope, Middleton in Teesdale and Ryton, precisely those in the most danger of being overrun by the Scots and the thieves. Like Lancashire, these three parishes encompassed several townships.<sup>1</sup> Ryton, for example, included six, and Middleton in Teesdale at least three.<sup>2</sup> Stanhope was worth 67.06.08<sup>✓</sup> per annum, Middleton in Teesdale 26.00.00<sup>✓</sup>, and Ryton 44.10.00,<sup>3</sup> all of which were more than comfortable stipends. The wide open spaces in such parishes no doubt provided ample scope for the agricultural activity upon which the tithe payments and farming of the glebe were based. It may be stretching the point a bit to say that appropriation could be seen as a benevolent act by the religious houses in the smaller parishes along the Tees, ensuring a set, stable income in parishes of higher population and lower arable acreage.

In calculating the average income of the rectories and vicarages in Durham county, the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 and Pope Nicholas' Taxation of 1291 are invaluable.<sup>4</sup> The latter was drawn up by the pope at the request of Edward I who was seeking further finance for his Scottish campaigns. The Valor was an integral part of the Reformation legislation of the 1530's. It superseded the 1291 valuations upon which clerical taxation to the pope through Convocation had been assessed, and from the 1530's onwards provided the basis upon which the first fruits and clerical tenths, now due to the king, would be assessed. A comparison of the total average

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<sup>1</sup>Haigh, p. 31

<sup>2</sup>Fordyce, vol. II, pp. 64, 665.

<sup>3</sup>Valor, V, pp. 312<sup>✓</sup>, 313<sup>✓</sup>, 316<sup>✓</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicolai IV circa 1291 (Record Commission, 1802), passim.

annual value of a living for 1291, 1555, and for a year sometime in the reign of Edward VI,<sup>1</sup> provides a further cautionary note to the supposed economic well-being of the clergy. The average gross value of the rectories seems to have fluctuated very little over the almost 260 years between 1291 and the reign of Edward. In 1291 the average value was 36.04.10, in 1555 it was 33.01.08, and for the reign of Edward VI, it showed a slight rise to 35.19.03. This stability, more apparent than real, was not repeated in the average of the vicarages. In 1291 they seemed roughly competitive with the rectories at 32.05.07, but from that date the average value embarked on a downward plunge, reaching a low in 1555 of 11.17.10 per annum. Vicars were doing somewhat better at the accession of Edward VI, when the average rose once again to 26.05.04. Tunstall's 1530 valuations<sup>2</sup> for the rectories and vicarages in his gift were more optimistic. For the rectories the average annual gross value was 36.05.08, for the vicarages, 14.17.09. A real inflation of prices and consequent drop in the value of livings seems to have begun in earnest in the decade of the 1530's. Average valuations for the chantries are only available for 1535 and the reign of Edward VI, when a chantry priest might expect an average annual gross income of 5.02.10 and 5.02.09 respectively.

The incomes of these livings were heavily dependent on agriculture. In the face of what has been termed the "Price Revolution" of the sixteenth century, the picture, especially for the rectories, no longer looks quite so stable and rosy. There are, of course, differences of opinion as to

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: DR XVIII, Book of Royal Charters . . . ,passim.

<sup>2</sup>TR, pp. 1-3.

the precise cause of this increase in prices.<sup>1</sup> Popular candidates are the influx of precious metals from the new world, debasement of the coinage, and a demand for goods in excess of the supply available. Excessive reliance on the first of these two alternatives has been dampened by Y.S. Brenner,<sup>2</sup> who pointed out that the occurrence and extent of inflation was frequently manifest in England before one could reasonably expect these monetary changes to be felt. Brenner turned to a third cause, essentially demographic. He summarized:

. . . increased demand, rather than relatively diminished supply of goods, disturbed in the sixteenth century the previously prevalent price equilibrium. The way in which this derangement was reflected in prices, and the structure of the newly emerging price pattern, must suggest that it was caused by population growth. The demographic disaster in the fourteenth century produced a relative surplus of land. Tenements became available on easy terms and those of only marginal fertility were abandoned. As a result a relative scarcity of wage workers was reflected in the high cost of labour, while the great productivity of the cultivated land was reflected in the low grain prices. While high wages and low grain prices restricted tillage to the better land, it encouraged pasturage especially in areas of marginal fertility and sparse population. . . . The low cost of victuals and high wages also permitted early marriages, the sustenance of large families, and a high survival rate. Hence, when the great epidemics ceased to recur, population growth set in again. When this happened land became scanty, rents were raised in one form or another, family holdings had to be shared by a greater number of people and less fertile land was again brought under the plough . . . As a result of this victual prices rose sharply.<sup>3</sup>

Durham county exhibited several of the key characteristics which Brenner identified as leading to an increase in prices. There had been an

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<sup>1</sup>See C.M. Cipolla, Before the Industrial Revolution European Society and Economy 1000 - 1700 (New York, 1976); and the essays in C.M. Cipolla, ed., The Fontana Economic History of Europe The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Glasgow, 1974); Peter Burke, ed., Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe Essays from Annales (New York, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Y.S. Brenner, "The Inflation of Prices in Early Sixteenth England" in The Price Revolution in Sixteenth Century England, ed. by Peter H. Ramsey (London, 1971), p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-85.

outbreak of plague circa 1515, as well as successively bad harvests in the early and late twenties. Frankleyn had reported over 4000 people felled by the great pestilence.<sup>1</sup> In Durham, there was not only a depleted work force but a diminished supply of agricultural goods. The population, however, showed a slow steady increase over the course of the century.<sup>2</sup> In comparison with other parts of the country, grain prices rose less,<sup>3</sup> but they still rose to a level about which ecclesiastical administrators would complain. For the rectories in Durham county, some of the lands were probably considered marginal not only because of bad harvests, a depleted work force, and pasturage, i.e., enclosure, but also because of the Scottish threat. It was the rectories, after all, and not the vicarages, which were in the northern parts of the county. The rectories seemed to maintain a stable value. In reality, inflation had merely disguised the fact that higher values (in these cases for great tithes) were being assigned to the same or fewer goods. The vicarages, the appropriated livings, showed the effects in the depleted values of their livings quite obviously. Located along the Tees in a population cluster, Brenner's road to inflation probably had more opportunity to manifest itself. Frankleyn had reported that in Durham city and Darlington parish on the Tees alone some 5000 people had died of the plague.<sup>4</sup> These parishes were small, and as vicars, the incumbents were more dependent on small tithes, those which were more difficult to collect. There could not have

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/26/24. 10 September, 1522, William Frankleyn to Bishop Ruthall.

<sup>2</sup>James, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Brenner, Table 5, p. 87. See also footnote 1, page 17.

<sup>4</sup>See footnote 1, this page.

been much land available for pasturage in an area prone to higher population, settled in towns. Brenner offered a further possibility as to why vicars in particular would do so poorly:

In the sixteenth century, when the overspill of agricultural labour inflated the towns, and these were no longer able to produce their necessary food supplies themselves, the gap between agriculture and industry widened. Townspeople ceased to be producers as well as consumers of victuals and remained solely consumers. Not only land but the labour force employed in agriculture was thus further curtailed relatively to the increased demand for its produce.<sup>1</sup>

Townspeople had relatively less to give to the support of the vicar in the form of tithes than did the less highly populated, agriculturally orientated rectories. As a result, the vicarages of Durham county were conforming, on the average, to Crammer's pronounced belief that 10.00.00 was an adequate stipend for the beneficed man.

The actual income of the beneficed clergy can be broken down into three categories: the oblations, glebe land and tithes detailed in the Valor. Oblations were gifts to the church, "grapes, oil, cheese, altar clothes,"<sup>2</sup> given to the church at four festivals during the year, the "libro quadrag. et pasch." so often designated in the valuations. Christmas and Easter were the two occasions fixed for all churches. The other two, the patron's feast day and the anniversary of the church's dedication, varied of course with the church. Oblations were due, for example, on August 5th<sup>3</sup> at St. Oswald's parish church, that being the king's feast day, while at St. Giles in the same city, the parishioners would be making their contributions a month later, on the first of September.

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<sup>1</sup>Brenner, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, p. 989.

<sup>3</sup>C.R. Cheney, Handbook of Dates for Students of English History (London, 1970), pp. 50, 57.

It is difficult to say precisely what percentage of a vicar's or rector's income came from these oblations. In Worcestershire it has been estimated that they formed approximately 6% of an incumbent's income.<sup>1</sup> As they were in the nature of a gift, presumably the parishioner could decide upon the generosity with which he would support the incumbent. In many cases the oblations are not given a separate valuation, but are included with the tithes or the dwelling place and glebe. For Bishopton, for example, the Valor combines the tithes and oblations for a total of 16 s.,<sup>2</sup> to account for 18.4% of the entire yearly gross income of 4.07.08,<sup>✓</sup> and the same occurs for Sedgely,<sup>3</sup> where oblations and other profits yield 16.2%<sup>✓</sup> of the rector's stipend. There does not seem to be a very rigid difference between the oblations a rector could expect and those obtainable by a vicar. Of the five vicarages for which the Valor specifically gives the value of oblations alone, these offerings formed between 6 and 11% of the gross yearly income for all except Dalton,<sup>4</sup> where they comprised 22%<sup>✓</sup> of the total stipend. Of the four rectories, oblations formed 14.6%<sup>✓</sup> and 16.4%<sup>✓</sup> of the total income at Brancepeth and Gateshead,<sup>5</sup> yet for Wolsingham and Ryton parishes<sup>6</sup> they formed only 4.7%<sup>✓</sup> and 5.3%<sup>✓</sup> of the total income. The voluntary nature of this income was no doubt responsible for the fluctuations in this segment of an incumbent's stipend.

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<sup>1</sup>Barratt, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 320.<sup>✓</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 316.<sup>✓</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 319.<sup>✓</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 313-314.<sup>✓</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 312-313.<sup>✓</sup>

The glebe was another main source of income. This was the freehold property, attached to the rectory or vicarage, which the incumbent was meant to farm himself.<sup>1</sup> In this way the rector or vicar remained tied to agricultural interests in much the same way as his own parishioners, provided his land was in the near vicinity of his benefice and he did not let the property to a layman. Arable land was increasing in value during the early sixteenth century. It was therefore economically to the good of the incumbent if his lands were near enough to permit him to farm them himself. If they were extensive, though, he would probably still find it necessary to hire outside help. Peter Heath, in his study of clerical accounts, found that glebe land to the extent of thirty to forty acres was not uncommon.<sup>2</sup>

What proportion of an incumbent's income was made up by the glebe? Once again, the Valor presents some difficulties. Frequently it does not state the number of acres involved. Conniscliffe vicarage gives no more details than "terr' de gleba eiusdem."<sup>3</sup> As with the oblations, the value for glebe is frequently given in combination with another item, most frequently the dwelling site itself, so that is impossible to obtain a separate value for these holdings. The values for all eleven rectories and vicarages in which the commissioners noted down some detail of the acreage include the dwelling site in the sum. Bishop Middleham (vicarage) had by far the most land appurtenant to it, twenty one acres.<sup>4</sup> Including the dwelling site and vicarage, they were valued at 1.01.00<sup>✓</sup> per annum.

<sup>1</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, p. 571.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Heath, Medieval Clerical Accounts (York, 1964), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Valor, V, p. 318.✓

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 320.✓

The monetary value reveals little about the amount of land involved. Just as Bishop Middleham with its 21 acres brought in 1.01.00 per annum, so did Merrington<sup>1</sup> (vicarage) with its dwelling site, two acres of land and an enclosed area earn 6 s. 8 d. a year. ✓ Sockburn's messuage and one acre of glebe land was worth five shillings. ✓<sup>2</sup>

The descriptions for the rectories are somewhat more varied, both in terms of acreage and the types of land included with the glebe. For a total of 3.02.00 ✓ the landed wealth of Whickham parish<sup>3</sup> was composed of the rectory with an enclosed area behind it, another enclosed area called Allerdene, four acres of meadowland, six acres of land lying<sup>partly</sup> in the north field and ~~just as much~~<sup>partly</sup> in the south field in the same village. ✓ Cockfield possessed ten acres of glebe land and certain enclosed places for a total of 13 s. 4 d.; ✓<sup>4</sup> Dinsdale's 2.12.00 was divided among the rectory, with certain lands and tenements with the glebe, and two tenements in "Middle<sup>ll</sup>leton ove Rawe." ✓<sup>5</sup>

That the Valor was far from comprehensive in detail is evident when one looks to other sources. On the 20th of July 1501 Richard Fox issued a license in which it was declared that

per praesentes concedimus et licentiam damus dilecto nobis in Christo Rogero Layburn clerico Rectori ecclesiae parochialis de Segefild infra Episcopatum nostrum Dunelm et nostri patronatus, quod ipse sexaginta acras Terrae, abbutantes super rectoriam ecclesiae suae praedictae, jacentes ex parte australis eiusdem rectoriae, parallam glebae Ecclesiae praedictae includere, ac eas libere sic inclusas sibi et successoribus suis in seperalitate omni tempore Anni tenere possit . . .<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 320. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 317. ✓

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 313. ✓

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 317. ✓

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 317. ✓

<sup>6</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Hunter MSS, no. 5, p. 239; DPK: PReg. V, p. 74. ? - ~ f. 74.

The Valor entry makes no mention of these sixty acres other than "terr' gleba."<sup>1</sup> In the same year, Layburn, also archdeacon of Durham, was given permission to enclose "quadraginta Acras terrae de gleba Ecclesiae suae de Esyngton iacentes juxta Hallefeld infra Episcopatum nostrum Dunelm."<sup>2</sup> Layburn no doubt made a wise move in terms of the inflation of the 1530's. Land rose in value, and a cure based predominantly on land was more secure and stable than that overwhelmingly dependent on tithe. In these two instances Layburn's position as archdeacon no doubt provided him with the necessary influence to improve the parish holdings in so marked a way.

It is impossible to get any general idea of an incumbent's wealth in terms of acreage, but what percentage of his entire income was this land? As it turns out, landed wealth, or at least that officially appendant to the benefice, came nowhere near to providing the bulk of support necessary for the comfortable living of an incumbent. The percentage differs between the rectories and vicarages, however. For no rectory did the value for the glebe land exceed 22% of the whole, except for Dinsdale, where it comprised 40% of the entire value of the living. The vicarages, on the other hand, showed widely disparate values. Gainford's dwelling site, garden and enclosed area made up only .8% of its total income. Seaham's landed income made up the majority of its wealth at 59.7%. For Hart and Hartlepool the figure was 33.33%, for Bishopston, 45.6%.

Not surprisingly, the chantries show the greatest dependence for their revenues on land attached to the cure. As charitable endowments, it was not uncommon for anywhere from 85 to 100% of the value of the chantry to be derived from immovable property: cottages, tenements, burgages, messuages,

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Hunter MSS, no. 3, p. 195; DFK: PReg. V, f. 74 No.

as well as their dwelling sites. Of the fifty-five chantries surveyed in 1535, thirty-three of them derived 100% of their income from landed endowments, a fact oddly at variance with the traditionally very poor stipend received by the chantry priests in comparison with a beneficed man. To be sure, there were chantries worth more than the 5.02.10 average in 1535, but more often than not they were well below this sum.

The endowments upon which three chantries above the average income were founded are therefore notably instructive. The Gild of St. Nicholas, attached to St. Nicholas parish church in Durham City, had an annual value of 6.08.00,<sup>1</sup> based not only upon the dwelling site for the cantarist, but including numerous tenements. Four such tenements were located next to Durham Castle, two more were in Silverstreet, two more in Framwellgate and another in Sadlergate, with an enclosed area next to Durham. The Chantry of St. John<sup>2</sup> in St. Oswald's parish was possessed of the dwelling site and a parcel of land called Edderacres, as well as one tenement in Fleshergate and another in Elvet. This particular chantry was assessed at 11.11.04 gross. Bishop Langley's chantry in Durham Cathedral<sup>3</sup> was meant to support two priests and received annual stipends from the monastery of Gervaux and the bishop of Durham himself for a total of 20.12.04. The fact of the matter seems to be that, if a chantry were to rise above the average stipend, its revenues would have to come from a fixed stable source such as a monastery, much the same as with the vicarages, or, if it were based on land holdings, these parcels would have to be both numerous and concentrated in one area. This, at least, was the case for these three chantries in Durham City, where property values were conceivably higher.

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

This tendency was not so apparent in the countryside, where several chantries held lands widely scattered throughout the county and drew their revenues to a successful level. In Sedgfield the chantry of St. Thomas<sup>1</sup> was only some 2 s. 6 d. below the average, yet its revenues came from rather widely disparate sources. It held lands and a tenement in Ponteland parish in Northumberland, two parcels of land in Newcastle, and another parcel described as lying next to the Tyne. The parish of Sedgfield itself was some eighteen to twenty miles south of the Tyne. It was thus impossible for the incumbent of this chantry to oversee these lands himself and at the same time fulfill his obligations at the chantry. Significantly, these Newcastle lands were once again, as with the Durham City examples, within an urban area, and contributed 2.06.08 to the total gross annual income for this particular institution. The Chantry of Jesus<sup>2</sup> in Brancepeth parish showed a similar assortment of dispersed lands: a tenement let to farm in Whickham parish along the Tyne, another in Staindrop parish bordering Gainford on the Tees, as well as two burgages in North Auckland to the south of Brancepeth itself. These lands totalled 3.01.00 of the total annual income of 7.01.00. The extent of these lands and more particularly their dispersal at opposite ends of the county, necessitating the farming of them by individuals other than the chantry priests, no doubt diminished their potential value to the chantry itself. Farming out tenements seems to have been carried out on a grand scale in Gateshead, where despite their apparent proximity to the priest as well as their location in an urban center, their personal administration would have proven too much for the one chantry they were meant to support. The chantry within the church of Gateshead had an annual

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 322.

income of 6.17.00.<sup>1</sup> In 1555 Robert Galele (Galilee) derived his living from the "mans' dict cantarie et ceter' fruct' eiusdem." When itemized these other fruits turned out to be a formidable list of some eleven tenements farmed out to various individuals for various fees. Such a system, whereby many people had a stake in the support of a chantry, was not always so profitable, however. The Chantry of the Holy Trinity<sup>2</sup> in the same city brought German Creighton a stipend of only 4.14.08, based on the contributions of some twenty-three individuals.

The source of income to which the chantry priests were not entitled, which formed in most cases the largest portion of the incumbent's entire income, but which had the distinction of being the most vexacious to collect, was tithe. This was the compulsory, although formerly voluntary, support by the parishioners given to the incumbent, consisting of one tenth of their annual income.<sup>3</sup> They were divided into two groups, great and small tithes, the former payable to the rector of a parish, the latter to a vicar. By definition great tithes referred to the fruits of the ground and commonly included wood, corn and hay, also known as predial tithes. Small tithes referred to goods which were not a direct product of the soil but which had been nourished by it. Small tithes included a further classification called "personal tithes", the profits of labor. It is important to realize that whereas a rector might look forward to receiving

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 322. The figure given is that of the Valor. By my addition it should be 4.16.08.

<sup>3</sup>Cross, The Oxford Dictionary, pp. 1580-81; Smith, p. 61: "Even when they (tithe) became compulsory, the tithe payer was free to choose the cleric to whom they should be paid. However, it was natural that the landowner should pay them to the priest in the place where he lived, and by the XII century this had become so general a custom, that it came to be regarded as a right and was recognised by law."

the entire tithe assessment from the parish, a portion of which would be designated for his own use, the vicar received only a portion of the tithe due from the parish, the small tithes, and, moreover, he was responsible for collecting these himself. Whereas the rector might have no difficulty in determining one tenth of a man's wood or corn, those products more easily divisible provided there were no efforts to conceal the produce, or boundary disputes, the vicar had to determine a tenth of the livestock and make the necessary division. In many cases this involved some form of commutation of the tithe to another good or to money, and disputes over the amount of the alternate good or money were no doubt common. In addition to collecting his dues, the vicar also had to assess personal tithes. As has already been pointed out by another historian,<sup>1</sup> the chief drawback to these, as with many another form of clerical income, was their dependence upon the honesty of the laity in accurately assessing the profits of their personal efforts and declaring these, minus their own expenses, to the vicar.

In Durham county, except in rare cases like the vicarage of Seaham, the bulk of the yearly stipend which a beneficed man could expect to receive came from tithe. Whereas Seaham derived 60% of its income from glebe and only 13% from the collection of the tithe, the reverse was the case in most instances, for both rectories and vicarages. In 1555 John Tunstall derived a gross income of 53.08.08 from his rectory of Haughton-le-Skerne.<sup>2</sup> Whereas 9.5% came from oblations and 7.4% from the glebe, a full 78.9% was derived from the collection of tithe. The percentage in reality was probably higher than that, since a valuation for personal tithe is included with other income and therefore cannot be valued separately.

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<sup>1</sup>Gramsby, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 317.

Thirty pounds was the return from the great tithes of sheaves and hay, while wool and cloth brought in a further 10.00.00 per annum. As a rector was entitled not only to the great tithes but to the small as well, Tunstall's income was further supplemented by the tithes on the geese, pigs, hens and other livestock of the parish to the total of 2.02.08. At Sedgefield<sup>1</sup> where tithes comprised 67.5% of the yearly income, sheaves were responsible for a full 36.00.00, and cloth and wool for 14.00.00. The income from glebe and oblations was equal at 12.00.00 from each. Gateshead showed the same dependence upon the collection of tithe for its well-being,<sup>2</sup> With a total gross income of 30.09.00, 8.00.00 came from sheaves, 5.07.00 from hay, and 2.11.00 from cloth and wool. A regionally specific entry for small tithes was noted for salmon which brought in one pound yearly.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas in the rectories the tithe of hay and sheaves brought in the most money per year, as much of those two articles as the appropriators allowed to the vicar usually fell behind the value of cloth and wool in the vicarages. At Gretham<sup>4</sup> hay was valued at 10 s., cloth and wool at 1.06.08; at Pittington<sup>5</sup> hay provided only 5.00.00 of the income, while cloth and wool provided a full 8.00.00. Personal tithes are only mentioned twice in the assessments for Durham county, both times for rectories and not for vicarages as one would expect them. Barratt<sup>6</sup> reported that

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>3</sup>Bishop Wearmouth and Ryton also derived tithe from fish. Ibid., pp. 312-313.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>6</sup>Barratt, p. 298.

approximately one tenth of the income of the Worcestershire and Gloucestershire clergy came from personal tithe; in the two instances for Durham county, the value of personal tithe is included in a sum of other sources of income. It is impossible to calculate its exact value for the Durham clergy.

So much in the collection of tithe depended upon the voluntary co-operation of the laity in the taxation of their own wealth. Not unnaturally disagreements arose, in some instances making its collection difficult. To settle disputes the clergy made frequent recourse to the ecclesiastical courts, notably the Consistory. There is enough detail in this body's fragmentary act book to be able to discern twenty-one tithe cases. To be sure, all that is known in several suits is the names of the individuals. Even in knowing that, this act book is more informative than some. Purvis himself warned that "it is even possible sometimes to pursue the entire record of a certain case without ever discovering what was the charge against the defendant."<sup>1</sup> In the Durham act book, however, tithe cases, "causae subtractionis decimarum," are adequately marked as such. The same cannot be said for the final results of a case. The suit of Ralph Swalwell, chaplain, versus Robert Kirkham of Chester parish, in which "Dominus decret pro parte Act / "<sup>2</sup> is comparatively rare. A much more common occurrence is simply like the following: "Rector de Sedgfield contra Robertum Pyerson Johannem Atkynson et Johannem Chilton / in causa subtracc decim."<sup>3</sup> That is not to say that we are not left with some parti-

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<sup>1</sup>J.S. Purvis, An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Records (London, 1953), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 9r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 8v.

culars as to what prompted individual cases. The act book is immensely more useful in the few details it gives of the course of each suit than for the actual results.

The incumbents of eight parishes, one prebend and one chapelry were responsible for the twenty-one tithe cases recorded for the 1530s. Of the parochial incumbents, it was possible to determine for four of them the percentage to which the rector or vicar depended on tithe for his living. The rector of Sedgefield derived 67.5% of his income from tithe and brought forward five cases during these years. The rector at this time was Robert Shorton who died in 1535.<sup>1</sup> The rector of Gateshead, John Brown (1532-1557),<sup>2</sup> ran a close second with four cases. He derived 62.7% of his income from tithe. Next came the vicar of Hesledon, Robert Whitehead (1527-1560),<sup>3</sup> who brought two cases into the Consistory and received 65.3% of his income from tithe. Finally, the rector of Haughton-le-Skerne, Thomas Barrett (1519-1534),<sup>4</sup> brought only one case to court, but his dependence upon tithe (78.9%) far exceeded the other three men.

The more a man depended upon tithe for his yearly income, the more closely he was bound to the agricultural concerns of his parishioners, and the more acutely he would feel the pinch in years of dearth. It might be logical to hypothesize that tithe cases would be more frequent, not necessarily in hard times themselves, but in the years thereafter, when the clergy had a greater chance not only of winning their court cases and avoiding costs, but of actually collecting the contested revenue. If this

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<sup>1</sup>SS 139, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

is the case one would expect the early 1520's, following an epidemic of the plague and an agricultural slump due to de-population, to have shown an upward swing in the number of tithe cases brought into the Consistory. These years followed a period in which the parishioner's ability to pay had markedly decreased. Unfortunately there are no existing records for the Consistory from 1515 through the early 1520's. According to William Frankleyn, however, the latter part of that decade were similarly distressing years in the county. Fifteen twenty-five through twenty-eight saw a great "fayling of corne and dethe of catell."<sup>1</sup> Significantly, the twenty-one tithe cases here in question took place in the early 1530's: nine in 1531, eight in 1532 and four in 1533. Thereafter none appear, although one must allow that the fragmentary nature of this act book is in some part responsible for that fact. One might wish to co-ordinate the number of tithe cases in other dioceses with years of agricultural hardship to test the validity of this hypothesis.

