The ‘holy days’ of Queen Elizabeth I

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Abstract

The annual celebrations of the accession day and birthday of Queen Elizabeth I are a familiar subject in studies of her reign, yet their beginnings, status and purpose have remained uncertain. By examining revisions of the calendar of the Church of England published in the Book of Common Prayer from early in the reign, this article establishes the dates of the first recognition of these public anniversaries. It questions the weight that has been attached to the evidence for these occasions provided in churchwardens’ accounts, and challenges the conventional interpretations that accession day began and spread as wholly spontaneous, local and popular festivities, and expressed a straightforward patriotic ‘cult’ of the queen. While agreeing that they were not holidays, and explaining that they were not strictly ‘holy days’, it is argued that the two anniversaries began as and continued to be religious occasions, and are best understood in terms of the religious politics of the Elizabethan state. As other scholars have shown by careful exegesis of sermons addressed to the queen, ‘godly’ clergy persistently urged her to undertake further protestant reformation and firmer anti-catholic measures. With the anniversaries and in the forms of prayer for accession day, archbishops and bishops provided opportunities and texts both to sustain loyalty to the actual queen and to stimulate hopes of a queen who would more completely fulfil their understanding of her providential role.

The annual celebrations for the accession day and birthday of the first Queen Elizabeth are a familiar and well-researched subject in studies of her reign, so much so that it might be thought that nothing further could be added, whether in sources or in interpretation. Yet further evidence, printed in contemporary publications year by year from early in the queen’s reign,

has always been readily available; it has simply not been noticed by historians. This evidence enables a re-consideration of persistent problems in understanding the two anniversary thanksgivings, which some contemporaries and later historians described as 'holy days'. It raises questions about the interpretative weight placed on the chief sources that have been used for study of the local celebrations on these days. It also suggests that the purpose and character of the anniversaries should be re-assessed, with assistance from the sceptical perspectives which recent scholars have offered towards the apparently relentless contemporary praise of the queen.

The significance of commemorations of accession day on 17 November for the development of a 'cult' of Elizabeth was established during the late 1950s. Francis Yates drew attention to the courtly 'tilts' – equine and athletic jousts – performed before the queen on the anniversary from at least 1581, and perhaps earlier. These entertainments were accompanied by elaborate orations and written panegyrics, which inspired works by Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney,[1] and have consequently attracted studies from scholars of Elizabethan literature and drama. John Neale indicated the existence of earlier, wider and longer-lasting popular celebrations of the anniversary, beginning around 1570, observed in numerous parishes and towns across the realm, and continued or revived after the queen's death.[2] In a seminal article,

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[1] Frances Yates, 'Elizabethan chivalry: the romance of the accession day tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 20 (1957), 4–25, repr. in Frances Yates, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), pp. 88–111, and see Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* (London, 1977), pp. 129–62; Paul Hammer, 'Upstaging the queen: the earl of Essex, Francis Bacon and the accession day celebrations of 1595', in David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (eds), *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 41–66; and Sue Simpson, *Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611): Elizabethan Courtier* (Abingdon, 2014), ch. 2.

[2] 'November 17th' in J.E. Neale, *Essays in Elizabethan history* (1958), pp. 9–20.

Roy Strong described the scope of the observances of accession day (and the range of sources for study of the subject), from civic festivities, ringing of church bells and publication of special church services, to eulogies, poems and sermons, to the claimed special place of the queen and England in the 'eschatological and imperial history' outlined in John Foxe's *Acts and monuments*.[3] He also indicated the numerous contemporary names for the anniversary; these included 'queen's day', the 'day of entry into her reign' (the term 'accession day' was not used at the time) and 'crownation day' (in the sense of the day on which the queen acquired the crown), which was corrupted into the term 'coronation day'[4] that became common late in the reign and into the next century.

