

Political Mysticism: Augustine Baker, the spiritual formation of missionaries and the Catholic Reformation in England

Abstract

Augustine Baker, the seventeenth-century Benedictine monk, is primarily remembered as an advocate of mystical spiritual contemplation. This reputation was shaped by a contemporary supporter, whose synopsis of Baker's works is the source most commonly consulted by historians. However, by reading Baker's complete 'Treatise of the English Mission' and recontextualizing this manuscript, it is evident that he was addressing problems of his day. His Treatise is a polemical response to debates about the implementation of the Catholic Reformation in England, Baker advocating a vision of clerical formation and personal spiritual reformation for all those active in the English Catholic mission.

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Augustine Baker, the seventeenth-century English Benedictine monk, is primarily recognized by modern scholars as an advocate of a particular form of contemplative spirituality that earned him a place in the canon of English mystical writing.¹ Such a characterization was cultivated by another seventeenth-century monk, Serenus Cressy, who produced an overview of Baker's writings with the purpose of promoting his spirituality. This streamlined, decontextualized synopsis of Baker's work is what is usually consulted by scholars of the early modern period. Moreover, Baker's writings are often considered in isolation, as works of mysticism with little mention of the wider context. However, there is a need to re-examine Baker's own words, in an attempt to discover why he wrote particular texts at certain times and who was his intended audience. Baker's manuscript 'Treatise of the English Mission' has been largely neglected as it does not feature by name in Cressy's digest. Yet, by recontextualizing this text, it is possible to unearth Baker the polemical mystic. In this Treatise, he addressed not only the English Benedictines, but also the English Catholic mission in general. His primary focus may appear to be monastic observance and the cultivation of personal spiritual contemplation, but, by reappraising Baker's work, it becomes apparent that he was addressing live issues within the Catholic Reformation. Penned in the wake of fierce English Catholic debates about how the community should understand itself in relation to a supra-national Church and a home nation that legislated against them, Baker's Treatise is a theological response to the fallout of these disagreements, known to modern scholars as the Approbation Affair. Baker's Treatise is a mercilessly unremitting dissection of the inadequacy of the spiritual formation being offered to, in the first instance, monastic missionaries, but, more widely, to all clergy embarking on the English Mission. In this context, Baker is addressing the whole English Catholic missionary

enterprise, insisting on the relationship between the proper formation of missionaries and the need for personal spiritual reformation. By recovering the national and international, as well as the spiritual and religio-political context, Baker's Treatise becomes a hitherto neglected voice amongst those implementing the Catholic Reformation.

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David Baker was born to a religiously conforming family in Abergavenny in Monmouthshire in 1575. His father was William Baker, receiver-general of the barony of Abergavenny and recorder of the borough. His mother was Maud Lewis, daughter of a local minister and sister to David Lewis, judge of the admiralty.² Baker was educated at the University of Oxford, where, by his own judgement, he fell into a dissolute lifestyle, after which he undertook legal training at the Middle Temple, before following his father as recorder of Abergavenny. It was while carrying out his duties in this role that Baker believed himself miraculously saved from drowning. It prompted a religious awakening in him and, by his own account, he subsequently read himself into the Catholic faith, to which he was reconciled in 1603. Discerning a religious vocation, he travelled to London, from where he was escorted by two English Benedictine monks of the Cassinese Congregation to St Justina's monastery in Padua. Adopting the name Augustine, Baker took the habit in 1605. However, a combination of factors caused him to return to England: physically, his health began to fail, while spiritually, he found the Ignatian methods of prayer practised at the monastery difficult to access. On one level at least his return to England was providential; Baker reconciled his father to Catholicism before his death in 1606. In 1607, Baker was professed to the Cassinese Congregation in London. Shortly after, he was aggregated to the Westminster Congregation, which had been revived that same year by two members of the Cassinese Congregation who had tracked down Sigebert Buckley, the

last surviving monk of Westminster Abbey, and so claimed descent from the pre-Reformation monastic community. Baker then lived on the mission, most notably at Cook Hall, Worcestershire, home of Sir Nicholas Fortescue. He was ordained a priest at Rheims in 1613 and eagerly signed-up to the union of English Benedictines from different congregations (Westminster, Cassinese and Spanish) in 1619 when the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) was formed. Indeed, Baker was involved in producing *Apostalatus Benedictinorum in Anglia*,³ a defence of the EBC against those English monks who rejected it. From 1624, Baker was spiritual director to the English Benedictine nuns at Cambrai in France. It was here that Baker's reputation as a mystical writer grew, though it provoked some controversy and a spat with the chaplain, Francis Hull, who viewed Baker's methods of contemplation as too freewheeling and dangerously close to promoting illuminism. Although the monk-president of the EBC cleared Baker, he was removed from his post (as was Hull) and took up residence with the English Benedictine community of St Gregory's in Douai in 1633, where Rudesind Barlow, who had supported him unflinchingly in the dispute, was prior.

It was in Douai that Baker wrote his two-part 'Treatise of the English Mission'⁴ in 1635–1636. Baker's rather confusingly titled 'An Introduction or Preparative to a Treatise of the English Benedictine Mission'⁵ was actually written three years later, in 1638. However, its intent was different from the Treatise, as it was designed as a response to those he believed had wrongly co-opted his Treatise for other purposes. For that reason, its content is not considered in this article. Nevertheless, as will be explained, it was this latter missive that led to Baker's subsequent expulsion from the monastery, he once again clashing with his confreres, especially the prior, Barlow. Feeling his age, a reluctant Baker was ordered on the English mission in 1638. He was based near the Inns of Court in London, where he died in his sixty-sixth year on 9 August 1641. He was buried in St Andrew's churchyard, Holborn.

Baker's 'Treatise of the English Mission' has only received fleeting attention from scholars. It appears to have been treated as a minor act, not part of Baker's wider mystical canon that had two streams: his writings on the inner life of prayer, and his saving and promotion of pre-Reformation English mystical texts,⁶ transcribed and presented for a new Catholic Reformation audience. Where the Treatise has been considered, it has been as a piece of history-writing, whether highlighting Baker's comparison of the seventeenth-century English mission to that of St Augustine of Canterbury in the sixth century, or his short narrative history of the English Benedictine mission,⁷ which is only a tiny portion of the Treatise, despite its title. The reason for this apparent neglect of the Treatise is the decontextualizing, abridged overview of Baker's work produced within a decade of his death: Serenus Cressy's *Sancta Sofia*. Summarized at the end of Cressy's synopsis of Baker's guide to the contemplative life, 'the nature and end therof; and generall disposition required therto,'⁸ the Treatise, though not explicitly named, is condensed to just over seven pages as an explanation of the religious state. Although Cressy briefly acknowledges that there can be, although rarely, a true impulse from God for a monastic to enter the missionary life in England, he presents Baker's Treatise in the context of his other works on mysticism, with one eye on winning English Benedictine and wider church approval for Baker's approach to spirituality. Here, the Treatise is bowdlerized, the garrulous, undisciplined writing style of Baker sheened to digestibility, no mention made of any specific examples used by Baker apart from his allusions to the first monastic mission that secured the conversion of England. Cressy's digest makes the Treatise a purely spiritual work, part of his efforts to highlight and further Baker's mystical approach to prayer. Here, the purpose of the Treatise is solely to urge monks to avoid the mission, condemning those wishing to enter it as motivated by their own spiritual tepidity. The only solution, therefore, is to remain in the cloister and pray, even on the mission.⁹ This is the mystical, detached Baker that has been passed down through the centuries. Scholars frequently refer to Cressy's digest rather than to

the original writings, despite David Lunn's warning of the dangers of relying on Cressy's text as an accurate rendering.¹⁰