The suits themselves illustrate characteristics of tithe collection noted by other historians. Two early cases in the act book point to the difficulty with which tithe was collected. The rector of Sedgelyield prosecuted Thomas Lynne in July of 1531 "in cause detens decimi ---vitul.---."<sup>2</sup> The defendant admitted that he possessed the beast. The problem appeared to lie in the mindboggling dilemma of how to give one's rector one tenth of a calf. In another case there was some dispute as to who actually owned the property to be tithed. In the "vicarius de Hesilden contra Willelrum Clerke paroch eiusdem",<sup>3</sup> the defendant "alleg se vj habere / sed ij eorem

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/52/20. William Frankleyn to Ralph Hungate, 1528.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 2r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 7v.

esse suorum filiozem." In another early case, "Vicarius de Busshopton contra William Kyerston", there was concern as to the correct form of collection. The entry reads only "in causa subtracc decim granoru Dominus comparuit et alleg consuetud decimarui garbas per le sheriffe."<sup>1</sup> Custom was quite important. The protracted case of the prebend of Shildon against John Parkinson and John Aldwood disputed both custom and boundary. At one point John Aldwood responded

that he canne tell nothing of certayntie of taking of the (ti)ethe of the Est felde & west felde but onelie of the money therfore . . . for theym / that is to say xxvj s. viij d. yerelie et so contynued xxxviij yere, unt such tyme that the prebendarie now taketh for theym yerelie xxxviij s. iij d. in money and so there was payed always in money et not the tiethe / and so he offereth to pay yet for his parte . . .<sup>2</sup>

His co-defendant later testified on the boundary question

quoad decim de Estfeld fa(tetur) quod prebendar h(ab)ere debet quascumque decim garbare de Estfeld / et quoad terciam partem decim garbare de Westfeld . . . neg . . . propterea<sup>3</sup> quod terr ille consistunt infra paroch de heghington . . .

The tithes most frequently contested were grain and hay, not surprisingly, as they were of the most value, both to the incumbent and to the parishioner. Either one might sell these products for a handsome profit. Yet another contested product of the earth was coal. Two suits appear involving this ore, one by the rector of Gateshead, John Brown, and the other by Anthony Bellasis, rector of Whickham. In only one is the outcome known. At Gateshead one of the defendants pleaded that he should not pay the tithes on this particular resource:

Rector petit decim Carbonu subterrane ec Reus fa(tetur) se debere / . . . petit quod non compelli ad soluc decim quousque dicte Carbon vendic de(b)it / et sic ex concensu Rectoris

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 7v.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 59r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 45v.

dominus soluc (decim) dicte Carbonu quousque eos vendic  
exposuerit . . .<sup>1</sup>

At this point a commutation of the tithe was under consideration, as the rector agreed that the actual product itself should first be sold before he could derive a profit from it. The case dragged on until 1539, however, when its final decision was recorded in Tunstall's Register:

. . . the said parson shall have in recompence of his said tiethe coles for every pyt thre holl days work in the yere within the said coll mynd to worke and to drawe coles at the cost of the said parson or his assignes. And the said Will'm and Will'm to fynd the said parson cole rope corff shoile and burrow everye daye of the said thre dais, and the said parson to be no further charget but onely with worke mens wag' for the said thre dais . . . Alwais providet that the said parson shall have fre libertie for his work men to work and drawe as many chal- ders of coles of every of the said pitt' as ar dalye or any daye drawe' for and<sup>2</sup> to the said Will'm and Will'm during the said thre days.

The three major sources of income in Durham county, then, were tithe, glebe, and oblations, with the greatest support in the majority of cases coming from tithe. These were supposedly the steady sources of income for the incumbent, although it should be remembered that a rise or fall in agricultural prosperity affected the incumbent as much as the laity and probably served to lessen the gap between their respective incomes. There were other, less lucrative and more occasional, forms of income. Hunne's vexacious mortuary was one. Mortuary payments were due at the time of death and were meant to be paid in kind, either the second best gown or beast of the deceased. The usual way of dealing with this was to make it one of the first bequests in the parishioner's last will and testament. The deceased would bequeath a certain amount of money to the high altar of the parish, "for tithes forgotten." It was a common form in the wills of

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 55r.

<sup>2</sup>TL, pp. 130-131. The defendants were William Thornlyngson and William Inskip.

Durham county, even after the statute of 1529 which set forth the amount of mortuary payable for each gradation of wealth. By this statute ten shillings was the maximum one could expect in payment of mortuary, and that only from a person whose goods were valued in excess of 40.00.00 at the time of death.<sup>1</sup> In 1553, John Chilton of Sedgefield parish bequeathed "to the high altar of Sedgefield for forgotten tithes xij d. . ."<sup>2</sup> In 1559 Henry Hutton of Norton, using the same formula, bequeathed 3 s. 4 d.<sup>3</sup> According to the provisions of the statute, one can assume that Chilton was worth less than ten marks and was therefore exempt from such payment, while Hutton left moveable goods valued between ten marks and 30.00.00. There are several such instances where a person gave mortuary payments when he in fact was not obliged to do so. The Reformation legislation with reference to mortuaries did not militate against voluntary offerings and the sporadic lift this gave to clerical incomes. Personal bequests were also made in many parishioners' wills as well as blanket bequests to groups of priests. Robert Bedyke, tanner of Durham, in 1545 made a combination of all three of these bequests:

. . . I bequest unto the high alter for my forgotten tiths  
 . . . xij d. It. I bequest and give to xxx ti preastes the  
 day of my burial for masse and dirige to every one of them  
 xj d. . . . Item I give to John Foster preast for the many-  
 fold kindness that I have found in hym bothe toward my self  
 and my son Robert trusting that he will continue them /  
 one ryall in gowld for a token . . .<sup>4</sup>

Similar occasional income was forthcoming from such ceremonies as weddings and the churching of women, and some places reported a different fee if the

<sup>1</sup>Heath, Medieval, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, John Chilton, Sedgefield, 1553.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Henry Hutton, Norton, 1559.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Robert Bedyke, Durham, 1545.

child was born dead or subsequently died. There also were the pennies offered to light a candle before images in the churches themselves.

The chantry priest derived income not only from bequests such as those cited above, but also from his frequent appearance as a proctor in the ecclesiastical courts. There are no records of the costs incurred by bringing an action in the Durham Consistory during this period. Woodcock,<sup>1</sup> in his study of the Canterbury ecclesiastical courts, estimated the costs incurred at each step in the prosecution of a suit. Accordingly, the procedure whereby the defendant and prosecutor of a suit chose or "constituted" their respective proctors cost 2 d. Afterwards, the proctor might earn 6 d. with each appearance in court. Ritchie<sup>2</sup> for a later period compared the daily salary of a York proctor with that of one at Canterbury, and not surprisingly found them to be higher in the south. There a proctor could expect one shilling per day, whereas his York counterpart received 8 d. for the same services. Ritchie's estimates deal with the late sixteenth century, the 1570's for York as compared to 1597 for Canterbury. Woodcock's estimates for an earlier period are probably safer for Durham diocese. Ralph Todd made at least fifteen appearances as a proctor in the Durham Consistory between 1531 and 1534. He consequently supplemented his annual income of 20.12.04 from the chantry of the Virgin and St. Cuthbert, shared with William Cokey who also served as a proctor in the court, by some 7 s. 6 d.

Service in the Consistory constituted just one form of occasional employment for the chantry priests. In fact, it is not unreasonable to conclude that there was a real dichotomy between the sources of income avail-

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<sup>1</sup>Woodcock, pp. 61, 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ritchie, p. 56.

able to the beneficed clergy and those available to the unbeneficed clergy. Whereas the unbeneficed were much more dependant on voluntary bequests from the laity and on their penchant to resort to litigation, the beneficed men enjoyed the relative security derived from the collection of the tithes and the farming of the glebe.

## II. Expenditure

While the laity busied themselves with their personal contributions to the local priest's support, the incumbent and chantry priest strenuously exercised their minds with the debit side of the clerical balance sheet. James Chambre of Boldon gave further testimony after the death of Ralph Todd, indicating in some detail exactly where a priest's money might have to be spent.

Sainge further, that the mansion house is moch better then yt was at his said uncle's comming therto, for ther was a crosse chamber new buylded, and 1 chymney therein maid of frestone, of his said uncle chardges, which also buildyd a newe water corne mylne . . . He belyveth that the said Rauff Todd receyved small commoditye by the said vicaridge, consydering the buylding he mayd ther, and the 40 s. he paid yerely to the poore of the said parish . . . consydering the 10th and subsidies, the fyndyng of the preiste, and all other ordinarye and extra ordinarye chardges . . .<sup>1</sup>

Dilapidations were the expense at issue here, but Chambre had digressed and mentioned other avenues by which the clergy's income might trickle away. Ralph Todd paid 2.00.00 annually for the maintenance of the poor in his parish. Traditionally a full third<sup>2</sup> of an incumbent's yearly income should have been deployed for this purpose, as well as for the offering of hospitality on such occasions as when the archdeacon and his retinue were in the process of making a visitation. Chambre, in fact, was far more comprehensive in his description of his uncle's expenses than the official assessments in the Valor were. A brief look at that document sheds little or no light upon the magnitude of clerical expenditure. The only consistently mentioned outlay was the annual "penny" or procuration due to the archdeacon, frequently amounting to only two shillings, and consuming between 2 and 2.6% of the gross income of the vicarages and a fraction

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<sup>1</sup>SS 21, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>Heath, Medieval, p. 14.

of one per cent for the rectories. Very rarely is a pension to a former rector or vicar included. Hugo Wrenne's pension of 16 s.<sup>1</sup> is mentioned for Grindon vicarage, but it is not included in the total expenses to be deducted from the gross income before taxation could be applied. The clerical tenth for this benefice was figured on the gross income of 4.13.04, less the archdeacon's procuration of two shillings, for an amount due of 9 s. 1 d.<sup>2</sup> One gains the impression that the Valor estimates were meant to last a very long time. With their permanence the transitory expense of one retired priest would not be allowed to interfere.

Similarly, little mention was made of chaplains at chapels of ease. The chantry priest at Eggleston in Middleton in Teesdale gained a mention,<sup>3</sup> while the man serving the chapel of ease at Weardale St. John in Stanhope did not. Stanhope, as a matter of fact, was declared to have no expenses at all.<sup>4</sup> The Valor is marginally more helpful for the chantries, for it corrects the impression given in its income entries, that the perpetual chantries were so liberally endowed with freehold land. Many of these same freeholds and tenements which the cantarists let to farm to provide a source of income for themselves, were in fact rented by the cantarists from other landlords, and there arose a chain of sub-letting. The properties on Moatside and Silverstreet, for example, let by the Gild of St. Nicholas, were themselves let to the cantarist by the bishop and monastery of Durham, respectively.<sup>5</sup> In calculating expenditure it is necessary to

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

be far less dependent upon the Valor and to seek information in other, more varied sources.

One of the most official and relatively regular forms of capital outlay was royal taxation. While the laity of the county palatine were not subject to these levies, the clergy of Durham were, and at their own assent, commonly given by their proctors at the Northern Convocation. That is not to say that the clergy's assent was a mere rubber stamp to a royal request. Outright dissent did occur, as in 1501, when Edmund Cowper refused this assent to the proposed tenth "quatenus dicta concessio concernit vel tangit temporalia dicti domini dunelmensis Episcopi infra diocesim Eboracensem spiritualibus annexa."<sup>1</sup> The magnitude of the levy varied with the seriousness of its purpose. On 6 April 1496, one whole tenth was granted to the king.<sup>2</sup> Record of this grant first appears in Fox's Register on the 16th of June 1496, where its purpose was described as "pro securitate et defensione ecclesia<sup>1</sup> anglicane, custodiaque rei publice, pace, tranquillitate et salvacione Regni Anglie et specialiter pro defensione marchiarum versus Scotiam . . ."<sup>3</sup> There occurs another "Breve Regum Pro Decima Levanda" on 1 June 1497,<sup>4</sup> when the taxation approved was two tenths. Convocation itself had voted this tax in April of the same year with the proviso that a third tenth would be forthcoming "Si rex in propria persona, vel per suum locumtenentem cum exercitu regali citra primum diem Novembris contra eosdem Scotos declinaret, et deveniret."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>David Wilkins, ed., Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae(1757), vol. 3, p. 644.

<sup>3</sup>FR, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-60.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

The Scottish threat was particularly menacing at that time, with the last serious pretender to Henry VII's throne, Perkin Warbeck, receiving recognition, marriage to a Scottish nobleman's daughter, and military aid from the Scots king. The amount of money granted by the clergy seems to have decreased, however, the greater the distance from the threat. In 1502 the levy was again down to one tenth, "ad tuitionem et defensionem Christianae religionis contra perfidum Turcam . . ." <sup>1</sup> By contrast the continental wars of the eighth Henry brought forth fairly regular requests for support in the second decade of the century.

The terms of these levies are fully available. In 1496, as in 1497, there were numerous exemptions. Livings were exempt from paying the subsidies "propter earum notariam paupertatem":

necnon monasteriis prioratibus et beneficiis omnibus et singulis Combrie Westmorl' Northumbrie Coupland ac temporalibus spiritualibus eisdem annexis infra dictas partes Combrie Westmorl' Northumbrie et Coupland, existentibus, ac eciam omnibus et singulis beneficiis ecclesiasticis curatis dignitatibus prebendis hospitalibus pensionibus et porcionibus secundum novam taxam vel antiquam, ubi nova taxa non habetur, ad decem marcas et infra taxatis, <sup>2</sup>a solucione concessionis . . . totaliter exceptis . . .

Any living worth less than 6.13.04 <sup>3</sup> per annum was exempt from the tenth.

In the new grant a year later that exemption would be reduced to those valued at eight marks, or 5.06.08. <sup>4</sup> The northern province did somewhat more poorly in this regard than did the members of the southern province.

There, the upward limit at which one could remain tax-free was twelve marks or 8.00.00, until the early 1520s. <sup>5</sup> Also exempt from these payments were

<sup>1</sup>Wilkins, p. 647.

<sup>2</sup>FR, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>Heath, The English Parish Clergy, p. 146.

benefices appropriated to colleges, halls or houses of the two universities or to other religious houses for the use of scholars at universities.<sup>1</sup> As if to counterbalance these exemptions, in the 1497 grant provision was made for a gratuitous subsidy to be collected from the tax-free churches in the outlying shires:

. . . a solucione pecuniarum antiquitus excipi consuetis prout supra excipiuntur unum subsidium gratuitum per vos ac venerabilem in christo patrem Willelmum dei gracia Carliolensem episcopum taxandum colligendum et ad terminos per vos et dictum venerabilem patrem assignandos et limitandos manibus nostris persolvendum concesseritis, proviso omnino quod si dicti prelati et clerus ad resistendum prefatis Scottis vel alijs huius regni Anglie inimicis aut ad eorundem hostiles incursus propulsandum in personis suis propriis vel ad aliquem seu aliquos viros armatos sumptibus et oneribus propriis ipsorum prelatorum et Cleri aut eorum alicuius ad id exhibendum inveniendum seu mittendum per nos aut alium quemcumque quavis auctoritate compellantur aut onerentur mandetur ve iniungatur, eisdem seu eorum alicui quod extunc concessionem decimarum suprascriptam quo ad huiusmodi personas sic ut premittitur ad arma contra scottos gerenda compulsas seu aliter ad exhibendum inveniendum et mittendum viros armatos contra dictos inimicos nostros sumptibus suis propriis oneratas pro non concessione habeantur, ac viribus careant et effectu.<sup>2</sup>

While these churches were officially exempt from the payment of the two tenths, it was still ensured that they would make some contribution toward the defense of the realm, either monetarily or through their own physical efforts.

Each tenth was due at a specified time laid down in the "breve". The whole tenth approved in 1496 was to be paid in two parts, the first half due by the feast of St. Martin in yene, 11 November of that year, and the second and last part to be entirely collected by the same feast in the following year.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the collectors would be gathering

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<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 52, 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-54.

one-twentieth of the value of the livings in each of these two years. In 1497 it was declared that the levy would be collected as tenths, that the first tenth was due between the first of August, the feast of St. Peter ad vincula, and the first of September, and the second between 29 September, "in festo sancti michaelis Archangeli proximo futuro" and the 21st of November.<sup>1</sup> The third tenth of this grant, dependent upon whether the king in his proper person or a lieutenant of his lead an army against the Scots, would be due "in Festo Nativitatis sancti Johannis Baptiste" - June 24th - and before August 1, 1498.<sup>2</sup> Fourteen ninety-seven was therefore a particularly hard year for the clergy, as far as royal taxation was concerned, with two-tenths and one-twentieth, from the previous convocation due to the king.

After the granting of such sums to the monarch it was customary to appoint a collector for the subsidies, and the bishops of Durham traditionally chose the prior of Durham monastery to carry out this task.<sup>3</sup> It is among the monastery's records that one finds evidence of the actual sums collected. Acquittances exist for the collections of four separate sums of money for 1496 and 1497. For the 11th of November, 12 Henry VII (1496), the first half of the one tenth granted amounted to 102.04.00.<sup>4</sup> On the first of September, 13 Henry VII 217.02.10<sup>1/4</sup> was recorded as having been collected,<sup>5</sup> presumably the first tenth of the two approved in 1497.

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see "Deputacio collectorum ad colligendum integram decimam" and "Deputacio . . . duas integras decimas" in FR, pp. 36, 60.

<sup>4</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 43v.

<sup>5</sup>DPK: Loc. 19, no. 40, part 3; SPReg. IV, f. 64r.

On 11 November of that same year there accrued 203.16.00<sup>1</sup> on 21 November, 1497, 217.02.10<sup>2</sup>. The first of these two sums was probably the final payment of the 1496 tenth.

From these sums the collector was meant to deduct payment for his labor in this rather onerous task. The subsidy grants made provision for this, stating that for every pound collected, 8 d. could be deducted in recompense. "Et quod collectores omnes et singuli cum huiusmodi remuneracione pro collectione et levatione sua huiusmodi absque ulteriori riguardo in hac parte habendo reputent se contentos"<sup>3</sup> Indeed, any irregularity or delay in the return of the grant might elicit a vexed letter from the king demanding payment forthwith. Thomas Castell was the recipient of just such a letter (undated) from the king, bristling with deadlines to be met and fines to be paid.

ll 9<sup>l</sup> We . . . straitly charge you that within 15 dayes next after the receipt of these our letters / ye content and pay<sup>e</sup> all the said somes of money . . . to our trusty and well-beloved in God Thabbot of the monasterie of our blessed lady without the wales of our cite of York and our trusty chaplain Thomas Magnus . . . Or-else in case ye refuse so to do / we than wol and charge you all excuses ceasing ye bee and personally appere afore us and the lords of our counsell . . . within 10 dayes next after your said refusal to show a cause reasonable if ye any have why ye ought not so to do / Not failling hereof upon payne of 5 marks and as ye wol answer therein unto us at your further perills . . .<sup>4</sup>

wellbeloved /  
Or elles /

✓<sup>c</sup> [= 500]

Delay in the actual collection of a subsidy was probably not uncommon. There are several other examples of letters of this type to the prior.<sup>5</sup> Yet even after the collection, and before the handing over of the

<sup>1</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 64v. ✓

<sup>2</sup>DPK: Loc. 19, no. 40, part 1; SPReg. IV, f. 64v. ✓

<sup>3</sup>FR, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>DPK: Loc. 19, no. 84. ✓

<sup>5</sup>DPK: Loc. 19, numbers 79, 85. ✓

? - simply a statement of  
acc - + quitance.

sums to the officials in York, the collector's work was not yet finished. He himself could not deduct his 8 d. per pound until other deductions had been made. On 21 November 1497, among the last items of the acquittance a deduction was claimed "pro . . . custubus ex<sup>e</sup> expens<sup>s</sup> suis circa collectionem et levacionem x<sup>me</sup> predict<sup>e</sup> — 4 li. 14 s. iuxta <sup>ij</sup> <sup>xij</sup> <sup>R</sup> <sup>vij</sup> ~~statam~~ 8 d. de libra sicut cont<sup>r</sup> in concess<sup>s</sup> predict<sup>s</sup> . . ." <sup>1</sup> The total sum collected had been 217.02.10, but the 4.14.00 had been calculated on a total nearer to 146.00.00 than 217.00.00. One wonders about the efficiency of this system of tax collection, both for the collector, who could only figure his fee upon the amount turned over to York and not the actual sum he had initially collected, and for the monarch, from whom much of the money would be siphoned before it ever reached him. In one of the "compti" for the 1504 grant, it was calculated that the total amount collected was 205.09.04<sup>3/4</sup><sub>2</sub>. The final payment to Martin Colyns for the king was a mere 52.03.07. Several deductions had whittled away the tremendous sum collected, among them 19.19.00 "de ecclesia de haloughton (Haughton-le-Skerne) et decanatu de Aukland ac de aliis ecclesiastic beneficiis pensionibus et porcionibus infra arch Dunelm Ad sexdecem libras et infra taxat A dict x<sup>me</sup> medietate . . . except."<sup>3</sup> A further 66.13.04 were allocated to the temporalities of the bishopric of Durham, now vacant and in the hands of the lord king, and an almost equal amount was due to Master Martin Colyns himself. Only after these massive deductions were made did Thomas Swalwell, the priory's collector on this occasion, calculate his own costs on the remaining 56.00.18, at the usual rate of 8 d. to the pound. The sums which at last reached the royal exchequer were a pittance compared with the initial

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: Loc. 19, no. 40, part 1.

<sup>2</sup>DPK: Loc. 18, no. 22. ✓

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., no. 22.

gross intake of the levy.

Royal taxation became insistently more frequent prior to 1550. After 1502, Convocation met on five more occasions prior to 1523: one tenth was accepted in 1504 and 1509, in 1512 three whole tenths were levied, and in both 1514 and 1516 the clergy gave their assent to two tenths.<sup>1</sup> In 1523 the necessity for further meetings of Convocation to meet and assent to taxation over the next five years was dispensed with, with the assent to a "subsidiū mediae partis unius anni omnium et singulorum fructuum et reddituum et proventuum omnium et singulorum episcoporum, ecclesiarum cathedralium . . . diocesis et provinciale Ebor. quinque annis continuis proxime sequentibus."<sup>2</sup> For those whose benefices were worth over 8.00.00, the rate at which this sum was to be paid yearly was to be 1/10; for those worth less than 8.00.00, 1/15.<sup>3</sup>

There is evidence that these grants, more and more frequent until they assumed the appearance of a virtual annual subsidy in the 1520s, were by no means popular with the great body of parish clergy. Frankleyn in the mid 1520s had written to Wolsey about the "sedisious demeynor" of the dean of Auckland, that supposititious Scotsman, who had "in opon presence of all the clergie at Duresme as also p'vatly" spoken against the priest money.<sup>4</sup> Frankleyn had described the great mass of the Durham clergy as a rather meek and mild lot - "wele contentyd" were the words he used - until the dean, Strangeways, had intervened. Thereafter, "dyvers began to alter refusing to take theyr othe a longe season in so myche that it hyndred

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<sup>1</sup>Wilkins, pp. 647-659.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 698-99.

<sup>3</sup>Heath, The English Parish Clergy, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>BL: Titus B. I. f. 295v. - old foliation (now f. 301v)

the collectors a hundrethe powndes at lest." It is hard to imagine one man, unless he was particularly charismatic, having such an influence as to arouse strong feelings about royal taxation where none had existed before.

A number of the "compti" of the Pre-Reformation period give the actual amount paid by the various churches in the collection of these subsidies. One such list occurs in the Small Prior's Register and details the "taxacio ecclesiarum" of Durham county, apparently for the collection of tenths in 1492 and 1496.<sup>1</sup> For 1496 we know the terms of the grant: one tenth to be collected in two parts. The list itself gives two values for each benefice, the "media" and the "integra". Accordingly, if Boldon were to pay one whole tenth of its income, it should have been assessed at 55 s. 4 d.,<sup>2</sup> Sedgefield would have had to pay 102 s., and Conniscliffe 42 s. 6 d.<sup>2</sup> In all, twenty-five benefices are included in this list and they all conform to one of the express conditions of the subsidy. Any living worth ten marks or less was to be exempt from contributing to this levy. All were well over that amount. The vital point is the basis upon which these tenths were calculated. It has traditionally been held that the taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291 provided that basis, yet the Durham sums provide serious reason to doubt that, at least in respect of Durham county. Such skepticism about the 1291 valuations has been guardedly voiced by other historians. Felicity Heal has stated that when a "tenth or subsidy was granted . . . individual liability was based in theory upon the 1291 taxation lists."<sup>3</sup>

The point is this: in 1496, when one whole tenth was granted by the

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, ff. 42r-v. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ff. 42r-v. ✓

<sup>3</sup>Heal, "Clerical", p. 99. Underline mine.

clergy, with relatively simple qualifications, in no instance in the "taxacio ecclesiarum" do the calculated whole tenths, when multiplied by ten, approach the 1291 valuations for the respective benefices. Rather, they correspond almost 100% of the time to a series of valuations carried out in 1318,<sup>1</sup> a scant twenty-seven years after the 1291 survey. Thirteen eighteen in Durham county would have found one in the middle of the Scottish wars. The valuations for that year are consequently markedly below those of 1291. Whereas in 1291 Boldon, Sedgefield and Conniscliffe were worth, respectively, 40.00.00, 113.06.08, and 26.13.04, twenty-seven years later those stipends had dwindled to 16.13.04, 51.00.00, and 21.05.00.<sup>2</sup> It was on these lower figures, more favorable to the clergy, that the tenths were apparently calculated. This is not meant to imply that the clergy paid lower tenths, using a lower valuation, by any covert means. The call for the 1496 tenth had specifically stated " . . . omnibus et singulis beneficiis ecclesiasticis curatis dignitatibus prebendis hospitalibus pensionibus et porcionibus secundum novam taxam vel antiquam, ubi nova taxa non habetur, ad decem marcas et infra taxatis, a solucione concessionis . . . totaliter exceptis . . ."<sup>3</sup> It was the 1318 valuation which was known as the "Nova Taxatio."