Subsequent historical works added further details and fuller contexts. David Cressy placed accession day and other annual festivities within an English early-modern 'vocabulary' of protestant celebration – the cultural meanings of events marked by bell-ringing, bonfires, gun salutes and feasting.[5] While Ronald Hutton argued that the popular celebrations were patchier and more sporadic than Strong and Cressy had suggested, he nevertheless agreed that accession day was 'certainly a very widespread, very common and very important event by the middle of the reign, and even more so by its end'.[6] Helen Hackett, while examining the veneration and quasi-religious iconography that surrounded the queen, emphasized the

[3] Roy Strong, 'The popular celebration of the accession day of Queen Elizabeth I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), 86–103, abridged in idem, *Cult of Elizabeth,* pp. 117–28.
[4] For a shift from 'the daye of the Quenes maiestyes enterynge unto the crowne' (1576) to 'cronancone daye' (1583) and then to 'coronacone daye' (1584), see John Bruce, 'Extracts from accounts of the churchwardens of Minchinhampton [Gloucestershire]', *Archaeologia*, 35 (1854), 430–4. The anniversary of the queen's actual coronation was 15 January.
[5] David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabeth and Stuart England* (1989; Stroud, 2004), pp. 50–7.
[6] Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England. The Ritual Year 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1994) pp. 146–51, and, similarly, idem, *The Stations of the Sun. A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 387–92. See also J.P.D. Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State. Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 24–5.

Catholic and puritan criticisms of the religious thanksgiving on the anniversaries.[7] Alexandra Walsham argued that even the sermons for the day published by her perceived supporters could contain subtle admonitions about the queen's policies.[8] Katherine Butler clarified the publication history of the surviving forms of prayer (the printed texts of special church services) for accession day, and showed how the occasion was promoted as an occasion for congregational and communal singing.[9] Anna Neissner has usefully gathered and collated evidence of church, court and popular celebrations.[10] Celebrations of the queen's birthday, on 7 September, began later in the reign and were always less extensive than those for her accession day. But Strong, Cressy and Hutton found evidence for bell-ringing on this day in numerous parishes, and Strong described these as 'an extension' of the accession day festivities.[11]

There remain, however, areas of uncertainty. It has not been easy to establish when and how commemoration of the two royal anniversaries began. Near-contemporary accounts suggested that the aftermath of the Northern rebellion (November 1569–January 1570) and the queen's excommunication by Pope Pius V in February 1570 provided the impetus for celebrations of accession day as an assertion of protestant loyalism.[12] Payments for bell-ringing, as recorded in churchwardens' accounts, which came to be regarded as the crucial evidence for the incidence of the celebrations, revealed earlier instances, at first during the late 1560s,

[7] Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen. Elizabeth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 83–7, 207–11.
[8] Alexandra Walsham, '"A very Deborah" The myth of Elizabeth I as a providential monarch', in Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (eds), *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 143–68.
[9] Katherine Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects? Ballads, psalms and godly songs for Queen Elizabeth I's accession day', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 140 (2015), 273–312.
[10] Anna Niessner, *Die Accession days: Entstehung und Nutzen der Inaugurationstagsfestlichkeiten in England, 1570–1624* (Norderstedt, 2015).
[11] Strong, 'Accession day', 99; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 57; Hutton, *Merry England*, pp. 148, 150.
[12] Neale, 'November 17th', p. 10; Strong, 'Accession day', 87–8; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 51–2.

notably in Lambeth,[13] and then – the earliest evidence yet found – in two London parishes in 1564.[14] The first known instances of bell-ringing for the queen's birthday are in 1574, again at Lambeth, followed by London churches in 1576.[15] However, these churchwardens' accounts yield no evidence to help explain the origins of either of the celebrations. In the absence of surviving state or church orders, it has been assumed that they began as spontaneous local festivities which were subsequently adopted by the crown, in the case of accession day with the publication in 1576 of the first known form of prayer for the occasion.[16] There has been conjecture about the relationship between the thanksgivings on accession day and the traditional but officially abolished religious commemoration on 17 November of St Hugh (a medieval bishop of Lincoln), as some contemporary records – even for places and areas with no pre-Reformation attachment to the saint – referred to celebrations taking place on this date as being for 'St Hugh's day'.[17] This, it is suggested, indicates that accession day provided these parishes with a covert means to preserve a prohibited Catholic commemoration. It has been difficult to understand the spread of the celebrations: why the start of bell-ringing and civic festivities for both accession day and the queen's birthday are first recorded in quite different

[13] Neale, 'November 17th', p. 10; Strong, 'Accession day', 89; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 52. *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts 1504–1645*, ed. Charles Drew, 2 vols. (Surrey Record Society, 1941, 1950), I, 93, first records 'rynging at the begynynge of the Quenes Mates rayne' in 1567.