Cressy's *Sancta Sophia* is willing to admit one aspect of the Treatise; namely, Baker's concerns about the very notion of missionary monks. Yet, in addition to editing out Baker's irascible side, Cressy also completely decontextualizes Baker, presenting him as a mystic not just for all seasons but for all times. This leaves Baker a very contained, nationally insular figure, untouched by the different religious, philosophical and political movements ebbing and flowing through the period of long Reformation. In order to understand even Baker's attitudes to the monastic life, his thinking must be placed into its proper context. On one level, the Treatise is Baker's entrée into a debate within the Benedictine Order on its role within the wider Catholic Reformation. Focussing on the primacy of monastic observance, the fundamental importance of contemplation within the cloister, plus the dangers of the secular world and its distractions, the Treatise was a contribution to ongoing reform movements within the Benedictine Order.¹¹ However, what Cressy completely obscures is that Baker was in fact addressing a much wider audience than just his Benedictine confreres. The context in which Baker was writing impinged upon what Cressy presented as a purely spiritual – maybe even mystical – discourse. In the Treatise, Baker highlights temptations around status and material wealth faced by missionary monks, factors bound up in the very conditions of the English missionary experience. For example, he warns that some missionary monks are motivated to seek the missionary life by false urges, so will hold little commitment to their profession in England except for fear of losing benefactors.¹² For Baker, some monks yearn for the mission for corrupt reasons, including 'the gatheringe of ritches, some to corporall pleasures, others to honours & dignities'.¹³ He fulminates that it is 'a most pestilent or diabolically humour' for a missionary to build up private funds for himself 'as one in Mission is apt to do'.¹⁴

These examples are not plucked at random from Baker's imagination but represent the experience of the English Catholic community and issues that bubbled to the surface during the Approbation Affair, which was reaching its final, extended wheeze at the time Baker was writing. Loosely-speaking, the Approbation Affair was about the right of Bishop Richard Smith to allow clergy on the English Mission to hear confessions and reconcile accordingly, yet disagreements about this very specific issue of where authority was vested soon engulfed the whole English Catholic community. It thus became a religious dispute played out in the public sphere, touching on matters involving the state and the established church, not to mention issues surrounding the relationship between English Catholics and the state, as well as the consequences of unofficial religious pluralism in a supposedly confessionalised country. Yet perhaps most important for this article was that the Approbation Affair quickly became an acrimonious debate about the implementation of the Catholic Reformation in England.¹⁵ Baker wrote the Treatise during the fallout of the Approbation Affair and it is against this backdrop that the Treatise must be read. He considers a number of the issues that were prominent in this disagreement and ultimately addresses not only Benedictine involvement in the English mission but that of all the clergy. Baker went so far as to trace the root cause of the dispute to poor spiritual formation in the exile colleges. The English Benedictines had been heavily involved in manoeuvrings in the Approbation Affair, particularly in its early stages. Though it would continue long after, in reality to the death of Smith in 1655, it was in 1635 that the secular clergy and the Benedictines (amongst others) signed an agreement or official truce,¹⁶ notably at the very time that Baker's Treatise appeared. With the fire dimmed, he could now enter the fray with his thoughts on how to remedy the situation, concluding that inappropriate, even poor, spiritual formation was the root cause.

Assessing the English Mission up to the point of his writing, Baker judges it a failure. He points out that members of the nobility and gentry who were Catholic when the first

missionaries arrived in the 1570s had since apostatized or become impoverished by the financial demands placed upon them by both anti-recusancy laws and the costs of supporting the mission. Baker sees ‘decay [...] in vertuousness of lives both in the lay Catholikes there, & in y^e missioners themselves, almost ever since the same Mission first beganne’. He relates that the first missioners were secular clergy followed by Jesuits, all acting with one spirit and one heart, ‘resemblinge much the state of the primitive Church discribed in the Acts of y^e Apostles’. However, divisions broke out at the start of the seventeenth century in the Archpriest Controversy, with the secular clergy alleging that the pope’s creation of the ecclesiastical post was actually the result of a Jesuit plot to gain control over English Catholicism.¹⁷ To an external, if not internal, observer these divisions died down around the beginning of James I’s reign until the ‘revivall of y^e late & new great stirres’ between the secular and regular clergy over the appointment of a bishop; what modern scholarship terms the Approbation Affair. Baker concludes there ‘still remaineth the jelousnes betweene’ different Orders, resulting in dissent and discord. For Baker, proper formation and spiritual reform of the clergy is the answer to this malaise, as the clergy, not to mention their disputes, continue to repulse the people rather than inspire them. Attempting to look even-handed, Baker says it is not for him to question whether the missionaries lack the true apostolic spirit required but ‘till pastors themselves come to be rectified, what hope is there of y^e rectifieng of their flock’?¹⁸

In short, Baker views the Approbation Affair, the backdrop against which he wrote his Treatise, as scandalous, harmful to the mission and the result of poor spiritual formation. A divine mission must have divinely inspired missioners rather than those who seek their ‘own honour, temporall gaine, favours & freindships [sic] of men, & other such like humane ends’, Baker argues, adopting the polemical language employed by both sides in the Approbation Affair. The early missioners, he contends, inspired the laity with their simplicity ‘but have ever since more & more, & still dayly do, decay in such simplicity becomminge wily & crafty, &

notinge the drifts & selfe-seeking of our inordinate missioner better perhaps then himself doth, & what good, trow you, can such sheepe draw from such a pastour'? If the missioner is not internally reformed and divinely-inspired then all he achieves is 'vanity, falsity & hypocrisy; & they beinge but blind pastors & guides, how can they wth their industries cause but blind sheepe'? Indeed, it can lead to even worse, creating 'a most perillous connivency' between priest and people, 'each clawinge, flatteringe, & pleasinge the other, & nether intendinge to please God, nor their soules good, but soothinge one another for selfe-ends', leading both to Hell.¹⁹ This is the language of the reams of letters, reports and texts produced by various factions during the Approbation Affair, but, rather than taking sides, Baker concentrates on the harm it is doing to the Catholic cause, both by scandalizing the laity, but also drawing them into these battles as well.²⁰ It is little wonder that Baker urges monks to remain in their cloister or, if on the Mission, return to their monastery as soon as possible, 'as to an haven of tranquillity, avoydinge the broyles & sturres that are in the State of the Mission, both between the missioners themselves, as between seculers & regulers, or between one Order & another, as allso avoydinge thereby other manifold confusions in soule, inconveniences & mischeefes or perils'.²¹