There are some anomalies in this list. Heighington and Aycliffe, two vicarages in Darlington deanery valued in 1318 at 26.17.04 and 10.00.00,<sup>4</sup> fell outside of the ten marks exemption, but are not included on this list. Aside from these two examples, all of the other rectories and vicarages

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<sup>1</sup>Taxatio, passim. The "Nova Taxatio" is included in this volume.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 314-315.

<sup>3</sup>FR, p. 33. Underline mine.

<sup>4</sup>Taxatio, p. 315.

not included in this list fell below ten marks in value, in many instances, below 4.00.00, in 1518. It may be worth mentioning that, for some of them, their values fell below that point in 1291 as well. In another anomalous case, Whickham, a rectory in Durham deanery, was assessed at 32 s.<sup>1</sup> Applying a multiplier of ten, its value in 1518 should have been 16.00.00, which would still have been lower than the figure for 1291. In reality, the "Nova Taxatio" credits it with a lowly 1.00.00 stipend per year.<sup>2</sup> There are other minor discrepancies. According to the assessment for Gainford, its entire worth should have been 40.19.04. The "Nova Taxatio" records 40.00.00 as its net worth.<sup>3</sup>

Another comotus for the subsidy granted in 1504 shows the same dependence on the 1518 valuations. One whole tenth had again been agreed to, and the comotus gives a breakdown, according to benefice, "*primae medietate unius <sup>integre</sup> decimae regi concessae.*"<sup>4</sup> This subsidy was to be collected in two parts, so that in this first half, one would expect an assessment of one-twentieth of the entire yearly income. There was no mention of any ten mark level below which no taxation was to take place. Once again, the full values of these benefices, computed from the assessments given in the comotus, match the 1518 values. Heighington once again is in an anomalous position. Taxed at 16 d.,<sup>5</sup> its full value should have been 1.06.08. This in fact agrees with the value given for the vicarage.<sup>6</sup> Heighington may well have been

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 42r. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Taxatio, p. 315.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>4</sup>DPK: Loc. 18, no. 53. ✓

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., no. 53. ✓

<sup>6</sup>Taxatio, p. 315.

in the same situation as Billingham and Merrington, both of which were appropriated. Scheduled to pay 14 d. and 16<sup>3/4</sup> d. respectively,<sup>1</sup> their yearly worth should have been 1.03.04 and 1.06.08. The actual 1318 values for these vicarages were 1.03.00 and 0.18.00.<sup>2</sup> In all, twenty-one rectories and vicarages were assessed at 1/20 of their yearly value.

Both Billingham and Merrington appear again for assessment under another category in the same compotus, headed by the following:

Item petit se exonerari de subscript' omnibus et singlis beneficiis ecclesiastic' pensionibus et porcionibus infra Archidiaconat' Dunelm' ad sexdecim<sup>3</sup> libras et infra taxat' A medietate dict' x<sup>me</sup> dumtaxat except' viz/prim' parte medietate ~~prime~~ prime <sup>3</sup> integre ~~decime~~ predict' ut hic immediate post inseritur. . .  
<sub>decima</sub> L de

Benefices valued at 16.00.00 or less were meant to pay only one half of the entire tenth, so that, in this first compotus, 1/40 of the living would be due. Working on that basis, with only one exception, all fourteen included in this segment were calculated on the 1318 estimates. Bishop Wearmouth's assessment of 6 s. 8 d. would have given it a stipend of 13.06.08 per annum, when in fact it was 52.13.04.<sup>4</sup> In this particular segment, Billingham and Merrington were taxed on the rectory as opposed to the vicarage, and therefore appeared twice in the compotus. The mystery still to be unravelled is why only these fourteen were allowed to pay, in total, 1/20 as opposed to the one tenth due, when almost all of the other benefices in the initial section of this document were well under 16.00.00. They were not all exclusively vicarages or rectories, nor were they located in one particular area.

Be that as it may, one is inevitably drawn to the conclusion that

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: Loc. 18, no. 53. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Taxatio, pp. 314-315.

<sup>3</sup>DPK: Loc. 18, no. 53. ✓

<sup>4</sup>Taxatio, p. 314.

while the Durham clergy probably fared better than some of their peers when it came to royal taxation,<sup>1</sup> the blow must have been particularly bitter with the increased demands of the 1530s and the newer, more realistic, valuations contained in the Valor. The initial changes in which the king was substituted for the pope as supreme head were deceptive. Annates, paid usually by members of the upper hierarchy upon their provision to benefices by the pope alone or by the pope and consistory, lapsed, although it is questionable how often these had been paid at all in recent years. Gone as well was Peter's Pence, estimated at a mere 199.06.08 per annum.<sup>2</sup>

In truth, clerical taxation was assumed by the king with much more vigor than had been apparent under the pope, with the introduction of first fruits and tenths, calculated upon the new survey. After 1536 any man entering a new benefice was required to pay one entire year's income - the first fruits - to the Crown. There were certain exemptions: vicarages worth 10.00.00 or less and rectories worth 6.13.04 or less were free of the obligation of payment. An income equal to or below these levels constituted poverty. There was, in addition, a yearly tax, the tenth of each year's net income, to be paid, and eventually more subsidies were demanded of Convocation on the remaining 9/10. Not only was the magnitude of the taxation increased, but the number of benefices which fell within its purview were also. Whereas, according to the new valuations of 1535, fifteen benefices, seven of which were rectories and eight of which were vicarages, were excluded from taxation by virtue of their poverty, in the 1496 subsidy, liability being based on the 1318 valuations, a full twenty-two benefices had been excluded, thirteen of them rectories and eight

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<sup>1</sup>Scarisbrick at one point hypothesized that the clergy had perhaps been undertaxed before the Reformation. Scarisbrick, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

vicarages.<sup>1</sup> If there was any beneficial effect to be had from the reassessments of 1535, it was that they brought more rectories within the scope of clerical taxation and thus on a more equal footing with the vicarages.<sup>2</sup> The same cannot be said for the chantries, many of which fell below the 6.13.04 allowed per annum for the rectories. Whether or not money was actually collected from these charitable endowments, even a chantry of such small worth (net = 3.06.05)<sup>3</sup> as the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Nicholas, Durham, was assessed for tenths (0.07.07).

One expense with which an incoming priest might find himself encumbered was a pension to the outgoing minister, retiring either because of sickness and old age or upon negotiation to allow another man to succeed to the benefice. In mid-1536 Thomas Barrett<sup>4</sup> received a pension upon his resignation of the cure of Haughton-le-Skerne. Ill health was not the reason behind this resignation. Barrett merely exchanged this benefice for the rectory of Laindon in Essex and enjoyed a pension from his old cure, at the rate of eight marks or 5.07.04 per annum, until his death in 1544.<sup>5</sup> Some men apparently made a practice of entering into a benefice, only to resign in a very short time. Thomas Kaye, LL.D., was such a man. Kaye occurred as Dean of Chester in 1532 and by the following year had resigned rather profitably with a pension of 24.00.00.<sup>6</sup> He was drawing yet another pension from the collegiate church of Auckland in 1553.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: SPReg. IV, ff. 42r-v. ✓

<sup>2</sup>Scarisbrick found similar results. Whereas formerly 30 to 40 benefices paid annates in a year, in the first six months of 1535, 289 paid first fruits to the king. Scarisbrick, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Valor, V, p. 323.

<sup>4</sup>TR, pp. 60-62.

<sup>5</sup>SS 139, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup>TR, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup>SS 139, p. 9.

Yet when a pension was awarded to an old and ill priest, the new incumbent frequently did not have to fear a long-term liability, and in instances such as that, the size of the pension could perhaps be forgiven the awarding bishop. At first glance they would seem to cripple the living of the new incumbent. John Retclyffe resigned from the rectory of Sedgefield in 1496 and was awarded a pension of 50 marks (33.06.08), "vita naturali durante . . . de decimis, oblacionibus, fructibus, proventibus et emolumentis" of this church.<sup>1</sup> The pension was set to be paid in two equal portions on the feast of St. Cuthbert in March and the feast of St. Cuthbert in the autumn (4 September). If the new incumbent, William Estfelde, did not pay promptly and in full, the fruits of the benefice were to be sequestered. Had John Retclyffe survived for several years after his resignation, one could have foreseen serious financial difficulties for Estfelde. According to the 1318 valuation, Sedgefield was worth 51.00.00, according to Tunstall, 66.13.04.<sup>2</sup> The pension would have claimed at least half of Estfelde's income. As it turned out, Retclyffe died in 1497.<sup>3</sup>

No mention was made of any illness in Retclyffe's resignation. The opposite was the case with Alexander Lygh, resigning from Houghton-le-Spring in 1500 with a pension of 60.00.00. In the decretum for his annual pension it was stated that

magister Alexander lygh nuper Rector ecclesie parochialis de houghton' nostrarum collacionis et diocesis, senio contractus et sui corporis viribus destitutus quod in vinea domini ad curam animarum parochianorum dicte ecclesie parochialis de

<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 21-25.

<sup>2</sup>Taxatio, p. 514; TR, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>SS 139, p. 104.

houghton' gerendam se recognoscens totaliter impotentem,  
 . . . ipsam ecclesiam parochialem de houghton' predicta  
 . . . pure sponte simpliciter et absolute in manus nostras  
 resignaverit.<sup>1</sup>

A further reference was made to his "impotenciam et imbecillitatem."

Lygh's illness involved some form of paralysis, advancing from the year 1491.<sup>2</sup> The magnitude of his pension in some measure reflected his valuable services to the Crown in Berwick upon Tweed. He died in 1501 and with him the liability to pay this pension, amounting to 60% of this benefice's 1530 valuation.<sup>3</sup> One could well imagine another man, Master John Balswell, dean of the collegiate church of Chester-le-Street, as another likely candidate for a pension. At the visitation of 1501 he was declared to be senile; the remarkable thing was that he served as dean of Chester from 1501 to 1505.<sup>4</sup>

The clergy were also responsible for the upkeep and repair of their churches and the property belonging to them, and were required to pay, out of the revenue they received from the cure, for any dilapidations that might occur. The case of Ralph Todd, attested to by his nephew, is a latter day example of a new incumbent attempting to prove that a state of disrepair existed in the property upon his arrival and was not a result of his own incumbency. A similar case exists in the records of the 1501 visitation and concerned one of the chantry priests. The parishioners of Gateshead complained that John Turpyne had not seen to the repair of his chantry. He retorted that the decay in the structure had not occurred

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Allan MSS, no. 15, "Sherburn Hospital".

<sup>3</sup>TR, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, p. 8.

"tempore incumbencie sue in dicta cantaria,"<sup>1</sup> but his protest fell upon deaf ears and he was ordered to see to the repairs. Dilapidations were by no means an uncommon occurrence in Durham county. The clergy seem to have had trouble keeping pace with the repairs necessary in their cures. The parishioners from nine parishes registered dissatisfaction with the upkeep of the churches in 1501. Most numerous were complaints that cemetaries were not being kept properly enclosed or that windows in the churches were broken.

A court case was one way to deal with disrepair left by the former holder of the cure. To deal with that caused by the present incumbent, sequestration was often the answer. In June of 1496 the laity in the parish of Norton made complaint about the state of the chancel in the collegiate church.

*Clamosa insinuacione parochianorum ecclesie collegiate de Norton . . . ad nostrum noviter pervenit auditum pariter et delatum quod canonici prebendarii eiusdem ecclesie cancellum dicte ecclesie collegiate tam in tecturis muris lapideis et fenestris et aliis diversis partibus honorifice et sumptuose ad dei laudem et cultum divinum constructum ad Ruinam et desolationem labi permittunt aliaque eis incumbencia onera cultum divinum concernentia et per eos et eorum quemlibet in eadem ecclesia supportanda a diu neglexerunt et adhuc negligunt adimplere in veresimilem ipsius cancelli destructionem canonicorum earundem prebendarum futurorum depauperacionem et cultus divini in ipsa ecclesia ut prefertur supportandi subtractionem et diminucionem necnon ipsorum singulorum dampnum non modicum et gravamen.<sup>2</sup>*

Such disrepair might in future inhibit divine worship, so the step was taken to sequester the income of the prebends of this church. It was apparently a successful move, for no complaint was registered for that church at the visitation five years later. The same tactics had to be used at the collegiate church of Auckland more than thirty years later,

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 151r.

<sup>2</sup>FR, p. 28.

again because the chancel had fallen into disrepair, but with what success it is impossible to tell.<sup>1</sup> Repairs could be costly as the need for an instrument of sequestration proved. In these two cases where individual responsibility for the damages would have difficult to assign, this procedure was probably all the more necessary.

Expenditure, then, varied among the clergy, but the beneficed bore its brunt with clerical taxation. This was a mandatory expense, or rather one that was more certain to be enforced, but it was not one from which they suffered unduly, as the assessments based on the 1318 valuation demonstrate. Other expenses were more sporadic in their occurrence, others, like dilapidations, were more or less constant, but the willingness with which the clergy, beneficed as well as unbeficed, met their financial responsibilities was mixed.

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<sup>1</sup>TR, pp. 17-19.

### III. Standard of Living

How was the economic status of the clergy reflected in their standard of living? How comfortably did the average rector, vicar and chantry priest live, and into what sort of possessions had he invested his money? The vast majority of priests did not have to worry about providing themselves with the actual structure of a dwelling place. It was a rare occurrence for a benefice to be without a vicarage or parsonage. Such dwellings were usually built to accommodate the needs of the incumbent. Donaldson reported that in Northumberland the priests' houses were frequently fortified for defensive purposes.<sup>1</sup> More generally these structures were built to accommodate the incumbent's duty to provide hospitality, as well as to maintain his servants and perhaps some of his chaplains. It has been concluded that these medieval structures were fairly large in terms of the buildings in which the laity lived, and consisted usually of a hall with five other rooms, spread over two stories.<sup>2</sup> Ordinarily the inventory of George Reyde, rector of Dinsdale,<sup>3</sup> would be disappointing in its brevity and lack of detail, but some of its collective entries at least give one an idea of the minimum number of rooms in the parsonage. A value of 26 s. 8 d. was given to "all within in the kitching", to "all within Thomas West chamber", 6 s. 8 d. All "that is within the hault" was worth 26 s. 8 d., and "all within the bachensse" and "all the unberied corne within the barn & the hay" were combined for a total of 15 s. 3 d.

Chuntries on occasion were also endowed with a dwelling. Farnacres,

<sup>1</sup>Donaldson, "Patronage . . .", p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Heath, Medieval, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 335v.

in Whickham parish, was endowed with the entire vill and manor of Farneacres.<sup>1</sup> Not infrequently, however, there was no structure assigned whatsoever, or, if there were accomodation provided, it amounted to no more than a mere room or chamber. The Chantry of St. James on Elvet Bridge was one such example, as was the Chantry of the Gild of the Holy Trinity in Houghton-le-Spring.<sup>2</sup> With a comparative look at the wills and inventories of several men one can gain an idea of the standard to which they were able to live.

Richard Towgall was a chantry priest at Gateshead, presumably at the Chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In his will he made a bequest of "another gown that was Sir William Gowlandes . . ." <sup>3</sup> A Dominus William Gollayne appeared at the same chantry in 1535, when its value was assessed at 5.04.08.<sup>4</sup> Towgall can only have enjoyed the revenues from this post for at most the six years prior to his death in 1541. There was no mention of a separate dwelling establishment or even a room in the 1535 valuation. After all of its official expenses had been discharged it had a net income per annum of 3.15.04 and was assessed to pay 0.07.06 of that sum toward the clerical tenth. In reality Towgall could count on 3.07.10 for his own free use.

No inventory appears to have been made of Towgall's possessions after his death. Perhaps it was felt that he did not own much of value. Be that as it may, one is left to determine his earthly goods by means of his rather short will. His initial bequests were concerned mostly with his

<sup>1</sup>Surtees, vol. 2, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, pp. 324-325.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Richard Towgall, Gateshead, priest, 1541.

<sup>4</sup>Valor, V, p. 322.

clothes, almost all of which he left to his relatives, the Huchensons. This was one area in which clerical wills traditionally departed from those of the laity, who seldom itemized their raiment. Towgall apparently owned some little land of his own, for he bequeathed "unto Robert Huchinson my tennament . . .". Virtually the only furniture mentioned was his bed "that is to know a feather bed A bowster two coddess . . . blankettes two coverlettes two sheytes . . .". The bulk of his other bequests were mainly concerned with religious articles. Among other things he gave to St. Cuthbert's Gild "two altar cleythes one towel two candlesticks one Antiphonall one presessiner a dirige book a pax . . .". The most interesting bequest concerned his chalice:

Item I give my chalice unto the church of this condition  
 And if it please God that their fawll a chantrie within  
 this foresaid church being at the parishioners gift And  
 the parishioners to be so good unto my cousinge Sir  
 Johannes as to give and promise him before another . . .  
 then this chalice to stand as gift And if he be not  
 promised and spedde be thos forsaid parishioners then this  
 chalice stand as no gift but only to go unto my executors . . .

Even a man who owned only the bare essentials for his own existence, who seemed nevertheless to have sunk a fair amount of his money into religious articles, felt that he had some possible influence to wield, and that to the benefit of his relatives.

Towgall had only enough bedding for himself, and according to his will, no other items of furniture. Nor did he own any agricultural tools or farm animals. The wills of vicars and rectors provide a sharp contrast to this apparently very simple existence. John Semer was the vicar of Stranton from 1559 to his death in 1561.<sup>1</sup> In 1535 the gross value of the

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<sup>1</sup>SS 159, p. 116.

vicarage was 18.00.00, net 17.16.00.<sup>1</sup> Each year 1.05.07 was due in payment of the clerical tenth, leaving 16.10.05 to be freely allocated according to Semer's judgement. The Chapel of Seaton Carew was also included in the 1535 valuation; presumably the vicar was responsible for providing a priest for that post, although the Valor lists no expenditure in that direction. Presumably he had servants whose wages he had to pay for as well. Although their exact relationship to the vicar is not stated, one Anne Norton received "one cheste and 20 s. of money", while Semer owed the Widow Stevenson 5.00.00 at the time of his death.<sup>2</sup>

Newcomers to benefices were expected to outfit the rectory or vicarage themselves for their duties, many and more expensive than those of a chantry priest. Semer's will displays the usual bequests to relatives, and in that regard the rectors and vicars differed little from the less well-endowed cantarists. But whereas many of Towgall's bequests concerned religious objects and books, in short spiritual goods, those of the vicar of Stranton were much more bound up with very earthly matters. The vicar too had to spend part of his income on the vestments and bread and wine for the communion services, but the bulk of his stipend went into his farming operations and the upkeep of his livestock. After piously bequeathing his soul to God and money to the poor man's box, Semer turned his attention to John Dodshon and gave him

three oxen two stottes two mares one boundwayne two coupe-  
waynes with all my yowkes and teams and all my plough gear  
with the fourth part of my crop of Corn in the field And to  
the said John to hehoe to wynn and get it in harvest and to  
pay the fourth part of the farme.

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<sup>1</sup>Valor, V, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: PR II, ff. 6v-7. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Semer's will come from f. 6v.

Even in expectation of death this vicar could worry about his harvest. His will further reveals that he owned some property of his own: "I give to Francis Emerson my house and all my land in the town and fields of Redmarshall." He could also afford to make bequests not in kind, but in actual sums of money. To his sister Isabel Dodshon he gave five shillings and to John Emerson, his brother-in-law, 3.06.08. Such a feature had no place in the will of one of such meager means as Richard Towgall.

Semer's inventory gives an actual value to each segment of his goods and points out what a substantial property owner he must have been. His livestock were worth a total of 23.08.10 and included five oxen, five stottes, two cows, nine lambs and nine ewes, among other beasts.<sup>1</sup> Grain accounted for another 20.02.08. Semer was already worth well beyond the 17.16.00 annually accredited to him by the Valor. He also owned more than enough household gear, particularly sheets and mattresses, to provide hospitality for many a traveller.<sup>2</sup> In particular his guests were likely to enjoy a good drop of ale with the vicar, for he possessed five ale pots. His inventory itemized two stools and three chairs, articles not usually encountered in such a document.<sup>3</sup> The vicar also seems to have been a most careful man for among his possessions were 5.00.00 in money and 11.00.00 in gold. His household goods totalled 44.17.10,<sup>4</sup> so that his assets,

<sup>1</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 7. All further references to Semer's will come from f. 7.

<sup>2</sup>See chapter four, pp. 99-100.

<sup>3</sup>Chairs were supposed to be a rare possession. F.W. Brooks, "The Social Position of the Parson in the Sixteenth Century" in The Journal of the British Archaeological Association (London, 1945-47), p. 31; Heath, Medieval, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>By my calculations, the total should be 48.10.09.

including the debts that people owed to him at the day of his death, reached a total of 99.11.04. This figure of course represented the sum total of twenty-two years accumulation. His debts ate away at this figure somewhat. He owed his priest, Sir James Lakenbye, 9.00.00, and a total of 7 s. 10 d. for two salmon and five lamb quarters, bought from John Brown of Hartlepool. For all that he emerged healthily in the black upon his death, as his goods, stock and farming equipment were appraised at 90.11.11.

A rectory did not necessarily prove as profitable for the incumbent as did the vicarage of Stranton for John Semer. George Reyde spent over thirty years as the rector of Dinsdale,<sup>1</sup> valued at a low net worth of 4.11.04 in 1535.<sup>2</sup> Reyde was one of the few rectors who was not swept into the net of clerical taxation by the financial legislation of the Reformation. His rectory was well below 6.13.04 in value and was thus exempt from taxation. His benefice was still not as exceedingly profitable as Semer's had been. His goods were valued at a total of 17.18.08 at the time of his death, a sum that was brought to 35.18.08 with the addition of the debts owed to him.<sup>3</sup> Minus his own few debts, upon his death he was worth, free and clear, 32.12.00. He made numerous bequests to the poor, and also gave 10 s. for the reparations of the church.<sup>4</sup> Only after these did he make bequests of beehives, clothes, and kitchen goods. In truth, there was very little to distinguish this will from that of Semer's, apart from its lesser bounty.

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<sup>1</sup>SS 139, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Valor, V, p. 317.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 335v.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: PR I, f. 10v.

The standard to which the clergy maintained themselves varied directly with the stipend they received from their cures and the duties incumbent upon them. As far as accumulated wealth is concerned, the results are quite predictable. The beneficed clergy received higher salaries and were able to invest more of their money in household goods. If the poverty of the chantry priest was purposely meant to keep his mind on God and his intercessory duties, then one must conclude that it was in some measure successful of that end. What is most noticeable, however, is that the men who were the most likely candidates to have surplus wealth, the beneficed, made little investment in the religious articles common to the unbeneficed. The long lists of household goods and farming equipment do not occur in addition to those tools of the faith, but as their substitute.

## Chapter Six

## Clergy-Lay Relations: The Points of Contact

When Richard Layton, rector of Sedgelyield from 1535 until his death in 1544,<sup>1</sup> wrote to Cromwell in June of 1535 offering the services of himself and Dr. Lee in the visitation of the monasteries in the northern counties, he argued persuasively that the prime characteristic of any man Cromwell might choose must be his trustworthiness.

. . . and forasmuch as the kyngs<sup>e</sup> hyghnes hath put his onely truste in yowe for the reformation<sup>e</sup> of his clergie gyvyng yowe therunto onely auctoritie and power ye muste have suche as ye may truste evyn aswell<sup>e</sup> as yo<sup>r</sup> owne self wiche muste be unto yowe as alter ego . . . ✓

According to Layton, he and Dr. Lee possessed that characteristic to the highest degree. There remains only to discuss those areas in which the clergy came into the closest contact with the laity, situations which involved a necessary amount of trust on both sides. Whether the mutual confidence reached the heights allegedly attained by Layton and Cromwell is problematical. The encounters between the clergy and the laity in Durham county were somewhat more mundane than the historic visitations of the monasteries. They included the issues of patronage, litigation, land transactions, visitations, and clerical beliefs and their possible influence.

Several characteristics of the patronage structure in Durham county have already been considered. Local clerks filled a majority, although not a vast majority, of the Durham benefices. The bishops and heads of monastic houses, men who held university degrees, more often promoted graduates to benefices than did lay patrons such as the Nevilles, earls

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<sup>1</sup>SS 159, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>BL: Cleopatra E. IV. 10. - old foliation  
(now f. 13)

of Westmorland. The members of monastic houses such as Durham Cathedral Priory also exerted their influence to see that their relatives received benefices in the gift of the monastery. The actual business of appointing a clerk was somewhat more complicated than simply choosing a learned home-grown relative for a post in one's gift, however.

Upon a benefice falling vacant, it was the bishop's duty to inform the patron of the living of the new opening, if it had occurred through the deprivation or resignation of the previous incumbent. The patrons for Durham county, except for such bodies as the Augustinian Priory of Guisborough in Yorkshire, were mainly local and on the scene. If they were not officially informed of the vacancy first through the diocesan, they had an equally good chance of learning of it almost immediately through the community in which both they and the incumbent had lived. The patron then had six months in which to present a new candidate. After that period, if no presentation to the diocesan had occurred, the bishop gained the right of presentation, but for that turn only. The bishop could not claim this right if he had failed to inform the de jure patron and give him his chance to present. As with the true patron, so with the bishop: if he failed to present after a lapse by the true patron, then the Crown ultimately gained the right of presentation, but again, pro hac vice only.