It is to the 'broyles & sturres' of the Approbation Affair that Baker continually alludes. For example, a recurring gripe is that there are too many clergy in England, a familiar refrain of the Approbation Affair. Accusations flew between different clerical factions that their opponents were hoovering up scarce resources as the Mission became a stockpiling exercise rather than a spiritual endeavour. In Baker's hands, this becomes a stick to beat both the Mission in general and, more specifically, as justification for why Benedictines should be reluctant to join the English mission. Simply, Baker argues there is no need for Benedictine involvement as England has enough missioners. He mockingly compares the monk who is concerned that there are too few missioners in England to one who thinks a vow of chastity

means there will not be enough children in the world. In reality, missionaries go ‘so fast & are so thicke in England, that there is scarsly harbour & maintenance for them there, w^{ch} is a cause of great inconveniences & mischeefes’ to the Catholic cause in general and missionaries themselves.²² Besides, Baker judges that the mission is now primarily about the ‘ministration of the sacraments, for w^{ch} doinge there is store of others y^t can do it as well, yea & likely better than I’. For a monk to enter the mission is therefore merely to place further strain on lay Catholic resources: ‘there beinge missioners enough in England besides him, & those worthy ones, as he ought to esteeme them to be, & there beinge no need of him, & he therefore superfluously chardginge the poore Catholicks for his mainteanance, doth thereby wthall the more straighten or hinder the convenient mainteanance of those other worthy missioners’.²³ Baker relates the story of one layman, favourable to the Catholic cause but not yet reconciled, who had already been obliged to bribe the pursuivants with £300 to avoid trouble: ‘this happeneth by occasion of comminge in & abidinge in as missioners farther than there is need, to unnecessary perill both to himselfe & to others; & therefore wthout necessity there should none goe in’.²⁴ Moreover, apart from the lack of a definite residence, something directly counter to a monk’s life of stability, it can also lead to jealousy as missioners start to covet others’ places of residence. Baker alleges this has already happened in England, individuals and clerical factions competing to attract benefactors as had been witnessed in ‘the great controversy that lately hath beene’, namely the Approbation Affair. Many lay Catholics can ill afford the financial burden so, Baker urges, missioners should return to their continental colleges and monasteries when they are no longer required. To summarize, Baker judges that, in England, there are too many missioners from all states of clerical life for too few Catholics, resulting in unreasonable strain on the resources of lay Catholics, which is only exacerbated by the effects of penal legislation. This over-supply ‘of such a multitude of them, w^{ch} yet needed not by much to be so great, is the cause of the foresaid emulations [the Approbation Affair],

every man or Order seeking to draw for temporall commodities to himself, as if that state of life were for such an end, & not for the conversion or good of soules'. Hammering home his point, Baker alleges that some see the Mission merely as a means of gathering money, a behaviour the Council of Trent explicitly legislated against.²⁵

Baker believes he has seen this money-grubbing attitude, an effect of the Approbation Affair, in some monk missionaries, judging 'the most vulgar or usuall amonge missionaries' being those who think they are there out of zeal but, in reality, wish to escape the rigours of monastic observance. This zeal soon dissipates, leaving the missionary monk focussed on 'gettinge of freinds [sic], estimation, & other temporall meanes, cominge ere it be longe to make his office of Mission to become indeed a meere trade or occupation for seculer ends'. This sort of missionary only cares for his flock's souls on condition of 'what may stand wth his owne private gaine, profit or honour'.²⁶ The 'gatheringe of ritches' becomes a corruption.²⁷ Moreover, not able to wear their habits, monks are forced to don secular clothing, which, for necessity, can be 'somewhat vaine or superfluous', leading to the danger of becoming more accustomed to secular affairs, delighting in the apparel, raising the funds to buy it, as well as securing a horse, a servant, and accommodation to go with the disguise, thus distracting the monk from the recollected life and impinging on his vow of poverty.²⁸ If a monk has not been properly formed in his monastery then how can he survive on the English mission, where he dresses in secular – even elegant – clothes, stays in inns, plays cards, engages in secular conversation, including with women, 'not allwaies of the most virtuous'?²⁹

Baker was not writing about the theoretical. During the Approbation Affair and the muck-sliding between different clerical factions, the behaviour of several missionary monks had been called into question, allegations that had at least concerned or even convinced the sometime president of the EBC, Rudesind Barlow. For example, Ambrose Barlow entered a lengthy dispute with the secular priest James Gaunt about the will of a lay Catholic in the latter half of

the 1620s, underlining Baker's concern about competition for financial resources.³⁰ Nicholas Fitzjames had allegedly become embroiled in demanding payment from a lay Catholic before a marriage could be contracted.³¹ David Codner was said to have grown too close to women in England, and had even been seen entering an attic room with one and there misbehaving with her.³² Bartholomew Roe was included on a Catholic list of 'scandalous' priests that alleged he was 'ill-formed because of his frequent drinking parties and gaming and the like'.³³ Gregory Gaire was accused of proclaiming that there was no need for a bishop in England to perform the sacrament of confirmation, as it had no bearing on a layperson's salvation.³⁴ By the summer of 1628, a frustrated Barlow was reportedly bewailing, 'that those monkes of theirs w^{ch} had remained 3 or 4 yeares in England coming over hither as banished or upon some other occasions were for the moste parte soe irregular and devoid of monasticall discipline, that he was enforced to send them back againe into England least theire example might hinder the observance of regular and monasticall discipline in the rest'.³⁵ The 1629 chapter of the EBC, in which Baker had taken part as a definator, discussed problems with some missionaries raised by the leader of the EBC's missionary southern province, Mark Crowther, decreeing that, if the monks 'would not mend after those charitable corrections they were to be cast out of y^e Congrⁿ as incorrigible people'.³⁶ The same chapter sought to halt potential scandals by improving the training of novices, making provision that monks could only be sent on the mission after nine years in the habit and not before they had reached the age of thirty. For good measure, they chastised the prior of St Laurence's, Dieuloard, Laurence Reyner, for ridding himself of disruptive monks by sending them on the mission.³⁷

The situation was further complicated by several monks refusing to recognize the authority of the EBC. In a covering letter to a report on the English Benedictines delivered to the chapter of the Spanish Congregation in February 1633, the president, Sigeburt Bagshaw, asked them to chase several recalcitrant monks on the mission. The five refused to obey the instruction to

return to their houses, Bagshaw urging the Spanish to at least get Alphonsus of St Gregory Hanson to return, as he hoped this may encourage the others to follow.³⁸ Bagshaw accused two of the monks of withholding ‘great sums of money’ from the EBC. Bagshaw and the English chapter had written previously about Justus Edner and ‘the monies which he keepeth left by Fa. Edward Ashe’, who died in 1629. The funds belonged to the English mission but Edner was accused of defrauding the southern missionary province and appropriating it for himself.³⁹ Placid Peto, alias Budd, withheld money that had belonged to John Norton and should have been passed on to St Gregory’s, Douai, after his death, the president seeking ‘the restitution of those monies’.⁴⁰ As if to prove Baker’s points in the Treatise, in 1637, the new EBC president Clement Reyner, in a report presented to the Spanish chapter by Benedict Smith, the English monks’ representative in Spain, affirmed that the situation was causing ‘discordias y diferencias’, resulting in ‘scandalo’.⁴¹ Although not cited case by specific case in his Treatise, Baker was clearly alluding to contemporary events of which others would have been keenly aware.⁴²

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It is against the events of the Approbation Affair that Baker’s intervention makes sense. His Treatise is a theological response to the Approbation Affair, underlining that the conflict was not simply a matter of clerical squabbling but about the implementation of the Catholic Reformation in England, a project that cut across political, philosophical and spiritual concerns. To avoid a repeat of the Approbation Affair, which he views as disastrous in terms of both public relations and missionary success, Baker highlights the need for personal, spiritual reformation as the solution. Apart from only supplying sufficient numbers of missionary clergy for the needs of England’s Catholics, to counter the more immediate, temporal concerns, Baker

states that any monk justifiably sent on the Mission must be healthy enough to use mortification as a means of evangelization and edification. For example, he should travel on foot rather than use a horse, survive on a meagre diet or what sustenance is available from the lower classes, wear poor attire, and observe the regular feasts of the Order as well as the Church.⁴³ Turning to more fundamental questions, Baker judges that if a monk has been properly formed, ‘the more Apostolicall spirit is in our missioner, the more he will affect to converse & exercise his function amonge the poorer & meaner sort’, for there is more spiritual benefit to be found there than amongst the dangers of the wealthy.⁴⁴ Equally, Baker judges it safer for the missioner’s soul to live with the poorer sort ‘because he shall more have his owne will, & refuse or undertake imployments as he pleases, then wth personadges who will expect that he shall do all that they will have him to do for them’.⁴⁵