A patron would present his candidate to the bishop, either in writing or by word of mouth. Tunstall's Register recorded the following from

. . . vestra humilis et devota filia, Elizabethhe Kyllinghall', vidua, de Myddlylton George vestre Dunelmensis diocesis, omnimodus reverencias tanto patri debitas cum honore. Ad ecclesiam parochialem de Myddilton George predictam, vestre Dunelmensis diocesis, per mortem naturalem Domini Willelmi Rippon ultimi rectoris eiusdem vacantem et ad meam presentationem spectantem, dilectum mihi in Christo Jacobum Orpyn, capellanum, paternitati vestre reverende intuitu caritatis tenore presencium presento, humiliter

ac devote supplicans quatenus dictum Jacobum ad ecclesiam predictam de Myddylton George admittere, ipsumque rectorem instituere canonice in eadem, ceteraque omnia et singula peragere, que vestro in hac parte incumbunt officio pastoralis, dignemini gracie.<sup>1</sup>

Orpyn was instituted to the rectory in February of 1552.<sup>2</sup> He had obviously met with the bishop's approval within the two months period set aside for the diocesan's examination of the candidate. Had Tunstall rejected him, Elizabeth Killinghall would have had the remainder of the original six months in which to find and present another candidate. She would have to have acted quickly in the event. We do not know Rippon's date of death, but optimistically she would have had only four months in which to present another man. She would also have had to reckon with a new examination by the bishop. Once again, the bishop was obliged to inform the true patron if his or her candidate had failed to meet his expectations if he hoped to benefit by a lapse in the patron presenting to the cure.

All of the patrons in Durham county appear to have been extremely careful of their rights of patronage, for no cases of lapse occurred during this period. There were, however, a number of grants of advowson for one turn only, and two instances in which another person presented during the minority of the true patron. Ordinarily the right to present during the minority of the patron was a privilege exercised by the king, who acted in this fashion with the estates of crown wards. In 1498 Edward Strangeways was instituted to the rectory of Brancepeth, a benefice traditionally in the patronage of the Nevilles. In 1498, however, Fox explained the circumstances:

Ecclesiam parochialem de Brancepath nostre diocesis et infra

<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

nostram regiam libertatem et de eadem per mortem magistri Thome Nevell in Decretis Bacallarii ultimi et immediati rectoris eiusdem vacantem, Et racione custodie Castellorum, dominiorum, maneriorum, Terrarum et tenementorum que fuerunt Radulphi nuper comitis Westmorlandie defuncti Et que dum vixit infra episcopatum nostrum dunolmensem et libertatem nostram regiam de nobis tenuit in capite ac racione minoris etatis Radulphi consanguinei et heredis eiusdem nuper comitis Westmorl' in manibus nostris existunt, ad nostram donationem et collationem spectantem tibi conferrimus intuitu caritatis.<sup>1</sup>

Durham was a royal liberty, a county palatine. Consequently, the bishop was "as king in Durham"<sup>2</sup> and could exercise the right to administer the estates of someone who would have been a royal ward outside of the palatinate. Or so Fox claimed. There are instances where the king provided to advowsons in the gift of the Westmorlands on the minority of the heir. One such case occurred in 1503 during the episcopate of William Sever, when Henry VII presented Master Roger Lupton to the rectory of Brancepeth.<sup>3</sup> The reason may lie in the differing personalities of the bishops. Fox was an adamant defender of his palatine rights, using them to good effect in his governance of this northern bishopric, whereas Sever's episcopate was a shadowy period of a mere three years from 1502 through 1505. The king may well have taken advantage of a weaker personality to augment his own influence in the county. In another instance of a minority, the presentation of Robert Galilee to a chantry in Gateshead parish church, Anthony Lumley, Esq., and the rector of Gateshead, John Brown, acted in the capacity of patron for one turn only.<sup>4</sup> The true patron, Conand Barton, a ward of the Lumley's, had not yet attained his majority.

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<sup>1</sup>FR, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Lapsley, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>Calendar of the Patent Rolls Henry VII, vol. II, 1494-1509 (London, 1916), p. 333.

<sup>4</sup>FR, p. 36.

The holding of an advowson was treated in law like an individual's private property.<sup>1</sup> It was a possession which he could use profitably when the post fell vacant and he had a particular clerk in mind for the cure. If he had no such candidate to promote, he might decide to sell the right to next presentation, for that one turn only, without any damage to his own long-term interests. As a piece of private property, it should profit its owner, and as O'Day has pointed out in her very comprehensive thesis on patronage, "If the de jure patron had no definite personal preference he would be likely to take the advice of another in making his choice and, in this event, might as well make his adviser pay for the privilege."<sup>2</sup>

One gains the impression, however, that as far as the advowson of the church of Brancepeth was concerned, the earl of Westmorland was either very profit-conscious, exceedingly indecisive, or both. The earl in question was Ralph Neville, born circa 1495.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly he was in his minority in 1498 and 1505, when Bishop Fox and Henry VII presented to the benefice. Until 1498 the incumbent of the benefice had been one Thomas Neville, presumably a relative.<sup>4</sup> In that instance the benefice had been used to the profit of the family until its vacancy during the minority of the fourth earl. Upon reaching full legal age the earl granted away the advowson of Brancepeth, for the next turn only, to George Neville, knight, and one William Blower, gentleman, in 1520, a fact recorded in Tunstall's Register

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>O'Day, "Clerical Patronage . . .", p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>F.M. Powicke, Handbook of British Chronology (London, 1939), p. 337.

<sup>4</sup>SS 139, p. 92.

in 1538.<sup>1</sup> In 1539 Anthony Bellasis was instituted to the rectory.<sup>2</sup> A bit of confusion on the earl's part comes to light in 1525 with a letter from the earl to Wolsey. It seems that Neville had granted the advowson to one of his chaplains, at what date there is no clue, but presumably before the 1520 grant. In Westmorland's letter he pleaded with Wolsey to help his chaplain.

. . . I receyved youre moste gracious l'res conteyneng / howe that I had her' to for made a grauntt to certan p'sonages of thadvouson of the churche of Brauncepath Beyng of my patronage to thuse of oon of y'r graces chaplayns / Requyring me by the same / to assent that the seid Churche myght be bounden for thassurans of a pensionn to be reserved to thencoment therof that nowe is / Upon a resignac'on by hym to be made unto yo'r graces seid Chaplane / Pleas it yo'r noble grace I do Remembre Welle I made suche a graunte of the same advouson to the lord of Burgavenny at his instaunt requeste and labor not having in my Remembraunce at that tyme / how before that graunte made I had graunted the same to a chaplane of myn own for suche Long Contynewed deligent and paynfull servise as he in my yowth hath doone unto me / And noon othwise by me recompensed but only by the seid graunte To whome in my moste humble wise I beseche youre grace be good and gracious lorde . . .<sup>3</sup>

The grant to Wolsey held sway, for in 1539 Bellasis was instituted to the rectory by the patrons Thomas Neville, knight, and one John Baker, Esq., executors of the late George Neville, lord Burgavenny.<sup>4</sup> What became of Westmorland's hapless chaplain, victim of one grant too many, one does not know.

Not every letter from the central government seeking the right of next presentation was fulfilled of its purpose. Cromwell had written to the prior of Durham, hoping to promote to the vicarage of Billingham at its next vacancy the parish priest of that cure, Sir William Resseley.

<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>PRO: SP 1/59/72.

<sup>4</sup>TR, p. 75.

The right to next presentation had already been granted to Dr. Robert Hyndmer, and the prior wrote and said as much to Cromwell:

My moste especiall and singler good Lorde, so it is, that afore the receipt of yo'r Lordshipes l'res / I and my brethern did graunt the next avoydance of the same vicarage to mr doctor hyndem' Chaunceleor to my Lorde of Duresm / wherof I am nowe sorie, knoweng yo'r lordships mynde therin to stande otherwaies / Moste humblie beseching yo'r lordeship not to be discontentid with w'th me and my brethern therin, who ar and ev' shalbe redie to Accomplishe your lordships mynde, pleasure, and comaundement in all thinges to the best of o'r powers w'th all humilitie according to our moste bownden duetie, And dailie to pray for the same in hono'r w'th encreas therof. And long lyfe to endure . . .<sup>1</sup>

When the benefice fell vacant in 1538 Dr. Hyndmer appointed his brother Reginald to the post. No doubt the ability to stand firm before Cromwell lay partially in the fact that one was dealing not only with Prior Whitehead, but with Tunstall's chancellor, and not with Ralph Neville's mere chaplain.

Grants of next presentation pro hac vice did not always fall victim to such pitfalls. On the eve of the dissolution of the monastery, Hugh Whitehead and the convent made two grants of next presentation to the vicarages of Merrington and Heighington in February and October of 1539.<sup>2</sup> William Hertborn and George Smith survived to exercise their right to present to the vicarage of Merrington in September of 1558.<sup>3</sup> George Rogerley and Roger Buterfield did not, and it required the testimony of some fifteen men to affirm the right of John Watson, as the only surviving of their assigns, to make the grant in February of 1577.<sup>4</sup> Not only was the advowson considered private property by the true patron, but the right of next pre-

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/127/89-90. 26 December, 1537

<sup>2</sup>TR, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>Pilkington's Register, p. 178. In the same volume as TR.

sentation was as well, and could be passed on to one's heirs until at last that right could be exercised. On a much wider scale, such a practice on the part of the monasteries diminished the patronage power immediately vested in the Crown upon their dissolution. The Crown could only play a waiting game to assume those advowsons, for the grants made by the monasteries were still fully legal after their dissolution.

Although somewhat patchy, there exists evidence to show how a priest might first come to the notice of a patron, other than being the chancellor's brother or attending the same Oxford or Cambridge college together. The incumbent of the parish was himself usually involved in choosing priests for the chaplaincies and chantries. A few such examples survive for Durham, in particular for the chantries not in the gift of the prior and convent. In 1531 William Stephanson was presented to the chantry in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gainford. His patron was William Fulthorpe, the vicar there, who had himself been nominated for this task by the commons and burgesses of Barnard Castle, Gainford parish.<sup>1</sup> Just as easily the vicar might not have been allowed a part at all. Richard Gregg was promoted to the two chantries of St. Helen without the Walls of Hartlepool and St. Nicholas within the chapel of Hartlepool, not by any ecclesiastical body or patron, but by the mayor, Richard Lasynby, and the community.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence of a chantry priest actually approaching the patron himself in search of preferment. Such men seem always to have been represented by a third party. Towgall, although a minor figure, for example, had represented his kinsman John Huchinson in his will,<sup>3</sup> and a

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<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Richard Towgall, Gateshead, priest, 1541.

third party was often necessary to protect the rights of the cantarist once he had been appointed. George Lawson of Sheriff Hutton in North Yorkshire, for example, had to write to Cromwell in 1528 for aid in defending his chaplain's rights to an annual service in St. Edmund's chapel in Gateshead. "So it is that the p'oressse of the nonnes of newcastell who p'tendith to be patronesse of the said chapell woll nott suffir my said chapeleyn to enioye the p'fuctes and comodities of his said graunt . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The beneficed clergy also frequently worked through a middle man. Thomas Strangeways remonstrated unsuccessfully with Cromwell in 1528 "to promote my kynsmane doctor Strangways / to the Benefice of Weremouth / now in my said lords gyft / And for the same the said doctor / to be my said lords chaplayn / and to be bond to doo hys s'vice / Wher soo ev' itt schall plays my said lorde / to comaund hym."<sup>2</sup> Frankleyn wrote to Ruthal in 1522, "I <sup>beseche</sup> beseech your lordship to have . . . Sir Thomas Hall in remembrance at <sup>u</sup> <sup>son'</sup> some convenient <sup>y</sup> time."<sup>3</sup> He may have been the same Thomas Hall who appeared as a canon and prebendarie of Darlington in 1535.<sup>4</sup> One John Wylliamson wrote to Cromwell in 1532, ". . . pleaseth it you to remembre the good p'sone Ogle for some of thiese promocions . . ."<sup>5</sup> If the good parson is the Cuthbert Ogle of the Northumberland family, he certainly had no need of a representative, for he had the bravado to promote himself, and what is more, to specify exactly the type of benefice he

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/50/243.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/52/16r.

<sup>3</sup>DL: Calig. B. III. 301. ✓ - 301v

<sup>4</sup>Valor, V, p. 316.

<sup>5</sup>PRO: SP 1/71/123v.

preferred: ". . . yff it be so y't my said master get me promocion of the kynges gracys I besych you & it may be w'towt cure."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it might seem indecent haste on the part of Richard Layton, but he wrote the following in his quest for the incumbency of Sedgefield parish church, upon which he had evidently kept a watchful eye:

ffurther hit may please yowe to be aduertisede that this day at diner I recevide a letter from Stoke coleage in Essex, yt the master ther is in extremis Langues' et in articulo mortis wiche besyddes all' other his promocions hath a ben'fic w'tin the bisshopyrke of Duresme wiche my lorde the bisshope of Duresme promisede me at his gret besines that ye qwyte hym of, wheras ye stuke vnto hym all' other hys frends forsakeyng hym. I shall moste intierly desier yowe to write to my saide lorde of Duresme in my behooffe nowe to accomplyshe his said promises at yor desier and request. I saide vnto hym at his departure laste from London that I dyde truste to bring or sende hym both the king' letters by yor procurement and also yrs for the said ben'fic when so euer yt shulde chaunce to be voide . . . further if ye . . . stope the kyng' grace yt he write not for any other his chapelaine, then shulde I be assuryde from all' pursevaunt' towchyng the premisses . . .<sup>2</sup>

Layton was Tunstall's nephew,<sup>3</sup> hence he had early knowledge that the benefice was due to fall vacant. The benefice was a valuable one, worth 66.13.04<sup>4</sup> according to Tunstall, and haste and a keen awareness of the situation would have been necessary to secure it in any event. Layton was successful in his bid for the rectory of Sedgefield and was collated to it on 22 November 1535.<sup>5</sup> He had, however, identified what could have been a decisive factor in his quest for this benefice, namely the king, who upon hearing of a vacancy could press for his own candidates to win the

<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/75/62.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: SP 1/98/26v.

<sup>3</sup>Sturge, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup>TR, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

cure.

The king's preferences were more particularly to be felt when the actual see of Durham fell vacant. Henry VII made several presentations following the visitation of 1501, prior to the elevation of Sever, including that of the prior of the monastery of St. John of Pontefract to the rectory of Redmarshall,<sup>1</sup> a canonical irregularity. Upon Wolsey's downfall, Henry VIII presented William Bolleyn to the rectory of "Egillistlyse", Egglescliffe, in 1529.<sup>2</sup> The king also appears to have enjoyed the consistent patronage rights to the chantries of Barnard Castle,<sup>3</sup> but there is no evidence as to how the king had knowledge of such otherwise inconspicuous chantry priests, unless they were chosen from among his own chaplains. The fact remains, that whoever the patron happened to be, most clergymen, beneficed as well as unbeneficed, had to remain fairly alert if they were to advance in their careers.

In seeking the goodwill of a patron the priest would do his best to ingratiate himself with an influential member of the laity. The court system, however, provided a forum in which relations were probably not so cordial. The clergy on the whole seem to have been more ready to use the courts than the laity. Of the forty-four instance cases in which a member of the clergy was involved as a party to an action, thirty-three were brought on the initiative of the clergy, ten at the instance of the laity, and only one involved priests as both defendant and plaintiff. The clergy of some nineteen parishes were involved in this litigation. The vast majority of this business was concerned with tithe cases (21), five of the clergy brought cases of "fidei lesionis", breach of faith or perjury, three were

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 158v.

<sup>2</sup>PRO: C 66/655, m. 18.

<sup>3</sup>See PRO: C 66/611, C 66/113.

involved in defamation cases, and for five suits the cause is simply not recorded.

The laity not only had instance causes to fear, however. There was also the ever-present shadow of the apparitor lurking somewhere in the county. Ominously described as a member of the "ecclesiastical *gestapo*,"<sup>1</sup> his duties included the sequestration of goods of intestates, and the supervision of the execution of a testator's last will and testament. His less popular duties involved summoning individuals to appear in court to answer to a libel brought against them, and less popular still, the actual ferretting out of possible misdemeanors and crimes by the community. It would have been this individual who "*certificavit coram domino iudice se citasse quosdam Johannem Aldwood et Johannem Parkynson . . .*" in the lengthy dispute between these two individuals and the prebend of Shildon in 1532.<sup>2</sup>

The apparitor frequently had to be brave of soul and very persistent. One problem frequently reported was the actual avoidance of the man, and by extension, the entire court case. In the case of the vicar of Hesledon versus Ralph Saunder, when the defendant at last made his appearance, in June of 1533, two months after the case had begun, he "*allegat se non fuisse citatu ad hunc . . .*"<sup>3</sup> Whether this was true or not it is impossible to say. When the apparitor did have excessive difficulty in summoning a party to an action, he could use the extreme measure of having the matter announced in church. Whereas a defendant might be able to say, in truth, that he had not been summoned, he would have had greater difficulty in maintaining

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<sup>1</sup>Woodcock, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 53r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 56r.

that he knew nothing of the case pending.

The apparitor was also likely to uncover the more unsavory bits of the parishioners' lives, as the laity knew only too well. On March 23, 1531(2), the rector of Sedgefield, Robert Shorton, brought a tithe action against Cuthbert Conyers. The case passed with little incident. Conyers met Shorton's demand for payment of personal, predial and mixed tithes, when, in response, he "*allegatite Rectorem predictem locasserei dimisisse prefat' Cuthberto om'mod decim provenient de manerio . . . villa de laton . . .*"<sup>1</sup> As tithes were a common enough suit in the Consistory, there would have been relatively little ill fame adhering to Conyers' name as a result. On the 21st of February, 1533(4), however, the court *ex officio mero*, through its apparitor, entered in its act book the fact that "*Publica fama referen offic detegitur quod quedam Maria Layton paroch de Sedgefield vivit in manifest fornicac cu' quod magistro Cuthberto Conyers.*"<sup>2</sup> It may well have been a coincidence that this statement followed less than a year after the tithe dispute with Conyers, but its discovery was obviously due to the work of the apparitor.

Whereas the laity might do their best to hide their failings toward the clergy from this official, they were not so reticent among themselves. Accordingly, Robert Mainsfourth might openly proclaim when questioned "*quod thomas Wheatley did take from hym xi stowkes of wheat without leave / and that he ys a craftye man . . . he tooke his corne away by night . . .*"<sup>3</sup> It is probably no accident, in a predominantly agricultural community like

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 21r.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 62v.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 47r.

Durham county, that the cases for which there exist the fullest details were tithe cases, or more generally, those dealing with wheat and grain. By contrast, land provided few disputes for the clergy. The most common error of which the clergy were guilty was one which was equally shared with the laity, entering into the possession of lands held of the bishop without first obtaining his license. It was for this offence that William Brown, vicar of the church of Aycliffe, had to pay a fine in 1508, along with Robert Thirkeld, Esq., George Strangeways, George Popelay and Thomas Tolbres.<sup>1</sup>

Do the consistory court records give any clue as to strained relations between clergy and laity? The rectors of Sedgefield, Gateshead and Hesledon appeared repeatedly as prosecutors in the matter of tithe, not to mention, other suits. Did any of their parishioners make frequent appearances as their defendants? Were certain members of the laity potential trouble-makers in the county? To determine this requires not only an examination of the names of the defendants but of the sequence in which they appear in the act book as well.

On the surface life seems to have been fairly placid in the county, and business in the Consistory was carried out in a rather perfunctory fashion. Very few cases occupied more than two sessions of the court, which met once a week. Several parishioners made repeated appearances, however. In July of 1531 the name of John Robinson first appeared as a defendant in "cause lesion' fidei sive perjurii."<sup>2</sup> The suit was brought by another layman, one Richard Bellasis, perhaps the elder brother of the great pluralist Anthony Bellasis, of Henknowle, Durham. A perjury case, involving

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<sup>1</sup>D. & C. Lib.: Randall MSS, vol. 4, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 2r.

a breach of contract and the failure of one party to fulfill the terms of an agreement made between them, was often of a specifically lay character. On this particular occasion Robinson apparently produced six compurators, his peers who would give evidence on his behalf. The judge admitted their testimony, and all seems to have ended well, for the entry finished with the simple word "concordat." One John Robinson made a further appearance on 23 November 1532<sup>1</sup> when the rector of Haughton brought forward a case concerning tithe against William Wilson, Robert Alandson and Thomas Mellerbie, and Robinson himself. It was a case concerning grain and hay, and was due for a second court day "ad libelland," which was not, however, entered under the 29 November session. Robinson's two appearances in court do not by themselves augur of any particular willfulness against the clergy. One case, after all, involved another layman, but he does seem to have been a man little mindful of his contracts.

Tithe cases were prosecuted by the clergy of one parish against parishioners living in another. No doubt the layman in question was believed to own property in the prosecuting incumbent's cure. The rector of Boldon, Henry Davy, in December of 1531, brought a tithe case against one Thomas Atkynson of Jarrow.<sup>2</sup> In that first session no more was done than to appoint Ralph Todd as proctor for Davy, the pars actrix. In the following week, Davy's libels were read out and admitted by the judge.<sup>3</sup> The suit was then adjourned to Sunday the 20th of January, the first Sunday after Hillary (13 January). The next example of such a tithe dispute occurred in 1532 when the rector of Whitburn brought suit against thirteen men from

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 36v.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 11r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 12r.

Boldon parish.<sup>1</sup> On 6 July, 1532,<sup>2</sup> the case was still in court, with the defendants now narrowed down to three men, Cuthbert Thompson, John Matthew and John Arrow. The bone of contention was the tithe offering from lambs' wool "infra paroch de Whitbarn." The proctor for the pars reus alleged that this "non vera esse" and no more was recorded of that particular case. At the next session recorded in the act book, however, the rector of Boldon had brought a "cause lesionis fidei" against the rector of Whitburn,<sup>3</sup> in which Ralph Todd was again acting as proctor, but for the rector of Boldon against his old client. As is usually the case, there are no details of exactly what the breach of faith consisted, but there is always the possibility that it had something to do with John More's suit against Davy's parishioners.

A penchant for litigation seems to have run in the Thompson family. Cuthbert Thompson of Boldon, above, was one of the lay members of that family. In all, eight cases occur involving four different men of that surname. Four of these involved John Thompson, a chaplain attached to Pittington parish, on the defending side.<sup>4</sup> For two of those cases the charge was one of perjury but no further details are known. The other three cases concerned George Thompson, chaplain of Boldon. He too faced a perjury charge, from one Alicia Elwood.<sup>5</sup> In the remaining two cases he prose-

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 22v.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 28v.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 28v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ff. 20v, 37v, 40r, 54v.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., f. 29r.

cuted William Thompson,<sup>1</sup> presumably a relative, on an unknown charge, and John Mattheve,<sup>2</sup> involved in the Boldon case above, on a perjury charge.

There were two individuals who seemed to stand out quite clearly as villains on the parish scene, if only for the duration of their case, and who were brought to court in a tithe cause by Thomas Kaye, the prebend of Shildon in Auckland Collegiate Church. They were John Aldwood and John Parkinson. Only Aldwood had made prior appearances in the Consistory. He made his initial appearance on 6 July, 1532,<sup>3</sup> as defendant to William Whitehead's pars actrix. Whitehead had become vicar of Heighington in <sup>1530: F. 6. 1529</sup> 1529 on the death of Ralph Aldwoode.<sup>4</sup> John Aldwood was apparently a relative, for the case concerned the administration of the goods of the deceased, for which the new vicar contested. On that day Aldwood appeared in court and "fa' se habuisse et h'ere bon' que fuer' vicarii defuncti sed neg se fuisse Executor testi eiusdam / Interreg a indice Aldwood quo jure administravit bon' dic . . . l're nuper vicarii de heghington . . ." <sup>5</sup> Aldwood was thus known to the court in a case dealing with the contested rights and property of the clergy.

Shortly thereafter the prebend of Shildon brought his tithe action against Parkinson and Aldwood, described as being of Haughton and Heighington parishes respectively. The first session took place sometime on or

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 52r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 75r.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 28r.

<sup>4</sup>DPK: PReg. V, f. 237r. ✓

<sup>5</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 28r.

between 26 October and 9 November 1532<sup>1</sup> and there were still references to the case as late as the 15th of March 1534(5). Ralph Todd was the proctor for Kaye; Thomas Bouthe, LL.B., was appointed for the two defendants on 23 November 1532.<sup>2</sup> On that day the libel was stated, denied, and repeated. As has been discussed earlier, custom and boundary were at issue in this case, and Aldwood and Parkinson testified as much on 14 December 1532.<sup>3</sup> Immediately after giving testimony Parkinson was cited to appear again to answer the articles, which he duly did on February 8, 1532(3).<sup>4</sup> To the fifth article he apparently denied an accusation, for he answered "quod non subtraxit aliquas decim." At the end of these responsions there appeared, through the proctor Thomas Bouthe, a revocation of the response and confession, to the articles in the libel. The case dragged on. In March the prebend produced a witness against whose testimony Aldwood and Parkinson protested,<sup>5</sup> and in April someone notified the judge that Aldwood and Parkinson had been duly cited to appear again.<sup>6</sup> At last, on 14 June 1533, the judge gave his decision: "quo die dominus conclusit cum parte pefat prebendarii . . ." <sup>7</sup> Aldwood witnessed the sentence, but Parkinson was not present. There does not seem to be any good reason for the subsequent notation in the act book, dated 15 March 1534(5), "Examinacion test pro

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 34r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 36v.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ff. 39r-v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ff. 43v-44r.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., f. 51v.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., f. 53r.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., f. 55r.

parte prebendarii de Shildon contra Johannem Parkinson et Johannem Aldwood in quad cause decim fact xv die martii AD . . ." <sup>1</sup>

The Consistory Court does not seem to have been used by parishioners as a forum in which to express their dissatisfaction with their incumbents and chaplains. Assuming that they had grievances which needed airing, the court was not, in any event, the place in which to do that. Cost alone prohibited such a foolhardy exercise. One alternative means by which the laity might voice their grievances, at less risk to themselves, was as an integral part of the visitation procedure. Archidiaconal visitations were meant to take place every year, episcopal visitations every three. The prior and convent of Durham might also decide to hold visitations of the clergy attached to their appropriated livings. There are a number of summons for just such events recorded in the priory records, but no record of the actual procedure. Upon the death of Bishop William Sever in 1507 a synod of the clergy was held in the nave of Durham Cathedral, with a list of the clergy attending, <sup>2</sup> but this in no way approached the actual examinations which were attendant upon an episcopal visitation. On such an occasion the entire body of the clergy from each parish church and chapelry would be required to gather at certain churches, chosen as centers for the visitation, where letters of ordination would be examined, oaths of obedience received, non-residency and vacancies noted, and the grievances of the laity taken down. In the absence of any such exercises by the archdeacons or the bishops, we must turn once again to the archiepiscopal visitation of 1501.

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, f. 70v.

<sup>2</sup>DPK: PReg. V, ff. 88r-88v. The list is not by surname, but by "the vicar of heighington", etc.

On 12 and 13 November 1501,<sup>1</sup> the clergy of various churches, together with representatives from the laity of each parish, gathered at St. Nicholas Church in Durham City. On the first of these two days the chantry priest of St. James, St. Nicholas parish, Dominus Nicholas Rowlyn, was reported to be "infirmiter."<sup>2</sup> John Hackforth of St. Mary in the South Bailey was declared non-resident, as was Edward Strangeways, rector of Brancepeth; four unbeneficed priests who did not appear but whose names were recorded were suspended.<sup>3</sup> For all seventeen parishes and chapel-ries accounted for on that day, the reports from the parishioners were a unanimous "omnia bene", and it was much the same for the fifteen parishes on the 13th. On the fifteenth of November the venue was changed to Chester-le-Street,<sup>4</sup> with the same results. The parishioners had no grievances of which to speak. The rector of Washington, Edmund Cowper, and the rector of Whickham, Robert Walker, failed to appear, as did two chaplains, Roger Herington of Whickham parish and Thomas Huchinson of Boldon. All four were marked "non comparuit ideo suspensus est." November 18th and 29th were spent, respectively, in Auckland and Darlington,<sup>5</sup> but, as was noted in the last chapter, the predominant concern was the state of the church fabric. Cemeteries were ill-kept, windows were broken, and orders were accordingly given that these be mended before a specified holy day and under pain of deprivation.

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, ff. 148v-150v.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 148v.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ff. 148v-149r.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., f. 150v.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ff. 154r-155v.

It is only with the return from the parish church of Gateshead that one approaches anything near a personal attack upon an individual. These attacks were directed, however, against certain members of the laity. William Gollen, Robert Symont, Stephan Byrome and Thomas Mose declared, among other things, the following:

Dicunt insuper quod Johannes Dawson de eadem fornicatus fuit cum quadam muliere quam secum tenet in domo sua ut uxorem suam. Vir citatus comparens negat articulum a tempore quo petiit penitentiam suam sibi pro eodem crimine per ordinarium injunctam, et habet decimam diem mensis Februarii proxime futuram ad purgandum se super eodem articulo cum sua quarta manu honestarum viciniarum, et postea submitit se correctioni judicis, et habet duas fustigationes circa ecclesiam parochialem de Gateshead predictam . . . Richardus Hed de eadem fornicatus cum Jana Hadshawe de Gateshead predicta solemnizari fecerunt matrimonium inter eosdem, et judex remisit eisdem suam penitentiam publicam.<sup>1</sup>

These parishioners had no compunction in declaring openly the faults of one of their own. One would have expected them to show less restraint where a man, set apart from them socially by his clerical status, was concerned. Yet no grievance was voiced which could possibly be construed as indicative of strained relations. John Turpyn was declared to have allowed dilapidations to occur in his chantry, a charge which he denied. He did not deny that he had failed to maintain divine service.<sup>2</sup> In terms of a chantry priest's duties these were legitimate complaints on the part of the laity.

More problematical in its determination is the extent to which the parish clergy exerted their influence over the laity in their care. What exactly were clerical beliefs and were they echoed by the laity? In what way did these beliefs influence the behavior of the clergy?

Medieval piety in all its manifestations continued to be well-supported

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: CCAB, ff. 150r-151r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., f. 151r.

throughout most of the period. Indulgences, the granting of which would eventually precipitate the protest of Martin Luther, were freely announced by Fox. In all, four such entries occur in his register, all for the maintenance of chapels on bridges, hospitals, or altars.<sup>1</sup> For example:

Cupientes igitur per allectiva indulgenciarum munera mentes fidelium ad caritative devotionis opera propensius excitare, de dei omnipotentis misericordia ac beatissime virginis marie beatorumque apostolorum petri et pauli necnon beatissimi confessoris cuthberti patroni nostri omniumque sanctorum meritis et precibus confidentes omnibus et singulis parochianis nostris et aliis quorum diocesani hanc nostram indulgenciam ratam habuerint de peccatis suis vere penitentibus contritis et confessis, qui ad sustentacionem constructionem et reparacionem pontis de Elvet in civitate nostra dunolmensi grata de bonis sibi ad deo collatis contulerint, legaverint, seu alio quovis modo assignaverint subsidia caritatis, quadraginta dies indulgencie concedimus per presentes.<sup>2</sup>

Ecclesiastical fire was turned upon the particularly secular problem of the border thieves.<sup>3</sup> Border government was not strong enough to deal with such lawlessness; people were similarly helpless in other situations with the result that religion, or at least its ritual, was a pervasive and perhaps an imperative influence in all aspects of their lives. Piety was still strong enough in the 1520s for John Jackson of Easington parish to found a chantry in 1526.<sup>4</sup> A heresy case came before Tunstall in November of 1531, concerning a merchant from Newcastle, Roger Dichaunte. His abjuration is instructive no less of heretical opinion than of what was considered to be orthodox catholic belief at the time:

. . . I have grevouslye offendyd and erred in dyuerse articles

<sup>1</sup>FR, pp. 15-19, 134-135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-84.

<sup>4</sup>DPK: PReg. V, f. 219r. ff 218v-219v

contrarye too the doctrine of holye churche ortherwise than a good christen man ow'ght too have done; And chefelye and naymelye in thiese articles, that is too say, that there is noo purgatorye after that a man' is deade, And that it is but folye too praye for them that bee deade, Also that the sacrifice of the messe is not acceptable too god, but rather stirithe the Ire of god, And crucifieth the christe of newe, Also that it is but vayn too pray too sanctes, bycause christe is onelye owr mediator, Also that bicause we be Iustified bye fay'the noo good work nether commaundyd bye god nor inventyd bye man can maike us acceptable too god, Also that man' haith the noo fre Wyll!, but all thinges be done bye necessite, Soo that it is not in the power of man too doo good ore too eschewe evyll, Also that euerye christen man' is a preste and haith the power to consecrate the Bodye of owr lorde, and too doo all other thinges whiche prestes alone now use too doo, Also that every prest my'ght and ow'ght too bee maryed, And also that all the lyfe of religiose men' lyvinge in there cloysters is but ypocrisye, And therfor all monasteryes ow'ght too be pullyd down'.<sup>1</sup>

Whether one attempts to identify Dichaunte's heresy with the old time Lollardy or the Lutheran variety of Protestantism,<sup>2</sup> English Catholicism in the 1530s was sufficiently orthodox to condemn this merchant. There was no sympathy for a priesthood of all believers, justification by faith alone or pre-destination.

Dickens and Palliser have drawn attention to the initial bequests in York wills as a possible barometer of religious conviction. Palliser divided the people making these bequests into three different groups: traditional, semi-traditional and neutral.<sup>3</sup> Before 1538, most York wills were of the traditional type, leaving their souls to God, the Virgin Mary and all the holy company of heaven. After 1538, the bequest of one's soul simply to God became more common, as did the semi-traditional compromise to God, yet seeking the intercession of Mary and the saints. The actual beliefs

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<sup>1</sup>TR, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>See Dickens, Lollards, passim.

<sup>3</sup>Palliser, p. 20.

of the Durham laity are beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say that, before 1540, very few lay wills are extant, but those that are display the usual opening formula: "do et lego animam meam deo omnipotenti beate marie et omnibus sanctis . . ." <sup>1</sup> So begin the wills surviving for 1507. During Tunstall's episcopate, John Sherwood used the same formula and displayed a steadfast belief in the Holy Trinity as well as the efficacy of prayer to saints. <sup>2</sup> While it is evident from Dichaunte's heresy that dissenting opinions were already being bruited about as early as 1531, it is not until after the 1540's that testators began making outright bequests of their souls to God alone in any significant numbers. The opening clause of the will of Sir Thomas Hilton, Knight, was still a rarity, even in 1558.

. . . I bequeath unto almight the father my soule and to his son Jesus Christ who hath redeemed me and all mankind by his most glorious death and passion hoping thereby to lie resussitate with the elect in the day of his Judgement when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead . . . <sup>3</sup>

The wills of the Durham clergy post 1540 can also be divided into categories. None can be assigned to the semi-traditional category, and at first glance it seems as though the others were evenly divided between traditional beliefs and a painstakingly contrived neutrality. On the basis of their opening bequests, five wills could be considered of the traditional type, five of an unbiased nature. Of the traditional wills, three need little comment. George Baytes, <sup>4</sup> vicar of Kelloe from 1535 until his death in March 1547(8), left his soul to God, the Virgin Mary and the holy company

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: Loc. 57, numbers 7,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16.

<sup>2</sup>TR, pp. 53-54; DSR: PR I, f. 29.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, ff. 21r-v.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, George Bayts, Kelloe, vicar, 1548.

of heaven, as did the chantry priest at Gateshead, Richard Towgall, in 1541,<sup>1</sup> and George Reid, the rector of Dinsdale from 1529 until his death in 1561.<sup>2</sup> Daytes asked that his executor, William Cockey, "bestow my . . . goods as he shall think good for the health of my soul." Towgall made several pious bequests and willed that his cousin John Huchenson "sing xv masses of requiem and other xv de quinqu vulneribus for my soul's health . . ." George Reid made the usual initial bequest and left ten shillings to be distributed among the poor of various towns.

The remaining two traditional testaments and four of the five supposedly neutral wills need some measure of qualification. Anthony Farell of Dalton-Dale, 1550-1560,<sup>3</sup> made what seems a compromise variation on the traditional style. "First I commend my soul unto Almighty God the maker and redeemer of all the hole world and to his blessed mother our Lady Saint Mary and to all the blessed company of heaven . . ." He made sure to emphasize the prime place of God as the ultimate redeemer, but seemed hesitant to dispense with the Virgin and the saints. He still believed that intercessory prayers and acts of charity were necessary, for he went on to "bequeath to the poor folk for Jesus Christ's sake and for that of my soul my wheat stack . . ." John Semer<sup>4</sup> emphasized the supremacy of God the father by his omission of Mary, yet the "holy company of heaven" was retained in the rubric. He too made bequests "for the health of my soul." Predestination (Calvinism) and justification by faith alone (Lutheranism) had made

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Richard Towgall, Gateshead, priest, 1541.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, George Read, parson of Dinsdale.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, ff. 299v-301.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., ff. 6v-7.

no inroads with these two men.

Only Clement Cockson,<sup>1</sup> by the time of his death in 1598 a curate at St. John's, Newcastle upon Tyne, showed no hesitation in dispensing with Mary and the whole regiment of saints. He began very simply, "I give my soul to Almighty God, my maker and redeemer . . .", but in the fortieth year of Elizabeth there was probably no need to hedge one's religious bets. There is no indication elsewhere in his will that he entertained any beliefs in earthly activities which could help the soul to heaven. The answer in all probability lies in the fact that one of his bequests was a copy of "Calvin's Institutions." Cockson, who had received his orders under Tunstall in the 1530s,<sup>2</sup> asked for nothing to be done for the health of his soul. His will was clearly protestant.

For the others, Edward Adthe and Thomas Wall of Bishopton showed their position by the description they accorded to Almighty God. For Adthe,<sup>3</sup> God was "my only saviour and redeemer;" for Wall,<sup>4</sup> the honors were shared by God Almighty and "his sone Jesus Christ my maker and redeemer." The two most interesting wills are those of Roland Pratt and Humphrey Gascoigne. Both appear as neutral from the initial bequests. Both were far from being completely unbiased. Roland Pratt, like Adthe and Cockson, had been ordained in the 1530s.<sup>5</sup> He had been, in turn, a chantry priest,

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Clement Cockson, clerk, 1598.

<sup>2</sup>TR, pp. 52, 57, 64, 65, 67.

<sup>3</sup>DSR: PR II, f. 225.

<sup>4</sup>DSR: PR V, f. 104.

<sup>5</sup>TR, pp. 27, 42, 43, 55. For Adthe, see pages 27, 45, 52, 58.

then rector of Wooler in Northumberland and finally rector of Washington in Durham county.<sup>1</sup> Ill in 1565, he made his last will and testament and began by bequeathing his soul to Almighty God.<sup>2</sup> No saints, no Virgin, were mentioned. Nor did he make any provisions to promote the health of his soul. Yet Pratt's will can hardly be deemed that of a man with no preference religiously. Pratt had at some point married. Midway through his testament he left "the residue of all my goods not bequeathed my debts legaces and funeral expenses deducted and paid I give unto Katherine Whytey my daughter and to her 6 children . . . and the child in hir body if it shall be baptized . . . And I make Thomas Whytey my son in law the supervisor of the same . . ." Katherine Whytey was assuredly his legitimate daughter. The populace of the sixteenth century displayed no hesitation in referring to illegitimate children in official documents as their bastard or baseborn offspring, and Pratt did not do this. He made no mention of his wife at all in his will. His marriage, together with the fact that he made no pleas for the health of his soul, ally him squarely with protestantism.

Humphrey Gascoigne was master of Gretham Hospital from 1522 until his death in 1540.<sup>3</sup> He made a pointblank bequeathal of his soul to God, and God alone.<sup>4</sup> Here, at a relatively early date, was what appeared to be a neutral will, yet internal evidence lays bare the lie of that first impression. Gascoigne went on to stipulate that placebo, dirige and mass be sung on the

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<sup>1</sup>TR, pp. 95, 102; SS 22, Appendix, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Roland Pratt, Washington, Parson, 1565.

<sup>3</sup>SS 139, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>Borth. I.H.R.: AR 28, f. 182v.

day of his burial, that a candle "burn daily at mass the space of one whole year," that a "p'p' (perpetual) tabernacle for the image of our Lady" be constructed and alms be distributed for the "health of my soule."<sup>1</sup>

He stipulated further that

. . . Sir Robert Parkin my servant shall sing at Barnburgh church for the health of my soul one whole year next and immediately following the day of my burial . . . I will that five priests at Gretham shall sing solemnly placebo dirige and mass and have for their labors every one singularly 8 d.  
 . . .<sup>2</sup>

Very few of the individual priests' wills can safely be called neutral, for at some point most betray a distinct religious preference, at least an apprehensive indecision.

The years in which these wills were made in part explain the religious character of the opening bequest. Palliser reported that while non-traditional wills were rare before the death of Henry VIII, a definitely protestant testament was an absolute unknown in those years.<sup>3</sup> Baytes, Towgall and Reid made their very traditional wills in 1547(8), 1541 and 1559, and Gascoigne, whose leanings were no less conservative, did so in 1540. Semer and Fawell made theirs in 1561 and 1560. In the cases of Baytes, Towgall and Gascoigne, no great doctrinal change had yet been demanded of them. Reid, Fawell and Semer made their testaments in the early years of Elizabeth, and perhaps reflect an uncertainty as to whether this settlement would last any longer than the six years of Edward or the five of Mary. They are complemented numerically by the wills of Pratt, Adthe and Wall. This uneasy balance between old and new beliefs may well have

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<sup>1</sup>Borth. I.II.R.: AR 28, ff. 182v-183r.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ff. 183r-v.

<sup>3</sup>Palliser, p. 20.

been typical of the general mass of the parish clergy.

The clergy made bequests to people who were among the circle of their family and friends, people in whom they deposited their trust. In that sense the laity were no different from the clergy, and in a significant number of instances the clergy appear among the most trusted of their parishioners' acquaintances. Bequests to the church works, to high altars or the poor man's box were not unusual, but they were to the institution of the church. Legacies were a sign of a more personal relationship. The singling out of a particular cleric by a layman speaks of cordial and good natured relations between the two, and in some instances, of great mutual trust. Clergymen were generally among the witnesses to a last will and testament, and while they might exhort the dying parishioner to make certain pious bequests for the health of their soul, it was certainly not in their power to force a parishioner to express gratitude which was lacking in the first place. Robert Bedyke, tanner of Durham City, in 1545 made his bequests to the high altar, as well as to thirty priests to be present on the day of his burial.<sup>1</sup> He went further, however, and singled out one priest by name: "to John Foster preast for the manyfold kindness that I have found in hym bothe toward my self and my son Robert trusting that he will continue them / one ryall in gowld for a token." Many were the priests who were asked to supervise the distribution of alms, and several were given the care of the deceased's children, although these were frequently their own relatives. The real significance in these bequests to clerics lies in the class of clergy singled out. Rarely was it the parish rector, more often the vicar, but predominantly the curates and

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Robert Bedyke, tanner, 1545.

chantry priests. The John Foster mentioned by Bedyke did not hold a cure of souls. Nor did Richard Dimsforth (Dunsforth) for the parish of Chester-le-Street, but it was to him that John Hedworth left 3 s. 4 d. in 1554, and he witnessed the will as well.<sup>1</sup> On the whole it was to the clergymen whose presence was most constant in the community, the unbeneficed and to a lesser extent the vicars, that parishioners turned.

There seems on the whole to have been remarkably little strife between the clergy and laity in the situations noted above. On all of the ground which priests and parishioners might find themselves face to face, a certain amount of mutual confidence was necessary. That confidence might be strained from time to time, as in the Consistory Court, but in the final analysis it never seems to have been entirely lacking. Cuthbert Conyers, brought before the Consistory on tithe and morals charges, still remembered to bequeath five shillings to his "ghostlie father" in Sedgefield parish, although this significantly was his curate, and not the rector.<sup>2</sup> Although there is little direct evidence to support this, it may be useful to suggest that such strain as did occur bore witness to a pained surprise on the part of the laity that the clergy were prepared to deal with them on their own terms. God's chosen were still men and had their own affairs to look after, both as members of the community to which they were tied by their relatives, and as guardians of the rights and privileges of the "corporation sole", the cure, in trust for their successors.

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<sup>1</sup>DSR: PR I, f. 29; TR, pp. 53-54.

<sup>2</sup>DSR: Orig. Will, Cuthbert Conyers, Esq., of Layton, 1560.

## Chapter Seven

## Conclusion

At the age of sixty-five William Blenkinsopp, one of the "petitioners" in the cathedral church of Durham,<sup>1</sup> and a former chantry priest in Durham Castle and later at Gateshead,<sup>2</sup> found himself swept along in the turmoil of the Rebellion of 1569. By chance he happened to hear mass in Durham Cathedral on 30 November, 1569, where the officiating priest, one William Holmes, did

. . . speak expressly against the state of Religion established here in England by the laws of this realm, and commending the late service that was abolished, and afterward, affirming that he had authority to reconcile men to the Church of Rome, willed all, that was disposed to be reconciled, to kneel down; whereupon he pronounced a form absolutionis in Latten, in the name of Christ and bishop Pius of Rome, amongst which sort that kneeled this examanant was one . . .<sup>3</sup>

No doubt Blenkinsopp's knees bent easily. The Latin formula should have been familiar to him, as he was collated to his first chantry in 1534 and had proceeded through orders in the years previous to that event. After reconciling himself to Roman Catholicism he proceeded "to sing matins, evensong, and other service in the choir 4 or 5 days together, and went in procession twice or thrice, amongst others, after the cross, within the said cathedral church." He subsequently professed himself to be "hartly sorry" for these actions. Other priests experienced similar lapses. At the age of 79, Thomas Wright, vicar of Seaham, was accused of having sworn "once by God, and an other tyme by Sanat John."<sup>4</sup> The curate of Chester

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<sup>1</sup>Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>TR, p. 59; SS 22, Appendix, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>SS 21, pp. 143-144.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

"ministravit communionem Domini contra jura ecclesiastica . . ." <sup>1</sup> and Dr. Keeling has reported several instances in which priests revived the ceremony for the churching of women. <sup>2</sup> Old practices died a slow and lingering death, and in many cases this was no doubt the result of their being almost second nature to the men involved. They, no less than their parishioners, were products of their environment and times.

That environment consisted of a county palatine within a northern bishopric, exposed to the uncertainties of Scottish raids and native English marauders. It was by no means a homogeneous environment. Upland parishes, vast in terms of square miles, were similarly sparsely populated. In most instances the size and distribution of the clerical population reflected this and Durham City itself was swelled with the ranks of the parish clergy, diocesan administration, and the monastic body of the cathedral. This northern shire provided opportunities for advancement not only in diocesan affairs, but in palatine government as well. From the point of view of a career, young men in Durham County no doubt looked favorably upon entry into orders as a viable alternative to other means of making their living. This is not to imply that men were being ordained in vast numbers in the diocese. In 1501 they made up a little less than one per cent of the total population of the county. But in a society trained to follow its natural leaders, defined by family and lineage, a man entering the priesthood could theoretically transcend his social status as a layman and become one of those leaders. The main question has always been, did this newfound quality of leadership, of existing outside the social dis-

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<sup>1</sup>SS 21, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup>Keeling, p. 452.

tinctions of the time, make the ordained man too accessible or too aloof? The complaint against the Pre-Reformation clergy has traditionally been that they were too accessible, and if this means that, despite their clerical status, they still shared many experiences and characteristics with the laity, then that complaint has basis in fact for Durham county.

In 1529 Simon Fish vehemently referred to the clergy as "ruinous wolves" who had crept in and " . . . are nowe encreased . . . not only into a great number, but also into a kingdom."<sup>1</sup> In his frame of reference he saw the clergy as a group apart, having little in common with those to whom they ministered. Indeed, in calling them a kingdom, he came near to regarding them as aliens. The facts of the matter for Durham county were significantly different. The majority of the beneficed clergy came from Durham diocese and the northern parts of the realm, for a total of 60 out of the 79 men identifiable. Whether they came from Westmorland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, or the diocese itself, they shared the common experience of a rural society in shires far distant from the hub of the capital.

The unbeneficed had even closer ties to the locality than did the beneficed. Generally, they were more likely to spend extensive amounts of time in the same locality. They were less mobile and more tied down to their area, where they not infrequently obtained all of their orders. In many instances, then, the beneficed and unbeneficed clerks grew up among the very neighbors and relatives who would one day be their parishioners.

The point of separation came with the level of education one attained. There appears to have been a wide rift between the education obtained by the beneficed, approximately one third of whom held university degrees, and the unbeneficed, many of whom could only have attended those schools

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<sup>1</sup>Fish, p. 1.

maintained by chantry priests. Moreover, these last were none too numerous within Durham county, and as with other areas of England, the belief that the chantry priest as educator was a common figure has been exposed for the fallacy it is. The reading material of the unbeneficed was similarly limited to liturgical tracts. Even that of the beneficed clergy was by no means mentally exacting. It is only when one considers the reading material available at such places as Auckland Collegiate Church that one encounters the humanist authors and theological works.

Indeed, one must not overestimate the value placed on university degrees for an intending cleric. To earn a degree from Oxford and Cambridge by no means meant a course of training for one's vocation. The B.A. and M.A. were not career-specific; theology was simply not studied in the arts curriculum. As has been shown already, of the 71 graduates preferred during the period 1494-1540, seventeen held arts degrees only and only a further seventeen possessed degrees in divinity. The rest had earned degrees in civil and canon law, and while these were certainly more apropos to their chosen profession, they were not necessary in the execution of such pastoral duties as the hearing of confessions or the churching of women. One cannot generalize and say that the beneficed clergy were all fairly equally educated, or even that they all held degrees. The only group of clergy to which superior marks for educational attainment could possibly be given lie beyond the scope of this study: the regular clergy such as those resident in Durham monastery.

The Durham clergy, then, particularly the unbeneficed, were not so widely separated from the laity by education as one might be lead to believe. Education, particularly the possession of a university degree, conferred social status, much as did ordination. It was on the basis of a man's

education that a priest was frequently promoted to the diocesan or palatine administration, not on the basis of his lineage, his social status as a layman, which he had in any case left behind at the time of his final orders. For example, it has been shown that Magister John Surtees of Dinsdale, whose ancestry was of great lineage and "comed of knights,"<sup>1</sup> but who held no degree, took no part in the actual running of the diocesan machine. The church did provide some mobility to its more humble entrants, the sons of yeomen and husbandmen, while the previous status of some men may have worked against them. It is conceivable that the bishop, in trying to build up his own power base, might reject local worthies in favor of his own appointees. Surtees, for example, was related to the locally influential Conyers family. Whatever the case, there was one drawback to the newly found status of priest: it could not be passed on to one's heirs as clerical marriage was forbidden. If any member of the laity in Durham county resented their neighbors, now clerks, for their social distinction (and there is no evidence that anyone did), that person could console himself with that fact.

Priestly status appears to have been fairly rapidly conferred, as a study of the interstices has proven. There was a differentiation in the rapidity with which a future beneficed clergyman attained his final orders, and the speed with which the future unbeneficed clergyman did so. Whereas the beneficed clergy spent a mere 9½ months in the process from acolyte to priest, the unbeneficed man spent twice as much time in the same process. Education was probably a key factor. So also was the place of ordination, for a man might attain full orders more quickly in the southern part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Hedley, p. 59.

realm than in its northern dioceses. In that sense the northern bishops were more watchful and conservative. They were not so conservative, however, as to discourage potential priests from further progression through orders by the full observation of the interstices. Priests ordained in the north, including the unbeneficed, still progressed more quickly through orders than they were canonically supposed to have done. Moreover, the unbeneficed entered at marginally younger ages than did the beneficed, many of whom were usually immersed in university study.

The actual time spent in the parish was passed in the usual variety of ways: farming the glebe, saying mass, hearing confessions. That time differed between pluralists and non-pluralists, however. That at first might seem an obvious statement. If a man held more than one benefice, he could not be in two places at the same time. I refer instead to the length of time they actually held a benefice, not to the time during which they actually were resident. There was an average ratio of three benefices for every one pluralist. Whereas the non-pluralists often held their benefices for periods of ten to fifteen years or more, the pluralists were more likely to move on after five years.