This touches upon Baker’s wider solution for the problems of the English mission, a vision, as shall be argued, applicable to not only the Benedictines but all missionary clergy, and dealing with questions more lasting than just those surrounding the Approbation Affair. Baker advocates the proper formation of monks or those in contemplative orders for a missionary enterprise like that to England. Of primary importance is that the individual has perfected the practice of internal prayer or contemplation so that, whatever the missionary distractions, he can maintain ‘continuall contemplation’. If he is not properly formed then he will lose what skills he has already developed in this area, making ‘him a seculer though religiously professed’. As for those who were not well schooled in contemplation in the monastery but were still sent on the mission, Baker pithily declares ‘the mischeefe of such a case is very deplorable, & yet very frequent is such case, as is to be feared’, again bringing him back to contemporary events. Similarly, a monk poorly schooled in the virtues will lose them when on the mission so he should remain in the monastery, ‘the proper place for gaining of vertues, at least till a perfect habit gotten in them’.⁴⁶

Baker, though, takes a pessimistic view of the level of formation being offered to missionary monks. He believes it can take twenty to thirty years, or even one's whole life, in the monastery to reach the necessary stability in prayer and virtue to enter the English mission: 'What shall we then, but greatly feare or bewaile those y^t are but newly hatched out of their noviship' being sent?⁴⁷ Reminding his readers that the pope has not commanded the mission, only given permission that the superiors of the EBC can choose suitable monks to send if they discern a need, he once again stresses that any candidates must be accustomed with a stable, virtuous life and their souls need to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit if they are to affect the same in others.⁴⁸ Moreover, the monk must be given time to discern that it is the divine spirit encouraging him towards the mission.⁴⁹ If these things are not followed then, Baker fears, 'God knowes how some illumination had in monastery, not beinge there brought to perfection, will vanish away & come to nothinge beinge & livinge in the Mission, if he hath not the extraordinary grace'.⁵⁰ It is for this reason that Baker judges that the first two Cassinese-professed monks to enter the English mission – Thomas Preston and Anselm Beech – 'had some kind of advantage as to aptness for mission over those two that came from Spaine, and that was in the poynts & greater maturity in yeares of birth, antiquity in habit, and sufficiency' in philosophical learning and scholastic divinity.⁵¹

None of this means that Baker is inherently against Benedictine involvement in the apostolic mission, as Aveling has claimed.⁵² Indeed, he recognizes that contemplatives are the most apt for apostolic missionary endeavour because their life brings them to the required spiritual perfection. The problem is when they are sent before being properly formed, prompting the laity in England to wonder why the monks are trying to amend them when they should be in the cloister to amend themselves 'as is their profession & nature of their Order'. To such a charge against the Benedictines, Baker concludes, 'I do not see how they can be well answered

& confuted' apart from ensuring proper spiritual formation of any monk before he is sent on the Mission.⁵³

Again, looking to the wider ramifications of his arguments, Baker expresses his belief that the nation will not be converted till there are true missionaries 'zealous of the good of soules, & not of gatheringe money, or gettinge freinds [sic] or residences of honour & estimation'.⁵⁴ Although against Ignatian methods of prayer, Baker was not anti-Jesuit, as often assumed by historians,⁵⁵ and judged the Jesuits 'very proper & naturall for the Mission', certainly more so than claustrals, as they have provision for spiritual reflection during their apostolic endeavours. Nevertheless, he says that he knew one Jesuit who acted more like a reformed contemplative missionary during his time in London and at his host's country house. Baker knew the lay benefactor, who would complain that the Jesuit led a solitary life rather than giving counsel and conferring on matters. After two or three years, the Jesuit noticed that members of the household no longer came to see him so he determined to change his missionary approach. Soon, he 'became so imbroyled in businesses, that he was in jarres & contentions wth so many other missionaries, that I never heard of the like'. Baker concludes that this means to lead a spiritual life on the mission can lead to a loss of credit, showing not all are suitable for the mission and that it is highly dangerous to send spiritual novices.⁵⁶

Equally, Baker recognizes that the secular clergy have no choice but to return to England because of the missionary oath required of all those entering the exile colleges. This, he says, means that they have no place of retreat, even on the continent but, with no vow of obedience or poverty, they can traverse the perils of missionary life, the danger being 'nothinge but distraction of the soule'. He relates his conversation with an unnamed secular cleric on the mission, who viewed his ten years' labour in England as the opposite of his time at a college in Spain, recognizing he would never have such 'peace & quietnes of mind' again.⁵⁷ It is here that it becomes evident that Baker is speaking to a wider audience than just his Benedictine

confreres: Baker is judging the whole missionary enterprise to England. Finding it lacking, he offers his solution, namely spiritual reformation and proper formation. Nor was this plan being pushed on a merely theoretical plain: in fact, Baker himself was influencing and even spiritually directing a number of clerics destined for the English mission.

In his biography of Baker written c.1643, Leander Prichard, one of Baker's disciples and also his confessor, observes that Baker talked through his ideas with his friends at St Gregory's, Douai, where he was resident from 1633 to 1638.⁵⁸ In other words, Baker's Treatise cannot have been a shock to a number of monks, who had already been versed in his thinking. Moreover, Prichard records that people daily came to visit Baker for spiritual direction, not just monks but also children attending the school at St Gregory's. Further afield, those also seeking his spiritual direction included laymen and secular clerics from the English College at Douai. Among Baker's admirers were the president, Matthew Kellison, and the vice-president Edmund Lechmere (alias Stratford), as well as Franciscan friars from the English friary in Douai. Indeed, Prichard comments that some who visited from the English College had been sent by the priests there who had 'care of their souls'. The demand for Baker's guidance was so great that he would only see people for spiritual instruction from just after dinner till three o'clock in the afternoon. Even after he had penned the Treatise and in the latter years of his time at St Gregory's, 'the number of his disciples increased mightily', including Joseph Errington, who discussed a Benedictine vocation with Baker, and Francis Gascoigne, who died during his time at the school.⁵⁹ Two later seventeenth-century biographers, both Baker acolytes, Cressy and Peter Salvin (who, as a schoolboy at St Gregory's, had sought out Baker at Cambrai to discuss his vocation), attest to this wider influence, Cressy remarking that Kellison even wanted Baker to move to the English College at Douai when he was ejected from St Gregory's.⁶⁰ Therefore, Baker's teachings touched not only the vocations and lives of other Benedictine monks but also the wider exile missionary apparatus, including laypeople but also,

importantly in the context of the Treatise, other clergy destined for the English mission. With this knowledge, it is unrealistic to maintain that the Treatise was only for the ears of a few monks. Baker was the spiritual guide of a number of clergy destined for the English mission and the Treatise represents his pastoral approach to that endeavour, particularly in the light of the Approbation Affair.