Non-residence traditionally has fallen under the heading of clerical abuse, yet in Durham county, while absenteeism did occur, it was not on any grand scale. In 1501 absenteeism was reported in seven benefices out of 49, a rate of approximately 14% as opposed to the 22% found by Bowker for Lincoln. Moreover, when monitions to reside were issued, they seem on the whole to have been obeyed. Any attempts to correlate further clerical indiscretions on the part of the unbeneficed with the absence of the incumbent similarly fails, on one count because of the lack of a court book for the

early part of the sixteenth century, on the second count, because dilapidations occurred just as frequently in parishes where the incumbent was resident. Significantly, I have not discussed moral offenses committed by the clergy during this period, basically because there is no evidence as to whether or not they existed. There is but one single example concerning an unbeneficed clerk who survived into the late 1490s. Dominus Robert Seggefild, cantarist at the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Oswald's parish church, had died by 7 December 1498.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-fifteenth century he appeared before the Consistory Court:

Imponitur sibi quod fornicatus est et carnaliter cognovit Margaretam Bell sororem Thomae Cornforth. Fatetur, et habet pro commisso quod in die Veneris stet ad fontem baptismalem, in capella sanctae Margaretae, nudus caput, et legendo super psalterium tempore majoris missae, et quod, in die dominica, tempore altae missae, veniat per chorum ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelmensis, offerendo cereum summo altari, et 6 s. 8 d. feretro Sancti Cuthberti; et quod abstineat a peccato et loco suspecto sub poena 40 s. et suspensionis per quarterium anni . . .<sup>2</sup>

The only moral offenses for 1494-1540 are those which the parishioners proclaimed about themselves.

The clergy of Durham county seem to have been quite conservative in a number of ways. Many were local and therefore familiar to the area. Education for almost all of the unbeneficed and many of the beneficed was on a par with that available to the laity themselves. Nor does anyone appear to have indulged in any behavior outrageous enough to have invited comment in the Consistory. If the mass of the clergy of Durham county were notable at all, it was for their mediocrity, and I have my doubts as to whether this should necessarily be considered a bad thing. The outstanding

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<sup>1</sup>DPK: PReg. V, f. 45v. - 46r.

<sup>2</sup>SS 21, pp. 35-36.

administrators were present in the diocesan machinery, ready to handle any governmental or theological problems and to hand their decisions down in decrees to their more pastorally minded peers. When the canonical hours had been said and done, confessions heard, mass celebrated, and burials conducted, the mass of the clergy lived fairly like any other farmer in the area, tending his livestock and farming his glebe. There was nothing intrinsic in his behavior which would necessarily alienate a layman, and it was the sort of behavior with which a layman knew how to deal. Had an immoral priest occurred amongst them, the laity would have felt no hesitation in reporting his misdemeanors, as the fifteenth century case of Seggefild shows. On the other hand, what a burden it would have been to have had a real representative of Christ living in the community!

As has been shown, the clergy very definitely needed to keep their wits about them when it came to their economic upkeep. Thirty-nine per cent of the parishes of the county were appropriated and derived their income from a monastic body, most usually Durham priory. Such appropriation seems to have had little to do with the Scottish raids from the north, for almost all of these parishes were clustered along the Tees. This practice may still have had beneficial effects in an area of lower arable acreage. Clerical income was based on three main sources, tithe, glebe and oblations, and the majority came from tithe. Tithe, of course, occasioned the most bitter complaints. Bad harvests and generally poor economic conditions might make its collection difficult. There is evidence to suggest, however, that the Durham clergy did not immediately resort to the courts to enforce its collection, but waited until an economically more viable time to bring such action. Most of the suits for tithe in the Consis-

tory Court Act Book were brought during periods of recovery, some time after the bad harvests. The case was similar during the Pilgrimage of Grace. On 4 March 1537, Tunstall wrote to Cromwell, describing how many priests had lost the corn out of their very own barns.<sup>1</sup> No tithe cases commenced in 1537, although it must be admitted that the records in the act book were not kept as assiduously at that point as they had been in the early 1530s. The clergy do not seem to have been unmindful of their rights. Indeed, to have been so would have been foolhardy. But in the matter of tithes they also did not seem to be as rapacious as was commonly believed. Nor were the laity on the whole reluctant to pay what they owed. The dispute frequently revolved around a contested border, or a commutation of the tithe.

The clergy had a number of expenses which had to be met out of their stipend, among which were pensions, the upkeep of the church fabric, and hospitality to one's parishioners. Pensions do not seem to have been negotiated on any large scale; dilapidations were a far more common occurrence which a clergyman would usually do his best to prove had not occurred during his own incumbency. Traditionally a full third of one's income was meant to be spent on the provision of hospitality. As any look at the inventories of some of the clerical wills will show, they were well aware of this duty, owning vast numbers of sheets, beds and eating utensils. They also sank a fair amount of their capital into farming equipment and livestock. It was not, however, a wealth which the unbeneficed, who were frequently provided with no more than a room, shared. It will be remembered that the chantry priest at Gateshead had invested much of his money into religious articles, notably a chalice,

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<sup>1</sup>PRO: SP 1/116/188.

in contrast to the rectors and vicars. Another expense, more official in that it involved the government in London, was the increasingly frequent demands made on the clergy in the form of clerical taxation. Significantly, however, the clergy of this northern shire were doing quite well until the 1530s. They were assessed on the values of their livings, as recorded, not in the higher 1291 valuations, but upon the 1318 figures, drawn up in the middle of the Scottish warfare and pillaging. Its one disastrous effect was to hit the clergy doubly hard when the 1535 Valor was drawn up. Had the Durham clergy been assessed according to Pope Nicholas' Taxation, usually quite close to the figures of the Valor, the economic impact of the Reformation would not have made them so hardpressed.

Other matters called for a business-like mind. To advance in one's career, one had to keep an ear finely attuned to the patronage scene. The most blatant office-seeking appears to have taken place among the beneficed clergy; the unbeneficed had little power to wield, and occasionally lost out to the clergyman with a powerful patron behind him. The importunities of someone like Layton, who sought an office even before the prior occupant was dead and cold, no doubt offended the sensibilities of some people. Yet no grudges appear to have been born for similar abrasive behavior. To qualify that statement, the opportunities which parishioners were given to state their grievances at the weekly sessions of the Consistory Court, and during the proceedings of a visitation, bear no witness to any grudges held against the clergy by the laity. It is entirely possible that the more litigious, more actively place-seeking cleric, who usually tended by dint of his strenuous efforts to be university educated, pluralist, and active in the diocesan government, rarely came into first-hand contact with his parishioners. If there was contact, it was usually sought out by the rector,

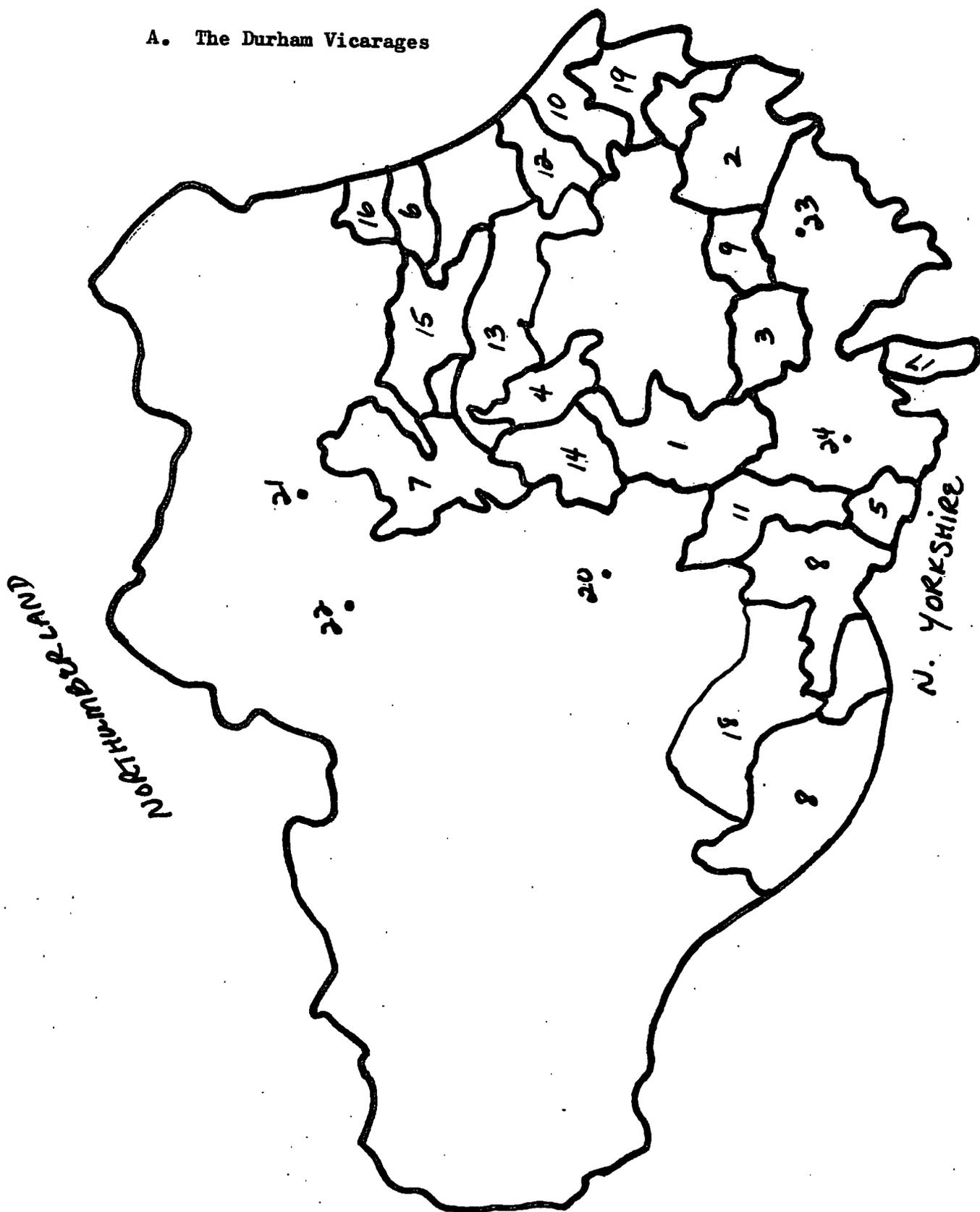
probably in the Consistory Court. The rector of Sedgefield, Robert Shorton, brought forward several tithe suits, for example. The parishioners did not go out of their way in search of him.

Such a trend is supported by the men whom the laity named in their wills as their benefactors, executors, and witnesses. Most of these men were the unbeneficed clergy and the "lower" beneficed man, those who could not afford to be non-resident, and who spent great spans of time ministering in the same parish. This group in all probability should be considered apart from the great mass of ecclesiastical administrators. The men in diocesan government tended to reflect the official doctrinal line at the moment. The lower beneficed and unbeneficed clergy did not, and it was their influence which held sway in the parishes. If the laity showed some hesitation and vacillation in those initial bequests of their souls, it may have been in no small part due to the fact that their priests did so as well. It is the conclusion of this study that the resident clergy were more at one with the laity than such tracts as Simon Fish's would lead one to believe. That is not to say that the non-resident clergy were universally guilty of moral laxity and economic greed, merely that their absence made them easier targets for such accusations. From the parishioners' point of view, it was much easier to approach and deal with those men who had a life style similar to their own and who had not yet crossed a barrier of privilege which the humbler members of the laity felt they could not transcend. High leadership, outstanding scholarship and great social distinction were not the qualities demanded of the Durham clergy by their laity. It would also be a fallacy to say that the clergy of other areas behaved in a less respectable manner than did the Durham population, or that the clergy grew more lax as the century progressed.

One cannot say that the Durham clergy conformed 100% of the time to the prescriptions of canon law, or even that they fulfilled their duties to the best of their abilities, merely that they satisfied the expectations of this particular lay community. Relations between the clergy and the laity in Durham county in the early sixteenth century were singularly placid. In this particular place, at this particular time, the clergy and the laity were essentially at one with each other.

## **Appendices**

A. The Durham Vicarages



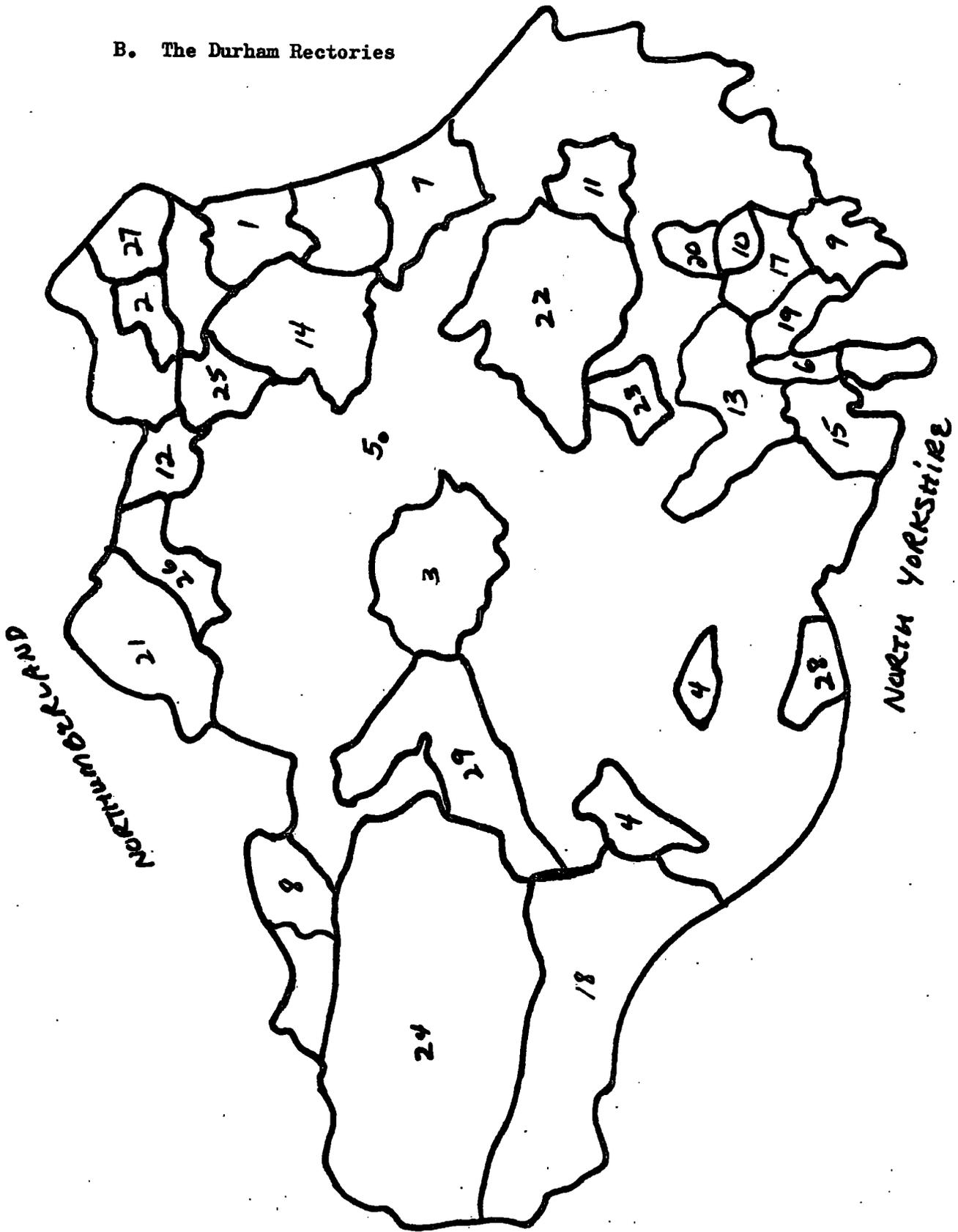
### Key to Maps

The maps on pages 208 and 210 provide an approximate idea of the location and size of the forty-nine parishes in Durham County. They are based on the parish map of the county palatine provided by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies at Northgate, Canterbury, Kent. The only parish not shown is the rectory of Kimblesworth which does not appear on any map which I consulted. However, DR XVIII, 1, Part D, (DSR) assigns it to Chester Ward, in the northeastern part of the county.

#### Vicarages and Sites of Collegiate Churches

1. Aycliffe
2. Billingham
3. Bishopton
4. Bishop Middleham
5. Conniscliffe
6. Dalton
7. St. Oswald's, Durham
8. Gainford
9. Grindon
10. Hart
11. Heighington
12. Hesledon
13. Kelloe
14. Merrington
15. Pittington
16. Seaham
17. Sockburn
18. Staindrop
19. Stranton
20. Bishop Auckland
21. Chester-le-Street
22. Lanchester
23. Norton
24. Darlington

B. The Durham Rectories



## Rectories

1. Bishop Wearmouth
2. Boldon
3. Brancepeth
4. Cockfield
5. St. Mary, South Bailey, Durham;  
St. Mary, North Bailey, Durham
6. Dinsdale
7. Easington
8. Edmondbyers
9. Egglecliffe
10. Elton
11. Elwick
12. Gateshead
13. Haughton-le-Skerne
14. Houghton-le-Spring
15. Hurworth
16. Kimblesworth
17. Long Newton
18. Middleton-in-Teesdale
19. Middleton St. George
20. Redmarshall
21. Ryton
22. Sedgfield
23. Stainton-le-Street
24. Stanhope
25. Washington
26. Whickham
27. Whitburn
28. Winston
29. Wolsingham

### Appendix C. The Unbeneficed Clergy

The following fasti of the unbeneficed clergy of Durham County includes all the men of that group for the period 1494-1540, and details every capacity in which I have found them to appear. In some instances the biographical data extends both before and after the period of study. However, no man is included for whom a record during the period itself does not survive. As such, this list consists of the minimum number of unbeneficed clergy known to have existed in the county for 1494-1540.

ADELISON, JACOBUS

Dominus, 1501. Eggleston, Middleton-in-Teesdale (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).

ADTHE, EDWARD

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| first tonsure | 21 September 1532 |
| acolyte       | 12 April 1533     |
| subdeacon     | 20 September 1533 |
| deacon        | 20 December 1533  |
| priest        | 19 September 1534 |

(TR, pp. 27, 45, 52, 55, 58).

29 May 1535, one of the "clerici jurati" in the Consistory Court (DSR: CCAB, f. 73v.).

. . . Cuthbertus dei gra' Ep'us Dunelm Sursum reddidit et quiet clam' Edwardo Adthe consanguindo Roberti Adthe nuper de Dunelm defuncti tot' jus tit'l'm et clam' sua que h'et . . . in uno mes' cum gardino in Chestre . . . (PRO: DURH. 3/78/membrane 4, no. 11.).

2 Edward VI, chaplain to the Gild of St. Cuthbert at Durham Castle in 1548, then aged 36 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 62.).

1556, instituted to the vicarage of Lesbury, the patron Christopher Adthe, clerk; possibly displaced in 1560 in favor of William Herrison (TR, p. 107; Forster, passim).

Will dated 1 February 1565 (DSR: Orig. Will).

ALLGOOD, WILLIAM

27 January 1503, witnessed the presentation of Robert Spragayne to Hilton Chapel (DPK: PReg. V, f. 75v).

APPLEBY, CHRISTOPHER

19 February 1522, to have the perpetual chantry of St. Mary and all the Apostles and Evangelists in the chapel of St. Margaret in Barnard's Castell, vice Thomas Appilby, chaplain, resigned (PRO: C 66/657).

Dead by August 1530, see the grant of the above chantry to Thomas Sanderson, August 1530, vice Christopher Appulby, deceased (PRO: C 66/657).

APPULBY, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, Norton, "cantarista non comparuit ideo suspensus est" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

Deceased by 1526, see the grant of the hermitage or free chapel of St. Mary Magdalene called Barmore, in the parish of "Berney-castell" in the bishopric of Durham, vice Thomas Appulby, deceased, 20 April 1526 (PRO: C 66/646).

ASLABY, CHRISTOPHER

Dominus, 1501, "capellanus cantarie Sti Johannis," St. Oswald's parish (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

ATKINSON, RICHARD

Dominus, 1501, cantarist, Blessed Virgin Mary, Seaham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).

ATKINSON, THOMAS

Adm. at King's, a scholar from Eton, February 19, 1525-26, aged 16; born at Eglington, Northumberland; left February 1528-9; rector of Elwick, Durham, 1546-1554 (Venn, vol. 1, p. 54.).

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| first tonsure | 21 December 1532  |
| acolyte       | 29 March 1533     |
| subdeacon     | 7 June 1533       |
| deacon        | 20 September 1533 |

(TR, pp. 42, 44, 47, 53).

1535, Gild of St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas, Durham (Valor, V, p. 318).

5 June 1535, Elena Froyid contra Thoma' Atkynson cap'm (DSR: CCAB, f. 73v.).

1547, collated to the rectory of Elwick; 1559, September, George Cliffe, then in possession of the rectory, was ejected and Atkinson was restored by the Royal Commission; 1562, Atkinson resigned Elwick and was succeeded by George Cliffe; 1559-71, prebendary of York (Forster, p. 195; TR, pp. 88, 144.).

AUTELL, RICHARD

1501, chapel of St. Hilda, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

AUTELL, RICHARD, cont.

letters dimissory, December 1500  
(FR, p. 148).

27 March 1501, deacon, "Ricardus Alktell  
dunolmensis diocesis ad titulum domus  
monialium de Basedall Eboracensis dio-  
cesis" (FR, p. 152).

Described as the previous chaplain of the  
chantries of St. Helen without the Walls  
of Hartlepool and of St. Nicholas in the  
chapel of Hartlepool in the institution  
of Gregge to the same, 1 October 1535  
(TR, p. 65).

BAINBRIDGE, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Middleton-in-Teesdale  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r).

Testamentum Henrici Richardson de Eggleston  
12 February 1501, " . . . ac supervisores  
dominum Johannem Bainbrig capellanum, et  
Edmundum Bainbrig . . ." (SS 22, Appendix,  
p. 36; Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 158r.).

Will of John Lonsdale, Newbiggin, Middleton-  
in-Teesdale, 24 October 1557, among the  
witnesses were "my curet Johannes Baynbrig  
clerke" (DSR: Orig. Will).

BAITES, GEORGE

16 March 1534, Johannes Robinson contra  
dominum Georgium baites cap'm: in ca'  
sive fidei les' (DSR: CCAB, f. 69r.).

1536, resigned the rectory of North Bailey  
and collated to Kelloe; 1548, resigned  
Kelloe with a pension (TR, pp. 69, 94).

BAKER, WILLIAM

chaplain of the parish of Gateshead,  
mentioned in the collation to the chantry  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gateshead,  
19 February 1496-7 (FR, p. 46).

Dominus, 1501, Gateshead (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 150r.).

BARBON, WILLIAM

1535, Chantry of the Virgin, Easington  
(Valor, V, p. 325).

BARKLEY, GEORGE

1535, St. Katherine's Chantry, St. Mary-le-Bow, Durham (Valor, V, p. 324).

2 Edward VI, Chantry of St. Katherine, North Bailey, aged 46 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 62).

BATESON, JOHN

Appears as John Betson, acolyte, 27 March 1501 (FR, p. 151).

Appears as John Bateson, 1533, Chantry of Our Lady, Gainford (Wilson, p. 748).

Grants in May 1534, " . . . another called Cheritre Garth, with five acres of land, in the tenure of John Betson, clk., . . ." (PRO: C 66/665).

1535, Chantry in Gainford parish church (Valor, V, p. 321).

1548, Chantry of Our Lady, founded within the church of Gainford, aged 70 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 67).

BELL, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Dalton-le-Dale (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).

BENNETT, RICHARD

8 May 1526, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Oswald's church "fra' domino Rico Benet capellano . . . per cessionem seu resignacionem domini Johannis Robynson ultimi capellani eiusdem vacantem." (DPK: PReg. V, f. 211r.).

1535, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Oswald's, Durham (Valor, V, p. 324).

1548, Richard Benet, aged 67 years, St. Oswald's, having no other living (SS 22, Appendix, p. 60).

BENNETT, THOMAS

29 May 1512, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin in St. Nicholas, Durham "per promocione d'ni Johannis Tailyor ultimi p'sbri eiusdem cantarie vacan . . ." (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 192v.).

Resigned the above by 12 November 1515, see the collation of Thomas Horne to the same (Ibid., f. 205r.).

BENNETT, THOMAS, cont.

1517, collated to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the collegiate church of Howden (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 212v.).

The same man? 1538, monk of Tynemouth, pension of 6.00.00; collated to the vicarage of Eglington; 1578, attended the visitation of Bishop Barnes; 1578-9, did not attend, said to be infirm. His successor to Eglington appointed in 1578. Dead before 1587 (Forster, passim; TR, p. 120).

BEST, ROBERT

14 June 1496, admitted to the perpetual chantry of St. John in Gateshead "per liberam resignacionem domini Thome hachenson capellani . . . per providum virum Conanum Bartone armigerum verum dicte cantarie patronum . . ." (FR, p. 25).

Dominus, 1501, Gateshead (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

BETSON, HENRY

1535, Lady Priest Service or Perpetuity, Barnard Castle, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 321).

Demised to William Watson "one burgage parcell of the said Chantry lying in the street there called Briggaite between the burgages of the chantry of the Apostles of the Eastside and Edward Bradley of the Westside to hold for 21 years at the rent of 12 d! Date unknown (D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss., vol. 10, "Barnard Castle").

1548, Lady Priest Service, Barnard Castle, Gainford, aged 62 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 67).

BETSON, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Gretham, "cap'nus paroch" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

BETTIS, JOHN

February 1496-7, last chaplain prior to John Turpyne at the Blessed Virgin Mary, Gateshead, dead by this date (FR, p. 46).

BLINKINSOPP, WILLIAM

20 October 1534, collated to a chantry in Durham Castle vpm Giles Torner, chaplain (TR, p. 59).

- BLINKINSOPP, WILLIAM, cont. 1535, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Nicholas; Chantry in Durham Castle (Valor, V, p. 324).
- 1548, Chantry of Our Lady, Gateshead, aged 43 years; last incumbent of St. Mary's Chantry at the dissolution, received his annual pension of 3.00.00 in 1553 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 65; D. & C. Lib.: Randall Mss., vol. 4, p. 161).
- 1562-1580, minor canon of Durham deposed for the uprising of 1569; 1564, witnessed the will of John Byndley, curate of Muggleswick; 1571, had a brother Roland who died in that year and who referred to "my brother Sir Wm. Blenkinsopp"; 1580, present at the Bishop's visitation of the Dean and Chapter (SS 21, pp. 143-144; Forster, passim).
- 14 June 1583, will. (Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 102; DSR: PR VI, f. 24).
- BLUNT, WILLIAM Perpetual curate of Croxdale, 1530 (SS 2, p. 168).
- 1558, will. (DSR: Orig. Will).
- BOHAN, ROBERT Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).
- BOWES, RICHARD Dominus, 1501, Longnewton, "cap'nus gilde ibidem" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- BRASSE, CHRISTOPHER Dominus, 1501, Winston (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).
- BURNE, JOHN 18 December 1517, "To have the perpetual chantry of Perse Brigge in the church of Barnecastle" (PRO: C 66/630).
- 1535, Chantry Chapel of the Virgin at Piercebridge, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 321).
- BURRELL, GEORGE 1 March 1532, "hiis die et locu procurator Georgii Burrell allegavit . . ." (DSR: CCAB, f. 45v.).

- BURRELL, GEORGE, cont. 1535, Chantry of the Twelve Apostles, Easington (Valor, V, p. 325).  
1548, Chantry of the Apostles, Easington, 55 years old (SS 22, Appendix, p. 66).
- BUTTERICK, WILLIAM 1535, Chantry of the Trinity, St. Nicholas, Durham (Valor, V, p. 323).
- CACHASYD, THOMAS Appears as Cachersyde, presbiter, Kepyer, 17 December 1496 (FR, p. 44).  
24 July 1507, witnessed the will of Johannes Qwhyte de Mederethe in the parish of St. Andrew, Auckland, curate in the same (DPK: Loc. 37, no. 12).
- CAME, JOHANNES Dominus, 1501, Auckland Collegiate Church (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).
- CARTER, PETER 26 June 1533, admitted to the chantry of St. Mary the Virgin, Barnard Castle, Gainford (TR, p. 48).  
2 Edward VI, chapel of Priestbrig, Gainford, 50 years old (SS 22, Appendix, p. 67).  
17 August 1573, supervisor of his brother William's will as "Sir Peter Carter" (Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 69).
- CASSON, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Hart "capellanus ibidem" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).
- CAWARD (CALVERT), THOMAS 4 September 1515, collated to the "cantariam perpetuam beate marie virginis in ecclesia paroch' de Detynsdale per mortem d'ni henrici Tailboys ultimi cap'ni eiusdem" (DPK: SPReg. IV, ff. 202r-v.).  
1535, Chantry of Our Lady, Dinsdale (Valor, V, p. 325).
- CHALOMER, ROBERT Dominus, dead by 26 May 1499, St. Margaret's Capella (DPK: PReg. V, f. 46v.).

CHAUNER, WILLIAM

20 September 1507, "capellanus parochialis de Tamfeld", will of Edward Hedlye de Lyntergreyn (DPK: Loc. 37, no. 13).

CHEKYNG, ROGER

14 February 1533, "Ex officio d'ni (provisto) instanc d'ni Rogeri Chekyng contra Georgium bedwell: habet dict' Rogerus ad libelland . . ." (DSR: CCAB, f. 62r).

CLAXTON, ROBERT

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| first tonsure | 8 March 1532     |
| acolyte       | 29 March 1533    |
| subdeacon     | 20 December 1533 |
| priest        | 4 April 1534     |

(TR, pp. 43, 44, 54, 57).

1 September 1538, collated to the chantry of Farnacres at Whickham vpm Richard Gretehed (Ibid., p. 72).

1548, appears at the same chantry (SS 22, Appendix, p. 72).

1552, collated to St. Edmund, Gateshead  
1559, occurs as the vicar of Eglington, resigned the same year with a pension of 7.10.00; 1578, excused from attendance at the visitation, infirm.

5 December 1578, buried at Gateshead (Master of St. Edmund's) (Forster, p. 196; TR, pp. 111, 120).

CLAXTON, ROGER

26 May 1499, collated "ad cantariam b'te marie in capella St. Margarete" vpm Robert Chalomer (DPK: PReg. V, f. 46v.).

|               |        |
|---------------|--------|
| 30 March 1499 | deacon |
| 25 May 1499   | priest |

all on a title from Gretham Hospital (FR, pp. 84, 85, 88).

Dominus, 1501, St. Margaret's, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

CLARKE, THOMAS

7 January 1497-8, mentioned in the collation of John Vescy to Darlington Collegiate Church, "Et scriptum fuit ipsius Inductione domino Thome Clarke capellano parochiali ibidem . . ." (FR, p. 72).

CLARKE, THOMAS, cont.

29 May 1499, mentioned in the collation of Roger Layburn to the parochial church of Darlington (Ibid., p. 86).

Dominus, 1501, "cap'ni, ecclesia collegiata de Derlington" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

CLERKE, JAMES

Dominus, 1501, Middleton-in-Teesdale (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).

1501, "capellano", in will of Henry Richardson of Egleston (Ibid., f. 158r.).

CLERKE, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, St. Mary, North Bailey, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

21 July 1532, "John Clerke, M'r, procurator Actoris" (DSR: CCAB, f. 28v.).

CLERK, WILLIAM

1498, "Johannes Saunder de Ryton xiii die septembr' Anno trans' d'ni Ric' E'pi Dunelm quarto . . . sursum reddidit et quiet' claman' Willelmo Clerk capellano cantare beate marie in ecclesia parochial' de Ryton . . . in uno cotagio cum suis pertinenciis ac tribus acres terris" for the use of William and his successors in the chantry (PRO: DURH. 3/62/membrane 5, no. 11).

COCKEY, WILLIAM

occurs as proctor:      27 October 1531  
                                  23 November 1532  
                                  17 January 1533  
                                  19 December 1534  
                                  16 March 1534  
 (DSR: CCAB, ff. 7v, 37r, 60v, 66v-67r, 69r.).

1535, Chantry of the Virgin and St. Cuthbert, Durham Cathedral and Precincts (Valor, V, p. 324).

6 March 1547, in the will of George Bayts vicar of Kelloe, "The residue of all my goods I give to my most trusty friend William Cockey Clerk whom I make my sole executor of this my testament and last will" (Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, p. 127; DSR: Orig. Will, George Bayts, Kellow, vicar, 1548).

- COCKEY, WILLIAM, cont. 1558, apparently dead. William Bell, parson of Middleton-in-Teesdale, speaks of the "gowne which Cockey gave me." (DSR: PR I, f. 2.).
- COKE, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, Dinsdale (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155v.).
- COLLISON, RICHARD 1501, St. Margaret's Chapel (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- 2 September 1507, in the will of Thomas Robynson de parochia S. Margareta, was bequeathed 3 s. 4 d. and served as a witness. (DPK: Loc. 37, no. 16).
- 6 September 1507, witnessed the will of Richard Bowman in the parish of St. Margaret (Ibid., no. 14).
- COLLIER, JAMES Dominus, 1501, St. Mary Magdalene, Gainford (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- COLT, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Bishop Wearmouth (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).
- COLYNSON, JOHN 12 July 1498, mentioned in the collation of Strangeways to Brancepeth (FR, p. 76).
- Dominus, 1501, Brancepeth (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- CORNEY, THOMAS 10 April 1522, in the will of John Trollop of Thornley, Squyer: "Also I bequeath to Sir Thomas Cornay iij' to sing for me for two years if the same Sir Thomas so long live" (Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, p. 105).
- COTESFORTH, JOHN 16 May 1520, described as the "capellanus" in the induction of Christopher Werdale to Aycliffe (DPK: PReg. V, f. 190r).
- COTISFOURTHE, ROBERT 21 March 1533, in the will of John Sherwode of Haughton-le-Skerne, "Also I bequeathe to

- COTISFOURTHE, ROBERT, cont. Sir Robert Cotisforthe to pray for me 6 s. 8 d." (Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, p. 111; according to TR, p. 53, the date is 21 March 1534).
- COWPER, WILLIAM Dominus, 1501, Chantry of the Holy Trinity, St. Nicholas (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v).
- CRAWHALL, ROBERT 9 December 1497, St. Mary in the North Bailey, "capellanus", witnessed Edward Cheeseman's pension (FR, p. 71).
- CREIGHTON, GERMAN Dominus, 1501, Gateshead (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).  
1535, Chantry of the Trinity in the Hospital of St. Edmund the Bishop, Gateshead (Valor, V, p. 322).
- CURWEN, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- CUTTLER, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Hurworth (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- DAND, JOHN Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Lanchester (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- DAWSON, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Longnewton (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- DAWSON, ROBERT 23 January 1534, in the will of John Hedworthe, Esq., of Haverton in the parish of the collegiate church of Chester-le-Street, he was bequeathed "a noble" and also served as a witness (Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, pp. 112-113; DSR: PR I, f. 29.).  
1535, chantry-chapel of Harraton or Harveton, Chester-le-Street (Valor, V, p. 326).

- DAWSON, THOMAS 1518, "littera fraternitatis concess' domino Thomas Dawson capellano" (DPK: PReg. V, f. 177r.).
- 6 July 1532, "Thomas Dicson contra Thomam Dawson cap'm" (DSR: CCAB, f. 28v.).
- 2 March 1555, witnessed the will of Robert Twedell of Monkhesledon as "S'r Thomas Dawson" (DSR: Orig. Will).
- 18 August 1558, in the will of Ralph Furbank of Elwick, "Item I give to the reparation of Elwick church 10 shillings. Item I give to Sir Thomas Dawson to pray for me 3 s. 4 d." (DSR: Orig. Will).
- DAWSON, THOMAS 1513, dead. Mentioned as the last chaplain, deceased, of the chantry of Dinsdale, in the collation of Henry Tailboys to the same (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 194v.).
- DAWSON, WILLIAM Dominus, 1501, "cap'nus capelle de Whorleton," Gainford (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- DICHBURN, JOHN Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Lanchester (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- DICSON, ROBERT Dominus, 1501, "capellanus" at the collegiate church of Darlington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).
- DOSSEY, ROBERT Dominus, 1501, St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- DUCKETT, JAMES 31 March 1500, letters dimissory to "John Dowthwete" (FR, p. 129). Same man?
- 21 August 1530, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the chapel of St. Margaret on the death of William Marshall (DPK: PReg. V, f. 239r.).
- 1535, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Margaret, Durham (as Jacobus Dowcote) (Valor, V, p. 324).

DUCKETT, JAMES, cont.

2 Edward VI, John Ducket, aged 60 years of age, St. Margaret's, Durham; had a yearly pension of 106 s. 8 d. paid by the King's Receiver of the Augmentation Court (SS 22, Appendix, p. 60).

DUNFFORTH, RICHARD

Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).

23 January 1534, in the will of John Hedworthe, Esq., of Haverton in the parish of Chester-le-Street, ". . . to Sir Richerte Dimsfurthe 3 s. 4 d."; he served as a witness as well (Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, pp. 112-113; DSR: PR I, f. 29.).

DURHAM, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Lancaster (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

EDEN, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, "capellanus", St. Giles, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

20 February 1501, in the will of William Coltman of Durham, "Item, do et lego pro decimis oblitis 3 s. 4 d. Item, volo ut Willielmus Edan, capellanus, celebret pro anima mea, parentum et benefactorum meorum, immediate post decessum meum per spacium unius anni completi . . ." probatum 10 September 1502; served as a witness as well (SS 22, Appendix, p. 39; Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 159r.).

ELLESON, CUTHBERT

7 December 1498, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Oswald's, Durham, on the death of Robert Seggefild. (DPK: PReg. V, f. 45v.).

6 June 1520, dead by that date, see the collation of Robert Whitehead to the above chantry (Ibid., f. 192r.).

ELLESON, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Oswald's, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

EMERSON, THOMAS

B.A.; supplicated for M.A. 22 January 1506, in priest's orders by 1506 (Emden, vol. 1, p. 641). Same person?

1535, chantry of St. James in the Bishop's manor, Darlington (Valor, V, p. 326).

4 May 1545, dead, see collation of the chantry or free chapel in the manor of Darlington (TR, p. 85).

EYRE, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Norton (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

FENWYKE, JOHN

24 January 1536, mentioned as a chaplain of the collegiate church of Auckland in the collation of Byshell to the same vpr Lawes (TR, p. 68).

7 May 1539, present at the collation of Lancelot Thornton to Auckland (Ibid., p. 72).

FLAYNE, JOHN

12 July 1499, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Andrew's Auckland (FR, p. 91).

14 September 1501, mentioned in the "union or annexation of the prebend of Shildon to the office of sacrist in the collegiate church of Auckland (FR, p. 168).

FLECHER, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Medomsley, "non comparuit ideo suspensus est" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

FOREST, ROBERT

27 March 1501, acolyte (FR, p. 151).

October 1505, collated to the chantry of "Witton iuxta Beaurpark" on the death of Richard Tempill (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 149v.).

7 May 1526, presented to the vicarage of Dalton-le-Dale (DPK: PReg. V, f. 210v.).

17 June 1530, resigned (Ibid., f. 238v.).

9 April 1548, dead by that date, mentioned in the collation of Marley to the vicarage of Pittington (TR, p. 94).

- FORSTER, JOHN 17 June 1500, Stanhope, "capellano parochiali", see collation of Denby to the cure of Stanhope (FR, p. 135).
- FORSTER, ROLAND 1535, chantry-chapel of Sts. John the Baptist and Evangelist in Farnacres with the Fireside chapel in Tanfield, Whickham (Valor, V, p. 323).
- FYSSER, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Stanhope (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).
- GALELE (GOLELE), ROBERT 27 September 1532, presented to a chantry in the parish church of Gateshead vym Richard Rande, patron Anthony Lumley, Esq., and John Brown, rector of Gateshead 28 September 1532, instituted to the above chantry (TR, p. 36).
- 1535, chantry of Sts. John the Baptist and Evangelist, Gateshead (Valor, V, p. 322).
- GALLOWAY, ROBERT 1535, chantry-chapel of the Virgin in West Herrington, Houghton-le-Spring (Valor, V, p. 325).
- 1548, chantry of Our Lady in West Herrington, Houghton-le-Spring, aged 52 years; the last incumbent of St. Mary's chantry, he received a pension of 4.00.00 in 1553 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 71; D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss., vol. 12, "Houghton-le-Spring").
- GAMELSBY, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Kelloe (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- GARTELL, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Stainton-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155v.).
- GATESHEAD, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, Merrington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).
- GIBSON, JAMES 1535, Chantry of Sts. John the Baptist and Evangelist, St. Nicholas, Durham (Valor, V, p. 323).

- GIBSON, JAMES, cont. 1548, Chantry of Sts. John the Baptist and the Evangelist, St. Nicholas, Durham, 60 years old (SS 22, Appendix, p. 61).
- GIBSON, ROBERT Dominus, 1501, Easington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).
- GOLLAYN, WILLIAM 1535, Chantry of Our Lady, Gateshead (Valor, V, p. 322).
- GOODE, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Conniscliffe (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- GRAY, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, Gild of St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- GREATHEAD, RICHARD 1521, curate of St. Margaret's Chapel, Durham; died 1560 (SS 139, p. 53).
- GREATHEAD, RICHARD 1535, chantry-chapel of Sts. John the Baptist and Evangelist in Farnacres with the Fireside chapel in Tanfield, Whickham (Valor, V, p. 323).
- 1 September 1538, dead (TR, p. 72).
- GREG, RICHARD October 1535, instituted to the chantries of St. Helen without the Walls of Hartlepool and of St. Nicholas in the chapel of Hartlepool, vpm Richard Autell, chaplain, patron the mayor, Richard Lasynby, and the community of Hartlepool (TR, p. 65).
- 1548, chantry of St. Helen in the Chapel without the Walls of Hartlepool, aged 40; the last incumbent of this chantry, he received an annual pension of 4.00.00 which was paid in 1553 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 70; D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss., vol. 12, "Hart").
- 1558, witnessed the will of Agnes Tatham of Holom in the parish of MonkHesledon (DSR: Orig. Will)

GREG, RICHARD, cont.

January 1561, witnessed the will of Thomas Richardson of Hart parish (DSR: PR II, f. 26.).

May 1561, witnessed the will of John Semer of Stranton, clerk vicar there, received 5 s. as a bequest (DSR: Orig. Will).

1570, died as curate of Hart (Forster, p. 197).

GREVESON, JOHN

17 December 1496, acolyte (FR, p. 87).

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

HAKERBY, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Haughton-le-Skerne (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

HALL, LEONARD

21 March 1534, in the will of John Sherwood, "Also I will that syr Leonarde Hall' shall' synge for mye sowle one holl yere and he to have to hys wayges 4 li. 6 s. 8 d.", he also witnessed the will (TR, pp. 53-54; Wills and Inventories, vol. 2, p. 111).

1578, curate of Earsdon, excommunicated for non-attendance at the visitation (Forster, p. 197).

HALL, THOMAS

April 1526, grant of the hermitage or free-chapel of St. Mary Magdalene called Barmore, in the parish of "Berney-castell" in the bishopric of Durham, on the death of Thomas Appulby (PRO: C 66/646)

April 1531, grant of the perpetual chantry in the chapel of Perse Brygge, in the parish of Gaynsforth, Durham dioc., void by death (PRO: C 66/656)

1535, chantry-chapel of St. Mary Magdalen or the Barmore chapel, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 321).

HANELEY, ROBERT

1495, chaplain at the chapel of Farnacres (FR, p. 14).

- HARDING, ROBERT** Dominus, 1501, "capella de Castle Eden, Hesilden" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r).
- HARRISON, CHRISTOPHER** 18 April 1513, mentioned in the collation to the chapel of Muggleswick (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 194v.).  
1535, Chantry of Our Lady of Pity, Easington (Valor, V, p. 325).
- HATCHENSON, THOMAS** 14 June 1496, resigned St. John's Chantry, Gateshead, succeeded by Robert Best (FR, p. 25).  
Dominus, 1501, Boldon (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.). "cap'nus paroch' non comparuit ideo suspensus est"
- HEDLEY, DIONISIUS** 1535, Chantry of St. Katherine, Sedgfield (Valor, V, p. 321).
- HERINGETON, ROGER** Dominus, 1501, Whickham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.). "non comparuit ideo suspensus est"
- HETHERINGTON, SIMON** As Simon Hederinton, letters dimissory, March 1499-1500 (FR, p. 127)  
Dominus, 1501, Gainford (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- HILARY (ELLY), ROBERT** June 1522, grant of the perpetual chantry within the castle of Barnard Castell, vacant by the death of John Wakerfeld (PRO: C 66/640)  
1535, chantry of St. Margaret in the Castle Chapel, Barnard Castle, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 322).  
1545, witnessed the will of Robert Parkinson, tanner, of Barnard Castle (DSR: Orig. Will)  
1548, Chantry of St. Maragret, Barnard's Castle, Gainford, no age given, having the same for the term of his life by the king's patent (SS 22, Appendix, p. 67).



HORSELEY, JOHN, cont.

23 October 1535, appeared in the Consistory Court and identified as "capellanus" (DSR: CCAB, f. 80r.).

HOWTILL, RICHARD

1535, Chantry chapel of St. Helen, Hartlepool (Valor, V, p. 326).

HUCHENSON, JOHANNES

27 September 1500, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Galilee Chapel, Durham Cathedral, by the bishop (FR, p. 140).

16 May 1515, dead by this date, described as the "ultimi capellani cantarie b'te marie in ecclesia de pittynghon" in the collation of John Thompson to the same (DPK: PReg. V, f. 160r.).

HULL, WILLIAM

4 May 1508, "capellanus", a witness to "Juratu' prefati domini Willelmi Fabyan" (DPK: PReg. V, f. 98r.).

HUNTER, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Medomsley, "non comparuit ideo suspensus est" (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

HUSBAND, WILLIAM

16 January 1497-8, "capellanus" in Eggliscliffe in Thomas Hall's collation to the rectory of the same: "Et consequenter scriptum fuit pro ipsius Inductione domino Willelmo husband' capellano parochie ibidem" (FR, p. 73).

3 December 1500, witnessed Alexander Lygh's resignation of the rectory of Houghton-le-Spring (Ibid., p. 143).

HYNDE, WILLIAM

4 May 1533, occurs as curate at Whickham (TR, p. 47).

JEFFRAISON, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Lanchester (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

21 March 1501, witnessed the will of William Snath of Lanchester, prob. 1 May 1502 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 37).

JOHNSON, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).

16 January 1528, littera fraternitate  
concess' Dno Thome Johnson" (DPK: PReg. V,  
f. 228v.).

KIRKMAN, JOHN

3 March 1532, collated to the chantry of  
Pittington on the resignation of John  
Thompson the last chaplain (DPK: PReg. V,  
f. 249r.).

1535, Chantry of Our Lady with the Chantry  
of St. Katherine, Pittington (Valor, V,  
p. 323).

1548, Chantry of Our Lady, Pittington, aged  
53 years; last incumbent at the suppression  
of this chantry, he received his pension of  
4.00.00 per annum in 1553 (SS 22, Appendix,  
p. 68; D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss, vol. 13,  
"Pittington").

1559, "John Kirman clerk curate ther" wit-  
nessed the will of Robert Matho of "Geli-  
gate" in the suburbs of the city of Durham  
(DSR: PR II, f. 144v.).

1563, curate of St. Giles, Durham  
(Forster, p. 198).

KNAWESDALL, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Darling-  
ton (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

LAKES, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street. (Borth.  
I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).

LAKEY, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

LANGHORNE, JOHN

1531, appeared in the Consistory Court  
"ad proband rectorem de Sedgfield"  
(DSR: CCAB, f. 1v.).

1548, in the will of John Barforth of  
Sedgfield he received 8 d. and served as  
a witness (DSR: Orig. Will).

- LAWE, GEORGE  
23 November 1532, appeared in the Consistory Court (DSR: CCAB, f. 36v.).  
16 March 1534, dead by that date, referred to as "domini Georgii Lawes defuncti" (Ibid., f. 69v.).
- LAWE, JOHN  
Dominus, 1501, Ebchester (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- LAX, JOHN.  
15 January 1497-8, mentioned in the collation of Roger Layburn to Wolsingham (FR, p. 73).  
17 February 1501, witnessed the will of Robert Barker of Wolsingham, prob. 4 May 1502 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 34)  
2 December 1531, "Jacobus Lax cap'nus contra Thomam Wright: in cause lesionis fidei" (DSR: CCAB, f. 11v.).
- LEE, RALPH  
Dominus, 1501, Easington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).  
23 September 1497, acolyte (FR, p. 62).
- LEYS, JOHN  
Dominus, 1501, Sedgfield (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, 149r.).
- LIGH, ROBERT  
13 October 1531, 10 November 1531,  
2 December 1531: Robertus Ligh cap'nus contra Johannem Camo: in causa diff'uis imponend" (DSR: CCAB, ff. 6r, 9v.).
- LOKEY (LEKEY), JAMES  
1535, chaplain in the parish of Middleton-in-Teesdale (Valor, V, p. 325).  
1548, chaplain in the parish of Middleton-in-Teesdale, aged 60 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 68).  
1563, curate of Eggleston a chapel attached to Middleton-in-Teesdale (Forster, p. 199).

LOUNDE, ROBERT

5 September 1524, "capellanus," "littera fraternitatis concess' domino Roberto Lownde cap'no (DPK: PReg. V, f. 206r.).

LYNDSAY, ROBERT

18 January 1532, appeared in the Consistory Court (DSR: CCAB, f. 40r.).

"The service of one priest within the Ospitall of Saincte Edmund (Gateshead) for term of 99 years, as appearith by indent., dat. 12 Aug. 29 Henry VIII Incumbent Robert Lynsey (no age given)", 1548 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 65).

LYNHOUSE, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Trimdon (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

MALPER, GEORGE

Dominus, 1501, Gateshead (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

MALTBY, ROBERT

16 May 1520, "capellanus" in the induction of Christopher Werdale to Aycliffe (DPK: PReg. V, f. 190r.).

MALTBY, WILLIAM

1531-41, Chantry of Richard Booth, St. Oswald's, Durham (Wilson, p. 745).

18 January 1532, "Executor Testi Johannis Taillor paroch' Ste Hilde . . . presentibus . . . Willelmo Mawltby cap'no" (DSR: CCAB, f. 40r.).

22 March 1532, appeared again in the Consistory Court (Ibid., f. 51v.).

MANCHESTER, RICHARD

15 March 1532, collated to the mastership of Badlefield, in the bishop's patronage (TR, p. 15; D. & C. Lib.: Hunter Mss., vol. 3, no. 36.).

1535, Chantry-chapel of Badlefield, Darlington (Valor, V, p. 326).

MANFFORDE, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, St. Oswald's, Durham  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

MARE, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

MARLEY, THOMAS

1531, "capellanus", witness to "Juramentum domini Thome Stevynson cap'ni" (DPK: PReg. V, f. 242r.).

MARNDUKE, THOMAS

14 July 1507, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Margaret's Chapel on the death of Roger Claxton, the previous chaplain (DPK: PReg. V, f. 83r.).

11 August 1520, dead by that date (Ibid., f. 190r.).

MARSHALL, JOHN

1535, chantry-chapel of St. Katherine in Hilton near Walkerfield, Staindrop  
(Valor, V, p. 326).

1548, chantry priest at St. Nicholas, Durham, aged 60 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 61).

Sometimes prebendary and canon of Chester-le-Street, drawing pension of 2.00.00 in 1553; 1552-60, canon and prebendary of Lincoln; 1565, present at a matrimonial case (Forster, p. 199; Pilkington's Register, pp. 149-164).

13 November 1566, in the will of Richard Norman, "To one John Marshall, one Testament in Latine" (Wills and Inventories, vol. 112, p. 36).