The influence of Baker's thinking and Treatise is evident in the subsequent shape of the Mission. As the seventeenth century progressed, John Bossy judged that the English Benedictines took especially well to the role of private chaplain as the means to follow the meditative life, citing Baker's friend, Robert Haydock, as an example.⁶¹ But the impact was not only on monk missionaries; Baker's influence at the English College, Douai, was subsequently the topic of some controversy. In around 1653, the secular cleric, Francis Gascoigne, a confessor to the college and intermittently general prefect, penned 'An Apologie for myself about Fr. Baker's Doctrine', against those who criticized his teaching of Baker's methods to the students as 'quite contrary to our state and opposite to the vocation of missionaries'. However, he argues throughout that Baker's approach 'is truly proper and fitt for this Colledge of missionarie priests', underlining how Baker's teachings were at the very least seen as conducive to training and forming those destined for the life of a missionary.⁶² Furthermore, Gascoigne and his family show how Baker's influence cut across gender and clerical boundaries. Francis – whose two Benedictine brothers were Michael and John, the latter becoming abbot of Lamspringe, which he shaped in a Bakerite spirituality – was educated at St Gregory's, Douai and lived at Cambrai before entering the English College at Douai in October 1630. He was ordained a priest around 1636.⁶³ His two sisters, Catherine and Margaret, were members of the Benedictine convent at Cambrai where Baker had been spiritual director and both were greatly influenced by him; Baker himself wrote a life of Margaret, and Catherine, like her brother Francis, penned a missive in defence of Baker and his teachings.⁶⁴

This is a far cry from Justin McCann's naïve claim that Baker had 'no controversial purpose' in writing the *Treatise*,⁶⁵ which perpetuates the image of Baker the self-contained mystic cultivated by Cressy in the mid-seventeenth century. Rather, this is mysticism as polemic. Just as Bill Sheils has argued that although Thomas Stapleton's *Promptuaria* were sets of homilies, they were deliberately controversial in terms of spreading the Catholic Reformation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,⁶⁶ so Baker's *Treatise* does not represent mysticism in a void, despite Cressy's glossing. This growing recognition by scholars that pastoral theology or guides to devotion could also have a polemical intent underlines the importance of recontextualizing these works. For example, appreciating this explains why Robert Persons, SJ, reacted furiously when his great work of spiritual guidance, the *Christian Directory*, was appropriated by Edmund Bunny and filleted for a Protestant audience.⁶⁷ Why should Baker's works be any different?

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The controversy surrounding Baker's *Treatise* would have a long afterlife within the EBC, regularly giving rise to tensions in the delicate balancing act between the contemplative and apostolic missionary life at the heart of its charism. Nevertheless, Baker's writings were initially neglected. In the latter decades of the seventeenth century, his commitment to the contemplative life could be interpreted as quietism – a loose movement that rejected traditional religious practices, active acts of faith and discursive prayer in order to enter a passive state so that the soul could commune with God – which was condemned as heresy by Pope Innocent XI in 1687⁶⁸ and may explain why the *Treatise* was never printed. In the eighteenth century, his approach was seen as outmoded against a backdrop of increased missionary activity. The Baker perpetuated by Cressy, the mystic that attacked the monks' mission to England, was

never going to be popular in such an environment, particularly when coupled with suspicions that his views were disruptive to community life.⁶⁹ More widely, his mysticism was seen as irreconcilable with the rationalism of the dawning Enlightenment, to which a strong cohort of English Benedictines eagerly contributed.⁷⁰ However, following the French Revolution and the monks' flight to England, interest in Baker began to grow as the monastic houses became settled during the nineteenth century and the need for missionaries was perceived to reduce after the passing of Catholic emancipation in 1829. It was the female Benedictine communities that had kept Baker's teachings alive at the convents in Cambrai and Paris, which resettled at Stanbrook and Colwich. They heavily influenced the monastic revival in the male houses of the EBC, particularly as questions started, once again, to rise about whether the congregation's character should be monastic or missionary, and whether there was a 'Benedictine' approach to spirituality rather than the then-dominant Ignatian method. Chiming with an international movement towards monastic reform, such as that of Solesmes under Prosper Guéranger, by the 1870s, the new foundation of Belmont Abbey had gone Bakerist and was to have a strong influence on the abbey at Fort Augustus in Scotland, which was founded shortly afterwards and had no missionary aspect.⁷¹ Increasing numbers of monks were exposed to Baker's work and started to argue that the Benedictines were primarily contemplative. His 'Treatise of the English Mission', in particular, was deployed by the pro-contemplative faction in the 1880s, Alban Hood pithily observing, 'it was not so much Father Baker, the mystical writer, but Father Baker, the polemicist, who influenced the Congregation at this crucial stage in its history'.⁷²

Yet in all this, the context within which Baker wrote his Treatise was lost, much of its wider controversial content filleted out for future generations by Serenus Cressy in his attempt to promote Baker the mystic. The first context against which the Treatise must be read – and the one it is more often related to as it explains his expulsion from St Gregory's – is the conflict over what the English Benedictines represented, particularly after the passing of *Plantata* in

1633, the Roman document that fully revived the EBC. Baker's Treatise was pressed into this battle by Rudesind Barlow, who was losing patience with the missionary enterprise and favoured a strict monastic observance or primitive reform of the Benedictine Rule, prioritizing contemplative enclosure. Baker reacted with fury to this partisan use of his work; though he may have been presumed to favour the observant aspect of monasticism, he was repelled by the primitive reformers' emphasis on monastic life as external observance, feeling it detracted from the monk's true calling of spiritual contemplation. Thus, he fired off his 'An Introduction of Preparative to a Treatise of the English Benedictine Mission', the title being somewhat ironic as it came three years after he had penned the Treatise. In that time, the context had changed, Baker now notably adding the word 'Benedictine' to the title, showing the Introduction's different intent. In the text, Baker turned on Barlow, the man who had backed him throughout his monastic life, and assassinated Barlow's character in nameless yet obvious and pitiless fashion. Although Barlow assumed this was done for his private chastisement – and took it in good grace – this turned to cold anger when he realized Baker's missive was being circulated amongst the monastic community.⁷³ Though the ins and outs of this spat, which resulted in Baker's being sent on the mission, are beyond this article, it provides the first context in which Baker wrote the Treatise, namely as a vision of the true monk. Moreover, it shows that his texts were intended for circulation. It also explains why the original context and purpose of the Treatise has been lost, the furore provoked by the Introduction being transposed backwards in time and placed upon the original Treatise.

What does this tell us about mysticism more generally? There remains a historiographical tendency to see, on the one hand, the Protestant Reformation as a major breach with the medieval, mystical past, and, on the other, mysticism as continuing with minor mechanical adjustments after the Council of Trent. Yet the Baker outlined in this article more neatly fits the claim of Sara Poor and Nigel Smith that early modern mysticism was characterized by

continuity within transformation.⁷⁴ By viewing Baker this way, the Treatise becomes an entrée into discussions surrounding mysticism dating from the time of Augustine of Hippo: namely, the relationship between action and contemplation.⁷⁵ Similar to Meister Eckhart several centuries before or Ignatius of Loyola in the early modern period, Baker seeks a dynamic union between action and contemplation. This leads to the next point of importance for the history of mysticism more widely; namely, the historiographical reality that less scholarship has been carried out on mysticism in those countries that became officially Protestant after the Reformation, including England.⁷⁶ As such, Baker needs to be situated not just in his national context – as a continuum of English mysticism⁷⁷ – but as a Catholic Reformation writer, engaging with questions inherent to that movement. This becomes even more pointed when one considers the judgement of Poor and Smith that ‘one important theme of historical continuity is the relationship between mysticism and the concept of religious reform’ and political action.⁷⁸ Baker fits this description, though rather than a return to orthodoxy he instead embodies Catholic reform efforts and, ultimately, wants the reform of a whole nation. In this light, we can see the mystical tradition as it was adapted during the Catholic Reformation alive in England. Rather than something frozen in medieval aspic, this is the English mystical tradition more akin to that identified by Edward Howells in Spain during the Catholic Reformation, where the spirituality of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross was very much part of Catholic religious renewal and interior spiritual reform.⁷⁹ Put bluntly, Baker’s Treatise is an English intervention in the long-running tension between interior union and exterior reformation, usually viewed as pioneered by the mystics of Catholic Reformation Spain.⁸⁰ In turn, this explains why Knowles did not view Baker as heir to the English medieval mystics; though he judges Baker as not fully grasping some of the main principles of medieval mystical theology, he actually unknowingly provides the answer elsewhere, when he describes the Catholic Reformation as prioritising apologetical replies to opponents, concentrating upon ‘the

war against vice and ignorance’, through the development of ‘spiritual exercises, regular retreats, set meditations and methodical direction’, which Knowles sees embodied in the Jesuits.⁸¹ Yet this also explains what Baker is attempting in the *Treatise*: part of the Catholic Reformation, he recasts mystical theology as a missionary, polemical enterprise. This is England’s contribution to the remodelled mystical tradition of the Catholic Reformation.

The *Treatise* is also Baker’s response to what he viewed as the scorched earth of the English mission in the wake of the Approbation Affair. Far from being anti-Mission – not withstanding his qualms about the purpose of the monastic life – Baker is genuinely concerned about the spirituality of missionaries in England. He sees the neglect of their spirituality, and indeed its formation, as the root cause of the Approbation Affair, not to mention, ultimately, the Mission’s lack of success in converting the nation. Baker was not unique in his concern for the spiritual welfare of missionaries. Soon after their arrival in England in the sixteenth century, questions of appropriate behaviour on the mission were already vexing both the English Jesuits and the global Society of Jesus, issues around place of residence and secular attire causing much concern.⁸² Indeed, in the earlier years of the English Jesuit mission, Claudio Acquaviva, the Jesuit superior general, expressed his unease about accepting candidates in to the Society in England when they had not had the necessary spiritual formation.⁸³ Even Robert Persons, who some would argue was the antithesis of Baker, fretted about his vocation as he became enmeshed in the politics of shaping the English Mission.⁸⁴ In this sense, Baker’s *Treatise* is not a million miles away from John Bossy’s characterization of those who started the English mission in the sixteenth century, Catholicism not as an act of nostalgic withdrawal but a reaction for something better. It involved personal conversion and was ‘a religion individual and interior’, a movement that rejected lay supremacy and sounded the alarm against spiritual malaise.⁸⁵ Bossy argues that William Allen, at the English College, Douai, was focussed on training spiritually reformed secular clerics ready to face the privations and temptations of the

English mission, ‘without priestly dress, without a church, without a hierarchy above or below, with no refuge in the continuity of material institutions and objects’, offering himself to the laity as a specimen of Catholic Reformation. Displaying no exterior signs of his priesthood, his ambiguous situation in lay households could lead to his increased involvement in secular activities, the danger being that ‘the disguise would absorb the personality.’⁸⁶ By recontextualizing Baker’s *Treatise*, it is evident that this seventeenth-century monk was attempting the same, fearing that the previous experiments had failed and pointing a new way towards the spiritual formation necessary for a missionary.

The wider context was that Baker was addressing the fallout of the ongoing Approbation Affair. Apart from highlighting the disunity of the contemporary English mission against that of the initial mission of Augustine of Canterbury, he focussed on the lack of proper formation of the seventeenth-century monks, these failings in spiritual formation only exacerbated by the tensions experienced on the mission. The *Treatise* is a spiritual understanding of the Approbation Affair, a theological response that crosses into the realms of the political. It is a Benedictine spiritual reading of the travails and even plight of the English mission and its Catholic community. Moreover, it is a chastisement of what has gone on in England, a theological meditation and spiritual reflection on not just the Benedictines’ activities, though they may appear to be his primary target audience, but the whole missionary enterprise to England. That he viewed the spiritual formation of secular clerics as part of the issues at play is made clear by his involvement in their formation. By recognizing this, Baker no longer represents the complete withdrawal from what Allen recommended, indicative of Bossy’s famous phrase that English Catholicism progressed ‘from inertia to inertia in three generations’.⁸⁷ Rather, Baker sought to reinvigorate the spiritual formation of these missionaries for a new generation, judging the previous experiment to have failed. In his monastery he may

have been, but the events of the Approbation Affair had seared the mystical mind of Augustine Baker.

I have modernized some of the spelling in the Treatise for ease of reading, namely ‘u’ to ‘v’, ‘i’ to ‘j’, and ‘v’ to ‘u’.

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¹ See, for example, David Knowles, *The English mystical tradition*, London 1961, 151–87; Liam Temple, *Mysticism in early modern England*, Woodbridge 2019, chapter 1.

² For this paragraph’s biographical material, see, amongst other sources, Monks in Motion database, <<https://www.dur.ac.uk/mim>> (hereafter MIM), 900; David Daniel Rees, ‘Baker, David [name in religion Augustine] (1575–1641)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://www.oxforddnb.com>>.

³ Clement Reyner, *Apostalatus Benedictinorum in Anglia, siue, Disceptatio Historica, de antiquitate ordinis congregationisque monachorum nigrorum S. Benedicti in regno Angliæ*, Douai 1626.

⁴ Downside Abbey, MS 26583 (Baker MS 27) [hereafter ‘Part 1’], printed in Augustine Baker, *A treatise of the English mission: The First Part*, ed. John Clark, Salzburg 2011; Ampleforth Abbey, MS 119 [hereafter ‘Part 2’], partly printed in Augustine Baker, *A treatise of the English mission: the second part*, ed. John Clark, Salzburg 2012, and the remaining printed in Hugh

Connolly (ed.), ‘Father Augustine Baker’s treatise of the English mission: the historical portion’, in Justin McCann and Hugh Connolly (eds), *Memorials of Father Augustine Baker and other documents relating to the English Benedictines* (Catholic Record Society 33, 1933), 157–84.

⁵ Downside Abbey, MS 26582 (Baker MS 26), printed in Augustine Baker, *An introduction or preparative to a treatise of the English Benedictine mission*, ed. John Clark, Salzburg 2011.

⁶ For example, see Elizabeth Dutton and Victoria Van Hynning, ‘Augustine Baker and the Mystical Canon’, in Geoffrey Scott (ed.), *Dom Augustine Baker 1575–1641*, Leominster 2012, 85–110; Liam Temple, “‘Have we any mother *Juliana*’s among us?”: the multiple identities of Julian of Norwich in restoration England’, *British Catholic History* 33 (2017), 383–400; Jaime Goodrich, “‘Attend to Me’”: Julian of Norwich and Literary Circulation Among the Cambrai Benedictines’, in James E. Kelly and Susan Royal (eds), *Early modern English Catholicism: identity, memory and counter-reformation*, Leiden 2017, 105–21.

⁷ David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540–1688: from reformation to revolution*, London 1980, 162–3; Barnaby Hughes, ‘Augustine Baker and the history of the English Benedictine Congregation’, in Scott, *Dom Augustine Baker*, 19–29.

⁸ Serenus Cressy (ed.), *Sancta Sophia: Or, Directions for the prayer of contemplation &c. extracted out of more then [sic] XL treatises written by the late Ven. Father F. Augustin Baker*, Douai 1657, 3.

⁹ Cressy, *Sancta Sophia*, 231–8.

¹⁰ David Lunn, ‘Augustine Baker (1575–1641) and the English mystical tradition’, this *JOURNAL* 26 (1975), 267–77. Lunn’s argument is recapitulated in Liam Temple, ‘The mysticism of Augustine Baker, OSB: a reconsideration’, *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 19 (2017), 213–30.

¹¹ I plan to discuss this element in a future article.

¹² Part 2, 352–4.

¹³ Part 2, 529.