MARSHALL, WILLIAM

11 August 1520, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the chapel of St. Margaret on the death of Marnduke (DPK: PReg. V, f. 190r.).

31 August 1530, dead by that date (Ibid., f. 239r.).

MAYNERDE, ALEXANDER

Dominus, 1501, Middleton-in-Teesdale  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).

1548, occurs as Edmond Mainerd (same man?)  
at the chapel of St. John's in Werdale,  
Stanhope parish, at the age of 66 years  
(SS 22, Appendix, p. 68).

MATHEWE, EDWARDUS

Dominus, 1501, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 150r.).

MELLYS, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Bishop Wearmouth (Borth.  
I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).

MELMERLY, LEONARD

24 June 1533, curate of the collegiate  
church of Auckland (TR, p. 46).

11 February 1534, mentioned as "Leonard  
Melmerbye priest" in the institution of  
Cuthbert Marshall to Aycliffe (Ibid., p. 54).

1535, chantry of All Saints, Darlington  
(Valor, V, p. 326).

7 May 1547, collated to a canonry in the  
collegiate church of Auckland and the third  
prebend of Eldon (TR, p. 88).

MERRINGTON, HENRY

Dominus, 1501, chantry of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary in St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

MESH, HENRY

Dominus, 1501, Brancepeth (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 149r.).

METCALF, ALEXANDER

1535, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Andrew  
Auckland (Valor, V, p. 320).

1548, Chantry of Our Lady, Auckland, aged  
80 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 64).

MIDDLETON, RICHARD

acolyte, letters dimissory, March 1499-  
1500 (FR, p. 128).

1535, Gild of St. Giles, St. Giles, Durham  
(Valor, V, p. 322).

MIDDLETON, RICHARD, cont.

1548, Gild of St. Giles, St. Giles, Durham, aged 51 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 63).

18 April 1558, in the will of William Colyer of Hart, "Item I give to Sir Robert Middleton to pray for me 12 d." Among the witnesses "Syr Robert Myddleton preist" (DSR: Orig. Will).

MILVASON, JOHN

1518-19, witness at the resignation of John Yong, rector of Kimblesworth (DPK: PReg. V, f. 178v.).

MORGAN, RALPH

28 June 1533, "Radus Morgan cap'nus contra Georgium Rixston", cause unknown (DSR: CCAB, f. 55v.).

1535, Chantry-chapel of St. Botolph in Frosterley, Stanhope (Valor, V, p. 325).

MORPATH, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

MORRESON, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Kelloe (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

MORTEM, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

NESSE, JOHN

"Haec est finalis concordia facta . . . inter Johannem Nesse capellanum & Rogerum Morland Querent, et Ricardum Blythman & Katerinam uxorem eius unam cons. et haeredum Rogeri Barnard et Thomam Herper et Johannam uxorem eius alteram cons. & haered. praedicti Rogeri Barnard defors. de uno mesuag' vocat Ayhopshale & quater viginti Acris Terrae cum pertin' in Ayhope (in Werdale) . . . scilicet quod praedicti Ricardus et Katerina, Thomas et Johann. recogn' Tenem'ta praedicta cum pertin' esse ius praedicti Johannis . . ." 9 Henry VII (D. & C. Lib.: Hunter Mss, vol. 4, no 27a).

Dominus, 1501, St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

NICHOLL, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

OVYNGTON, JOHN

7 May 1497, instituted to the chapel of St. Helen, Piercebridge, on the resignation of John Perlysse, "per nobilem virum dominum Edwardum pykeryng militem verum eiusdem cantarie, virtute litterarum patentium excellentissimi in christo principis et domini domini henrici dei gracia regis anglie et francie et domini hibernie illustrissimi eidem concessarum, hac vice patronum . . ." (FR, pp. 51-52).

PARKINSON, RALPH

29 July 1531, "Cuthbertus Bowe contra Radum Parkinson cap'no: in causa lesionis fidei" (DSR: CCAB, f. 3r.).

1535, Chantry of the Virgin, Bishop Wearmouth, as "Radhus Parkyn" (Valor, V, p. 323).

1548, Chantry of Our Lady, Bishop Wearmouth, 56 years of age; the last incumbent at the dissolution, he received his annual pension of 3.00.00 in 1553 (SS 22, Appendix, p. 71; D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss, vol. 14, "Bishop Wearmouth").

1558, a "mr Parkinson" mentioned in the will of Matthew Tutyng, St. Mary's, South Bailey, Durham (DSR: Orig. Will).

PEARSON, JOHN

1535, Gild of Corpus Christi, St. Nicholas, Durham (Valor, V, p. 323).

February 1556, in the will of Richard Wheatley of Durham City, "witnesseth hereof mr parson my curet" (DSR: Orig. Will).

PERIBROME, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, Chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

PERLYSSE, JOHN

7 May 1497, previous to this date, the chaplain of the chapel of St. Helen, Piercebridge (FR, p. 51).

POLLER, WILLIAM

13 August 1495, "capellanus", collated to a canonry in St. Andrew's, Bishop Auckland, with the grant of the advowson of the next vacant prebend (FR, p. 18).

1498, promoted to the mastership of Staindrop College, dead by 1500 (PRO: DURH. 3/61/membrane 8, no. 37; DURH. 3/61/membrane 11, no. 50).

PRAT, JAMES

Dominus, 1501, Gainford (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).

PURLE, JOHN

1535, Chantry of St. George, Chester-le-Street (Valor, V, p. 312).

RANDE, RICHARD

27 September 1532, previous to this date, the chaplain of a chantry in the parish church of Gateshead, prior to Robert Galele (TR, p. 36).

12 October 1532, "Executor domini Ricardi Rande cap'ni de Gatysshed" (DSR: CCAB, f. 31r.).

RAUGHTON, LEONARD

1535, Chantry of Our Lady, Chester-le-Street (Valor, V, p. 312).

RAWLYN, NICHOLAS

Dominus, 1501, Chantry of St. James, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

RENT, CLAUDE

1 September 1533, witnessed the resignation from Wolsingham by Keye and the collation to it of William Layton (TR, p. 57).

1 September 1538, chaplain at Farnacres, Whickham (Ibid., p. 72).

1548, Chaplain of Sts. John the Baptist and the Evangelist at Farnacres, Whickham, 50 years of age (SS 22, Appendix, p. 72).

Prebend of the collegiate church of Chester-le-Street, 1535-48; received a pension of 4.00.00 at the dissolution; collated to the rectory of Longnewton in 1556 and resigned the same for the rectory of Whickham

RENT, CLAUDE, cont.

in 1558; died at Whickham in 1575  
(Forster, p. 191; TR, pp. 106, 120).

REYDE, WILLIAM

5 June 1513, collated to the chantry of  
St. James and St. Andrew on the new  
bridge in Durham (DPK: PReg. V, f. 146r.).

RICHARDSON, EDWARD

letters dimissory      December 1500  
deacon                      March 1501  
(FR, pp. 148, 152).

4 May 1508, witnessed "Jura'tu' . . .  
domini Willelmi Fabyan" (DPK: PReg. V,  
f. 98r.).

RICHARDSON, THOMAS

3 January 1531, dead by this date:  
"Executor testi Thom. Richardson cap'ni  
contra Johannem Roteman", continued on  
3 February 1531 (DSR: CCAB, ff. 14b v.,  
16r.).

RIPON, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Eggescliffe (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 155v.).

1 April 1502, witnessed the will of William  
Astley, gen., de Aislabie (SS 22, Appendix,  
p. 38).

18 December 1531, dead by this date, men-  
tioned in the presentation to Middleton-St.-  
George, bordering Eggescliffe (TR, pp. 12-13).

ROBYNSON, JOHN

21 January 1496-7      letters dimissory  
(FR, p. 45).

8 May 1526, described as the last chap-  
lain of the chantry of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary in St. Oswald's church, he had  
resigned by this date (DPK: PReg. V,  
f. 211r.).

ROBINSON, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of  
Darlington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

SANDERSON, JOHN

1535, Chantry-chapel or gild of Houghton, the Holy Trinity, Houghton-le-Spring (Valor V, p. 325).

1548, Gild in the parish of Houghton, 52 years of age (SS 22, Appendix, p. 71).

SANDERSON, THOMAS

7/11 August 1530, grant of the chantry of Barnardcastell in the castle of Barnard-castell, in the bishopric of Durham (PRO: C 66/657).

21 September 1532          deacon

21 December 1532         priest

(TR, pp. 28, 42).

21 September 1533, occurs as the chaplain of Winston (Ibid., p. 55).

1535, Chantry of the Twelve Apostles in the Castle Chapel, Barnard Castle, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 321).

1548, Chantry of the Twelve Apostles, Barnard Castle, Gainford, having the same by the King's letters patent for the term of his life (SS 22, Appendix, p. 67).

SAUNDER, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Stanhope (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154r.).

SCOTT, WILLIAM

30 May 1532, sequestration of the revenues of the prebends at Auckland addressed to "Magistro Ricardo Bellyses, armigero, et Domino Willelmo Stotte, capellano, curato ecclesie collegiate de Awkelande" (TR, p. 18).

1535, Chantry of St. John the Baptist, St. Andrew Auckland (Valor, V, p. 320).

1548, Chantry of St. John the Baptist, Auckland, 60 years of age (SS 22, Appendix, p. 64).

SEGGEFELD, ROBERT

17 April 1455, "Imponitur sibi quod fornicatus est et carnaliter cognovit Margaretam Bell sororem Thomae Cornforth. Fatetur, et habet pro commisso quod in die Veneris stet ad fontem baptismalem, in capella

- SEGGEFELD, ROBERT, cont.
- sanctae Margaretae, nudus caput, et legendo super psalterium tempore majoris missae, et quod, in die dominica, tempore altae missae, veniat per chorum ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelmensis, offerendo cereum summo altari, et 6 s. 8 d. feretro Sancti Cuthberti; et quod absteineat a peccato et loco suspecto sub poena 40 s. et suspensionis per quarterium anni . . ." (SS 21, pp. 35-36).
- 7 December 1498, dead by this date, had been chantry priest at the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Oswald's church (DPK: PReg. V, f. 45v.).
- SHADLOK, THOMAS
- Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- SHELTON, RICHARD
- Dominus, 1501, Houghton-le-Spring (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).
- SHEPERDSON, JOHN
- Dominus, 1501, Houghton-le-Spring (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).
- SHIPMAN, ROBERT
- Dominus, 1501, Aycliffe (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).
- 30 August 1507, in the will of Thomas Robinson, "hiis testibus Roberto Shypman curato" (DPK: Loc. 37, no. 10).
- SHOTTON, RICHARD
- 14 January 1494, collated to the chantry of Harington (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 34v.).
- SHYNKELEY, RICHARD
- Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).
- SHYNKELEY, ROBERT
- Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).
- SKYRRO, ROBERT
- 1535, chaplain in Staindrop Church (SS 139, p. 119).
- 1541, vicar there until his death in 1556 (Forster, p. 188; TR, p. 77).

SMYTHE, JOHN

1480s-1490s, proceeding through orders  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 23, passim).

14 March 1495                      deacon  
(Emden, vol. 3, p. 1717). Same man as  
the following?

Dominus, 1501, Gainford (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 155r.).

4 June 1531, dead by this date, described  
as the last incumbent of the perpetual  
chantry in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin  
Mary of Barnard Castle (TR, p. 31).

SMITH, LANCELOT

One of the "clerici jurati" (DSR:  
CCAB, f. 73v.).

1535, Chantry of St. James, St. Nicholas,  
Durham, Chantry-chapel of St. James and St.  
Andrew on Elvet Bridge, St. Nicholas,  
Durham (Valor, V, pp. 524-525.).

SMYTH, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham,  
"non comparuit ideo suspensus est"  
(Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

SMYTH, THOMAS

2 March 1496-7, acolyte, letters dimissory  
(FR, p. 46).

Dominus, 1501, Brancepeth (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 149r.).

SPENCER, HENRY

Dominus, 1501, Stranton (Borth. I.H.R.:  
AR 25, f. 150v.).

SPRAGAYNE, ROBERT

22 January 1503, presented to the Chapel  
at Hilton Castle by William, lord of  
Hilton (DPK: PReg. V, ff. 75v-76r.).

1508, resigned from the Blessed Virgin  
Mary at Hilton (Ibid., f. 97v.).

1508, by exchange with William Fabyane,  
rector of Edmondbyers; occurs 1535  
(SS 139, p. 121; Valor, V, p. 314).

STEVENSON, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

STEVENSON, JOHN

29 March 1533, ordained priest (TR, p. 45).

24 April 1535, "Johannes Stevinson cap'nus contra Willelmm Johnson" (DSR: CCAB, f. 71r.).

1541, in the will of Robert Hotham of Etton, Yorkshire, East Riding, "Sir John Stevenson, my priest"  
1562-1578, vicar of Hesledon (Forster, p. 200).

25 December 1560, witnessed the will of James Raughton of Shincliffe as "John Stevenson curat" (DSR: PR I, f. 4v.).

1563, in the will of Dorothy Trollop of Thornley, "Sir John Stephenson curate" (Forster, p. 200).

STEVENSON, THOMAS

27 April 1531, presented to the chapel of Hilton (DPK: PReg. V, f. 241v.).

1535, Chantry-chapel of Hilton, Monk Wearmouth (Valor, V, p. 323).

1548, Chantry within the Chapel of Hilton, Monk Wearmouth, aged 53 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 71).

STEPHENSON, WILLIAM

4 June 1531, instituted as chantry priest at Gainford vpm Smythe, the patron William Fulthorpe, vicar of Gainford, for this turn, as the nominee of the burgesses and commons of Barnard Castle (TR, pp. 31-32).

1535, Chantry of the Virgin, Barnard Castle, Gainford (Valor, V, p. 321).

1548, Chantry of Our Lady, Barnard Castle, Gainford, aged 60 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 66).

- STEPHENSON, WILLIAM, cont. 28 January 1561, William Stevinson, STB, instituted to a canonry and the ninth prebend of Durham, vpr Horton, the patron Queen Elizabeth (Sede Vacante Register, SS 161, p. 136).
- 1562, instituted to the vicarage of Gainford; 1569, to the vicarage of Hartburn; 1575, both vacant (Forster, p. 201; Pilkington's Register, pp. 144, 168).
- 29 September 1575, dead by this date, see collation of Richard Stanclif to Hartburn (Pilkington's Register, p. 176).
- STOWE, RICHARD Dominus, 1501, Houghton-le-Spring (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v).
- 28 September 1504, collated to the chapel of Muggleswick (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 150v.).
- SWALWELL, RALPH 3 November 1531, "Radulphus Swalwell cap'nus contra Robertum Kirkham parochie de Cestria: in causa subtracc' decimi/Dominus decret pro parte Act/" (DSR: CCAB, f. 9r.).
- 1535, rector "ecclesie de Wytton iuxta Bearpark" (Valor, V, p. 314).
- SWALWELL, RICHARD 1535, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Nicholas, Durham (Valor, V, p. 323).
- 3 January 1541, instituted by the vicar-general to the vicarage of Bywell St. Peter vpm Foster (TR, p. 76).
- SWALWELL, WILLIAM 21 June 1507, collated to the chantries of St. James and St. Andrew on the new bridge in Durham vpm Watson (DPK: PReg. V, f. 83r.).
- SYMSON, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, collegiate church of Darlington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).
- TADCASTELL, JOHN Dominus, 1501, St. Margaret's, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

TAILBOYS, HENRY

March 1499-1500, letters dimissory, in art. bac. (FR, p. 127).

28 April 1513, collated to the chantry of Detynsale - Dinsdale (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 194v.).

September 1515, dead by this date, see the collation of Thomas Cavert to the same (Ibid., f. 202r.).

TAILYOR, JOHN

29 May 1512, left the chantry of the Blessed Virgin in St. Nicholas, Durham (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 192v.).

TEMPILL, RICHARD

October 1505, by this date dead, see the collation of Forest to the Chapel of Witton iuxta Bearpark (DPK: SPReg. V, f. 149v.).

THOMPSON, GEORGE

1528, appeared in the commission to induct William Whitehead to the vicarage of Pittington (DPK: PReg. V, f. 227r.).

21 July 1532, "Alicia Elwood contra Georgium Thompson cap'num Bolden"

22 March 1532, "Georgius Thompson cap'nus contra Willelmm Thompson"

29 May 1535, "Georgius Thompson cap'nus contra Johannem Mathewe paroch' de Est Boldon" (DSR: CCAB, ff. 29r., 52r., 73r.).

1541, in the will of Richard Towgall, chantry priest at Gateshead, to "S'r George Tomson . . . a pr of beyds of white boyne" (DSR: Orig. Will).

1563, at Simondburn, curate to Nicholas Hertburn; will dated 6 October 1567, "Sir George Thompson, curate of Medomsley" (Forster, p. 201).

THOMSON, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Hurworth (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 155r.).

THOMPSON, JOHN

16 May 1515, collated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pittington (DPK: PReg. V, f. 160r.).

THOMPSON, JOHN, cont.

1 October 1528, mentioned in the commission to induct Whitehead to the vicarage of Pittington (DPK: PReg. V, f. 227r.).

16 March 1531, "           Crawfte contra Johannem Thomson cap'num: in causa lescionis fidei"

22 November 1532, "Thomas Chambre contra Johannem Thompson cap'm"

18 January 1532, "Georgius Heddon contra Johannem Thompson cap'm" (DSR: CCAB, ff. 20v., 37v., 40r.).

3 March 1532, by this date had resigned Pittington (DPK: PReg. V, f. 249r.).

14 June 1533, "Johannes Atkinson contra Johannem Thompson clericus" (DSR: CCAB, f. 54v.).

THOMPSON, THOMAS

subdeacon  
priest

11 March 1496-7  
30 March 1499 on a  
title from Gretham, B.A.

(FR, pp. 48, 85).

Dominus, 1501, Darlington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

THOMPSON, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

TOD, NICHOLAS

Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).

TODD, RALPH

B.A. Oxon. 1519 LL.B. 1537-1554, vicar of Hart; 1554-69, vicar of Hartburn, died 1569; 1558, commissioner for the bishop (Forster, p. 201).

1535, Chantry of the Virgin and St. Cuthbert, Durham Cathedral and Precincts (Valor, V, p. 324).

Numerous appearances as proctor in the Consistory Court (DSR: CCAB, passim).

TODD, RALPH, cont.

21 July 1537, instituted to the vicarage of Hart by the vicar general vpm Wilson; 6 June 1546, collated to the vicarage of Woodhorn vpm Burton; 5 September 1558, commissioner for the bishop in a certificate concerning a vacancy in the vicarage of Alston; 1 April 1569, dead by this date, see the collation of Stevenson to Hartburn (TR, pp. 70, 87, 117, 168).

TODD, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Houghton-le-Spring (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149v.).

1535, Gild or Chantry of the Virgin, Houghton-le-Spring (Valor, V, p. 325).

TODDY, THOMAS

27 September 1500, described as the last chaplain of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Galilee Chapel of Durham Cathedral, resigned (FR, p. 140).

TOLLOK, JOHN

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

TORNER, GILES

first tonsure                      20 December 1533  
(TR, p. 54).

20 October 1534, dead by this date, described as the last chaplain of a chantry in Durham Castle in the collation of Blenkinsopp to the same (Ibid., p. 59).

TURNER, RICHARD

1535, Chantry of St. Thomas, Sedgefield; Chantry-chapel in Bradbury, Sedgefield (Valor, V, p. 321).

1548, Robertus Turner, Chantry of St. Thomas, Sedgefield, aged 70 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 63); the last incumbent of this chantry, he received a pension of 4.00.00 at the dissolution, paid in 1553 (D. & C. Lib.: Allan Mss., vol. 14, "Sedgefield").

TURPYNE, JOHN

1496-7, collated to the Chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Gateshead, vpm Bettis (FR, p. 46).

1501, Dominus, Gateshead, "Dicunt parochiani predicti quod Dominus Johannes Turpyn capellanus cantarie b'te marie virginis in ecclesia paroch' ibidem non reparat domos et edificia cantarie sue . . . et dicunt quod non observat ordinacoem eiusdem interessendo divinis in ecclesia ut tenetur". Turpyn answered that the dilapidations had not taken place during his incumbency. (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, ff. 150r, 151r.).

TURY, THOMAS

Dominus, 1501, Sedgfield (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

TYNDALE, JOHN

1515, littera fraternitatis (DPK: PReg. V, f. 159r.).

15 April 1520, presented to Kimblesworth vpm Blunt (Ibid., f. 190r.).

5 November 1526, dead (Ibid., f. 213v.).

TYPING, JOHN

8 July 1499, dead by this date, the last chaplain of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Andrew's, Auckland (FR, pp. 90-91).

WAKEFIELD, HUGO

Dominus, 1501, St. Margaret's, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

WAKEFIELD, RICHARD

9 November 1532, "Dominus Ricardus Wakefield cap'nus contra henricum pierson" (DSR: CCAB, f. 34r.).

WAKERFYLD, JOHN

8 March 1513, grant of the perpetual chantry of Barnardcastell, vpm William Tesedell (PRO: C 66/619).

WALKER, RICHARD

1494, collated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas, Durham (DPK: PReg. V, f. 30v.).

- WALKER, RICHARD, cont. Dominus, 1501, Chantry of Our Lady, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).
- WARDON, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Fishburn, Sedgefield (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- WATERFORD, CHRISTOPHER 1535, Chantry of the Sts. John the Baptist and Evangelist, St. Oswald's, Durham (Valor, V, p. 324).
- WATSON, GEORGE 1535, Chantry of the Virgin, Conniscliffe (Valor, V, p. 320).
- WATSON, WILLIAM Dominus, 1501, St. Nicholas, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 148v.).  
21 June 1507, dead by this date, had formerly served at the chantries of the Sts. James and Andrew on the new bridge in Durham (DPK: PReg. V, f. 83r.).
- WHITE, JOHN Dominus, 1501, Brancepeth (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).
- WHITE, THOMAS Dominus, 1501, St. Giles, Durham (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).  
1501, witnessed the will of William Coltman of Durham (Ibid., f. 159r.; SS 22, Appendix, p. 39).  
17 May 1544, grant of the right of next presentation of Dalton-le-Dale given by the Dean and Chapter on the next vacancy to Thomas White, chaplain, George Fletcher of Newcastle, and Thomas Hogeson of Durham, yeoman, jointly and severally, and their assigns (TR, p. 108).
- WHITEHEAD, ROBERT 6 June 1521, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Oswald's church, vpm Elyson (DPK: PReg. V, f. 192r.).  
12 February 1527, presented to Hesledon, until 1560 (Ibid., f. 220r.; Forster, p. 202).

WIGHTMAN, WILLIAM

20 June 1491, collated to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Darlington (DPK: SPReg. IV, f. 21v.).

Dominus, 1501, Chantry of St. James, Darlington (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 154v.).

WILLY, ROGER

1535-1541, Chantry-chapel of St. Nicholas, Ferryhill, Merrington (Wilson, p. 755).

1548, Gild of St. Anne in the Chapel of St. Anne, Auckland, aged 50 years (SS 22, Appendix, p. 64).

12 April 1558, witnessed the will of Margery Tunstall, widow, of St. Andrew Auckland (DSR: Orig. Will).

WILSON, JOHN

appeared in the Consistory, 28 January 1531, 12 October 1532 (DSR: CCAB, ff. 15r., 32r.).

1541-1561, vicar of Castle Eden until his death, patron Henry VIII (Forster, p. 202; TR, p. 77).

WILSON, ROLAND

Dominus, 1501, Chester-le-Street (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150v.).

WILSON, THOMAS

3 November 1531, "Thomas Wilson cap'nus contra Ricardum Henryson parochie de Hesildon" (DSR: CCAB, f. 9r.).

WYLKINSON, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Hesledon (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

WRIGHT, ROBERT

Dominus, 1501, Medomsley (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 149r.).

WRIGHT, THOMAS

1535, Chantry of the Virgin and St. Katherine, Houghton-le-Spring (Valor, V, p. 325).

1545, an overseer of the will of Alexander Robinson of Elton (DSR: Orig. Will).

WRIGHT, THOMAS, cont.

1560, mentioned in the will of Anthony Farell, priest vicar of Dalton-le-Dale (DSR: PR II, ff. 299v-301\*).

29 April 1567, instituted to the rectory of Elton vpm Sayer; same man: 8 August 1570, collation of Thomas Wright, M.A., to the vicarage of Sockburn vpm Robert Pereson; dead by 15 March 1572, see the collation of Blaxton to Elton and 21 April 1572, the collation of Trollop to Sockburn (Pilkington's Register, pp. 165, 169, 171).

WRIGHT, WILLIAM

Dominus, 1501, Hartlepool, Hart (Borth. I.H.R.: AR 25, f. 150r.).

YONGER, JOHN

4 April 1507, in the will of William Atkinson, "ballivi de Sowshelez," Durham, he received 4 s. and served as a witness (DPK: Loc. 37, no. 8).

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Prior's Register V, 1486-1538

Locelli 10, 14, 18, 19, 28, 29, 37

Department of Palaeography, South Road

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DR I. 2. Register of Cuthbert Tunstall 1530-1559

DR III. 1. Consistory Court Act Book July 1531-October 1538

DR. V. 1. Consistory Court Deposition Book: Undated fragments, sixteenth century

DR. XVIII. 1 Book of Royal Charters etc., to the See of Durham, especially Part D, List of all the livings etc., in the diocese, with values and names of patrons, apparently relating to a period about the reign of Edward VI.

PR Original Wills to 1560

PR I. Probate Register I

PR II. Probate Register II

PR III. Probate Register III

PR V. Probate Register V

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 C 66            Patent Rolls  
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## Archiepiscopal Registers

|        |                        |           |
|--------|------------------------|-----------|
| No. 23 | Thomas Rotheram        | 1480-1500 |
| 25     | Thomas Savage          | 1501-1507 |
| 26     | Christopher Bainbridge | 1508-1514 |
|        | <u>sede vacante</u>    | 1514      |
| 27     | Thomas Wolsey          | 1515-1530 |
| 28     | Edward Lee             | 1531-1544 |

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