¹⁴ Part 2, 333–4.

¹⁵ For the Approbation Affair, see Antony F. Allison, ‘A question of jurisdiction: Richard Smith, bishop of Chalcedon, and the Catholic laity, 1625–31’, *Recusant History* 16 (1982), 111–45; Michael C. Questier (ed.), *Newsletters from the Caroline court, 1631–1638: Catholicism and the politics of the personal rule* (Camden Society fifth series 26, 2005).

¹⁶ Westminster Diocesan Archives, A28 nos 41–5, 159–74; Maurus Lunn, ‘Benedictine opposition to Bishop Richard Smith (1625–1629)’, *Recusant History* 11 (1971), 1–20, esp. 15.

¹⁷ For the Archpriest Controversy, see Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *All hail to the archpriest: confessional conflict, toleration, and the politics of publicity in post-reformation England*, Oxford 2019.

¹⁸ Part 1, 267–74.

¹⁹ Part 2, 199–204.

²⁰ For lay involvement in the Approbation Affair, see James E. Kelly, ‘Counties without borders? religious politics, kinship networks and the formation of Catholic communities’, *Historical Research* 91 (2018), 22–38; James E. Kelly, ‘Kinship and religious politics among Catholic families in England, 1570–1640’, *History* 94 (2009), 328–343.

²¹ Part 2, 590.

²² Part 1, 79. Baker reiterates this point in Part 1, 345–6: ‘And yet we still never give over sending, or seeking to goe, as if there were need where indeed none is, but perill of such mischeefe & great inconveniences’ to the souls of all those involved.

²³ Part 2, 551; see also Part 1, 219–20. It also needlessly risks the monk’s own life and those who harbour him, when there are already sufficient numbers of clergy in England: Part 2, 570.

²⁴ Part 2, 572–5.

²⁵ Part 1, 337–44. See also Part 2, 273 for such ambition as contrary to a monk's religious profession.

²⁶ Part 2, 350–1.

²⁷ Part 2, 529.

²⁸ Part 1, 328–34.

²⁹ Part 1, 152–3.

³⁰ Maurus Lunn, 'Two other new Benedictine saints', *The Ampleforth Journal* 75 (1970), 390–4 at 392–4. WDA B 47/29; A22/229.

³¹ WDA A22 no. 115, p. 535.

³² Lunn, *The English Benedictines*, 152. Codner was known to be an opponent of Smith during the Approbation Affair and had clashed with his lay patrons; as such, it is not surprising that he became the focus of such gossip by the opposing clerical faction. See Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and community in early modern England: politics, aristocratic patronage and religion, c.1550–1640*, Cambridge 2006, 449, 452, 454, 462, 478.

³³ J. C. H. Aveling, *The handle and the axe: the Catholic recusants in England from reformation to emancipation*, London 1976, 80. Aveling does not provide the source. Roe was a known opponent of Smith: Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 450.

³⁴ WDA A22 no. 111, 523-4; MIM 246.

³⁵ WDA 22/387 no. 69, 385-88.

³⁶ Douai Abbey, Weldon Chronicles, II, 716. For Crowther, see MIM 671.

³⁷ Douai Abbey, Weldon Chronicles, I, 161–70; II, 715–19.

³⁸ Letter printed in CRS 33, 262. For Hanson, see MIM 473.

³⁹ CRS 33, 262. For Edner see MIM 673, for Ashe see MIM 660.

⁴⁰ CRS 33, 262. For Peto see MIM 696, for Norton, see MIM 553. Peto had previously been accused of having a layman arrested for debt over the alleged non-payment of a promised life annuity: WDA, A22 no. 115, p.535.

⁴¹ ‘discord and differences’ and ‘scandal’: Silos Papers, xix, 198, printed in CRS 33, 266–73. For Smith, see MIM 033. The situation was so out of control that the same report claimed Leander Jones, the then-EBC president, had gone to England in an attempt to defuse the situation; Baker was certainly aware, before writing the treatise, that Jones had gone to England, though he does not reveal whether he knew the cause: Part 2, 517; MIM, 688; Gerard Sitwell, ‘Leander Jones’s mission to England 1634–5’, *Recusant History* 5 (1960), 132–82.

⁴² For example, the English secular clergy were aware of problems with those monks refusing to join the EBC: WDA A27, no. 60, 173–6, printed in Questier, *Newsletters from the Caroline Court*, 183–7.

⁴³ Part 1, 109. This may be a jab at the Jesuits, whose missionary strategy was, according to some, the complete opposite to this.

⁴⁴ Part 1, 347–57, quote on 355.

⁴⁵ Part 2, 318–19.

⁴⁶ Part 1, 308–20.

⁴⁷ Part 1, 104–5. See the same sentiments in Part 1, 77, and Part 2, 465–72, esp. 471–2.

⁴⁸ Part 1, 70–3. Baker argues that the pope only gave permission for the mission if there was a perceived necessity; if the need is not there then the strict command of a monk’s profession is the same as the pope’s intention ‘that we should persevere in the monastery, as is our proper vocation to do’: Part 1, 129–30. See also Part 1, 165; Part 2, 115.

⁴⁹ Part 2, 125–6.

⁵⁰ Part 2, 232.

⁵¹ Part 2, 445. Indeed, he judges Preston ‘somewhat eminent for such kind his learninge.’ Elsewhere, he praises Beech, who missioned in England for four years, commenting, ‘I never knew any man in mission whom for my part I should have judged fitter for the mission, then he was, all qualities considered, nor do I know any man that succeeded better for the good of others, for the time he was there’: Part 2, 516–17. Baker is curiously quiet about Preston’s controversial opinions regarding the oath of allegiance, which were certainly not shared by Beech: for this, see Maurus Lunn, ‘The anglo-gallicanism of Dom Thomas Preston, 1567–1647,’ in Derek Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest*, (Studies in Church History 9, 1972), 239–46; Stefania Tutino, ‘Thomas Preston and English Catholic loyalism: elements of an international affair’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 41 (2010), 91–109.

⁵² Aveling, *The handle and the axe*, 80.

⁵³ Part 1, 275–7.

⁵⁴ Part 2, 10.

⁵⁵ For example, Tutino, though rightly presenting Baker’s spirituality as different to the Ignatian approach, portrays Baker’s vision in opposition to that of the Jesuits: Stefania Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in early modern England, 1570–1625*, Aldershot 2007, 74–5.

⁵⁶ Part 2, 288–95. Interestingly, John Bossy similarly assessed the Jesuits well suited to the English mission, judging that the order’s organization could be adapted without too much difficulty to conditions in England: John Bossy, ‘The character of Elizabethan Catholicism’, *Past and Present* 21 (1962), 39–59, at 52.

⁵⁷ Part 2, 283–8. From a specifically Benedictine point of view, Baker pointedly conjectures that, if this is the case for a college, imagine the contrast to a monastery.

⁵⁸ Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 1755, fos 54–143, printed in CRS 33, 123–4.

⁵⁹ CRS 33, 129–32, 146. Although McCann believed it lost, Baker’s life of Francis Gascoigne is Downside Abbey, MS 54401 (Baker MS 49). For an overview, see Philip Jebb, ‘A hitherto unnoticed autograph manuscript of the Venerable Augustine Baker’, *Downside Review* 104 (1986), 25–50. Gascoigne died on 10 February 1638 and the manuscript was written between that date and Baker’s departure the following August.

⁶⁰ Several convents also sought Baker’s services at this time, including the Benedictine nuns at Cambrai and the Carmelite community at Antwerp: Justin McCann (ed.), *The Life of Father Augustine Baker, OSB (1575–1641), by Peter Salvin and Serenus Cressy*, London 1933, xi, 25–7, 128–30.

⁶¹ John Bossy, *The English Catholic community 1570–1850*, London, 1975, 255–6.

⁶² Ampleforth Abbey, MS 48, 2, 23. The document is printed in John Clark (ed.), *Francis Gascoigne: an apologie for myselfe about Fr. Baker's doctrine; Abbess Christina Brent: discourse concerning Father Baker's doctrine; Augustine Baker: admittance; Bonilla; Ricerius*, Salzburg 2011), 1–94. See also Justin McCann “‘Bakerism’ at Douay seminary’, *The Clergy Review* 2 (1931), 213–26.

⁶³ Godfrey Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, vol. 2, Great Wakering, 1975, 126; MIM, 247, 460; E. H. Burton and T. L. Williams, ed., *Douay College Diaries: Third Diary, 1598-1637* (CRS 10, 1911), 286. For the Gascoigne influence at Lamspringe, see Margaret Truran, ‘Spirituality: Fr Baker’s legacy’, in Anselm Cramer (ed.), *Lamspringe: An English Abbey in Germany*, Ampleforth 2004, 83–96.

⁶⁴ Who Were the Nuns? database, <<https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk>>, CB074, CB077; Downside Abbey, MS 26598 (Baker MS 42), printed in Augustine Baker, *Five treatises; the life and death of Dame Margaret Gascoigne; treatise of confession*, ed. John Clark, Salzburg 2006, 49–73. For Catherine Gascoigne’s defence, see Bibliothèque Mazarine 1202, 382–95,

printed in Julia Bolton Holloway (ed.), *'Collections' by an English nun in exile: Bibliothèque Mazarine 1202*, Salzburg 2006, 382–95.

⁶⁵ McCann, *Life of Father Augustine Baker*, xxxvii.

⁶⁶ William J. Sheils, 'The gospel, liturgy and controversy in the 1590s: Thomas Stapleton's *Promptuaria*', in Kelly and Royal, *Early Modern English Catholicism*, 189–205.

⁶⁷ For this saga, see Brad S. Gregory, 'The "True and Zealous Service of God": Robert Parsons, Edmund Bunny, and *The first booke of Christian exercise*', this JOURNAL 45 (1994), 238–68; Victor Houlston, 'Why Robert Persons would not be pacified: Edmund Bunny's theft of *The book of resolution*,' in Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. (ed.), *The reckoned expense: Edmund Campion and the early Jesuits*, Rome 2007, 209–32; Ronald Corthell, 'Politics and devotion: the case of Robert Persons v. Edm. Bunny, author of *A book of Christian exercise*', *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014), 558–71.

⁶⁸ Ulrich L. Lehner and William O'Brien, 'Mysticism and reform in Catholic theology between 1600 and 1800', in Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber (eds), *The Oxford handbook of early modern theology, 1600–1800*, Oxford 2016, 63–75, esp. 69–70.

⁶⁹ Geoffrey Scott, 'Baker's critics', in Scott, *Dom Augustine Baker*, 179–92, esp. 187–8; Geoffrey Scott, 'Fighting old battles: the English Benedictine mission, 1689–1715', *Downside Review* 98 (1980), 9–24, at 21–2.

⁷⁰ Geoffrey Scott, *Gothic rage undone: English monks in the age of enlightenment*, Bath 1992. On wider Benedictine involvement with the European Enlightenment, see Ulrich L. Lehner, *Enlightened monks: the German Benedictines, 1740–1803*, Oxford 2011; Thomas McNally, *A saltire in the German lands: Scottish Benedictine monasteries in Germany, 1575–1862*, Aberdeen 2016, 128–202.

⁷¹ For example, the influence of Baker's treatise is evident in the writings of Belmont's first prior, Norbert Sweeney, particularly his *The life and spirit of Father Augustine Baker: monk*

and priest of the English Benedictine Congregation, London 1861, x–xi, 73–8. Geoffrey Scott, ‘Something of the struggle for Belmont’s soul, 1859–1909’, in Andrew Berry (ed.), *Belmont Abbey: celebrating 150 Years*, Leominster 2012, 72–109. See also Alban Hood, *From repatriation to revival: continuity and change in the English Benedictine Congregation, 1795–1850*, Farnborough 2014, 69–72.

⁷² Alban Hood, ‘Baker in the nineteenth-century English Benedictine Congregation’, in Scott, *Dom Augustine Baker*, 193–202, esp. 199–202, quote at 202. For similar attitudes at Downside Abbey and throughout the EBC, see Aidan Bellenger, ‘English Benedictines and the search for a monastic identity 1880–1920’, in Judith Loades (ed.), *Monastic studies I: The continuity of tradition*, Bangor 1990, 299–321; Aidan Bellenger, ‘The Downside *stirs*: personalities, principles, documentation’, in Aidan Bellenger, *Monastic identities: essays in the history of St Gregory’s, Downside*, Bath 2014, 26–56.

⁷³ For this affair, see Maurus Lunn, ‘William Rudesind Barlow, OSB, 1585–1656 – Part II’, *Downside Review* 86 (1968), 234–49, which counters some of the efforts of Baker’s early biographers to pin all the blame on Barlow by alleging that jealousy was the sole cause of the spat.

⁷⁴ Sara S. Poor and Nigel Smith, ‘Introduction’, in Sara S. Poor and Nigel Smith (eds), *Mysticism and reform, 1400–1750*, Notre Dame 2015, 1–28 at 4–5.

⁷⁵ Charlotte Radler, ‘*Actio et Contemplatio*/Action and Contemplation’, in Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge 2012, 211–22.

⁷⁶ Poor and Nigel Smith, ‘Introduction’, 7–8.

⁷⁷ For example, Sarah Apetrei views Baker’s writings as, posthumously, part of debates surrounding mystical theology after the Restoration and during the Long Reformation, into which Serenus Cressy had inserted him: Sarah Apetrei, “‘Between the rational and the

mystical”: the inner life and the early English Enlightenment’, in Poor and Smith, *Mysticism and reform*, 198–219 at 199–200.

⁷⁸ Poor and Nigel Smith, ‘Introduction’, 5.

⁷⁹ Edward Howells, ‘Spanish mysticism and religious renewal: Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross’, in Julia A. Lamm (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to Christian mysticism*, Oxford 2013, 422–36, esp 422, 435.

⁸⁰ Edward Howells, ‘Early Modern Reformations’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, 114–34 at 122–4.

⁸¹ Knowles, *English mystical tradition*, 152, 193.

⁸² Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., “*And touching our Society*”: *fashioning Jesuit identity in Elizabethan England*, Toronto 2013, 197–259.

⁸³ ARSI, Francia 1/I, fo. 115v printed in *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, SJ, Volume 1: 1574–1588*, ed. Victor Houlston, Ginerva Crosignani and Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., Toronto 2017, 259–62, at 260, 262; see also 271, 296.

⁸⁴ Victor Houlston, ‘Robert Persons’s precarious correspondence’, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014), 542–57.

⁸⁵ Bossy, ‘The character of Elizabethan Catholicism,’ 44, 45.

⁸⁶ Bossy, ‘The character of Elizabethan Catholicism’, 46–7, 51–2.

⁸⁷ Bossy, ‘The character of Elizabethan Catholicism’, 56–7. Admittedly, Bossy later regretted the terminology, recognizing the ‘spiritual and pastoral inventions’ of the early seventeenth century, of which Baker was a major part, even if Bossy still judged his activities ‘unduly passive’: John Bossy, ‘Afterword’, in Kelly and Royal, *Early Modern English Catholicism*, 246–254 at 251.