[14] See Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 232, 250–2, for the churchwardens' accounts for St Peter Westcheap and St Botolph Aldersgate. 1564 is the first year for which accounts survive for St Botolph, so it is possible that its celebrations began even earlier. See also the list of 'accession day celebrations' in Marion Coulthorpe, *The Elizabethan Court Day by Day* (2017), published online by the Folger Shakespeare Library at https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/The_Elizabethan_Court_Day_by_Day [hereafter *ECDD*].

[15] Strong, 'Accession day', 99; Hutton, *Merry England*, p. 150; list for 'birthday of the queen' in *ECDD*.

[16] Strong, 'Accession day', 91, and esp. p. 94: 'Official government action over Accession Day can be traced only in the succession of special prayer books for use in churches on that day', and see a similar statement in Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects', 303–4.

[17] Strong , 'Accession day', 88, 89, 90, 91; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells,* p. 51; Hutton, *Merry England,* p. 150.

years in dispersed places; how widespread or 'national' they became; whether their adoption falls into any pattern, and the means of transmission. Did they have spontaneous popular origins or were they initiated by social 'elites', and did they spread from one locality to another by example? To what extent were they encouraged or approved by the central authorities of the Church or state? Did this encouragement begin with publication of the first surviving form of prayer? Were the celebrations 'customary' or 'official'?[18] The character of the celebrations remains unclear – the extent to which they were regarded as 'holy days' of religious observance or as 'holidays' for popular festivities (in Christopher Haigh's words, 'an excuse for a booze-up').[19]

The source that prompts re-consideration of these issues is not the 'customary calendar' marked by popular festivities, nor a presumed 'church calendar' indicated by publication of forms of prayer from the mid 1570s. This article uses the evidence of the actual calendar of the Church of England, as revised and published early in the queen's reign by royal authority, and enforced by episcopal injunctions and visitations. Examination of successive versions of this new calendar and an associated table published in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and bound into copies of the Bible reveal the first and very widely distributed notice of

[18] Strong , 'Accession day', 94; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 52, 56-7; Hutton, *Merry England*, pp. 147-51; Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (1988; London, 1998), pp. 162–3. The lists for accession day and the queen's birthday in *ECDD* indicate the incidence of many of the surviving local records for celebrations up to the end of the reign.

[19] Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 163, and see Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects', 303, on the attractions of 'an opportunity to liven up a cold, wet November': such motivations are never absent in popular appreciation of royal occasions. For holy days, see Neale, 'November 17th', p. 12; Strong, 'Accession day', 89, 91, 99, 101; Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450–1650* (Woodbridge, 1984), p. 19 ('Accession day … was promulgated as an official holy day of the Established Church, its festivals replacing those of the old medieval saints' days'); and Hackett, *Virgin Mother,* p. 84.

the anniversary of accession day and the later official recognition of the queen's birthday,[20] while helping to explain the ambiguities of these occasions.

The new calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer*

On 22 January 1561, Queen Elizabeth ordered four members of the commission for ecclesiastical causes – including Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, and Edmund Grindal, bishop of London – to consider miscellaneous matters relating to the BCP of 1559 and to the condition of churches. One of these items was revision of the calendar printed in the BCP, in the sense of the prescribed order of daily lessons that were read out from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha during public worship.[21] The commissioners made just two minor alterations to this list of lessons; but they then undertook a further task, not specified in the queen's order – exceeding the terms of their original remit – by revising the calendar understood in a different sense, that of the descriptions and the significance attached to particular dates.[22] They retained the set holy days – days in addition to Sundays on which church attendance was required, and for which special ('proper') lessons were prescribed – which had been listed in the calendars of earlier editions of the BCP, and defined by act of

[20] The basic evidence considered here has not been entirely unnoticed. The inclusion of accession day in the new calendar was recorded in *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and Occasional Forms Of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. W.K. Clay (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1847), p. 454, and *The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: the Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. John E. Booty (1976; Charlottesville, VA, 2005), pp. xiv–xv; and the later addition of the queen's birthday was noted in F.E. Brightman, *The English Rite* (2 vols, London, 1915), I, ccxiii, quoted by Booty in *Book of Common Prayer, 1559,* p. 390. But none of these books provided further comment.
[21] Lambeth Palace Library [hereafter LPL], Parker Register, part 1, fo. 215r, and see *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, ed. John Bruce and Thomas Perowne (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1853), pp. 132–4.
[22] Francis Proctor and Walter Howard Frere, *A New History of The Book of Common Prayer* (London and New York, 1901; 1951), pp. 109–10.

parliament in 1552.[23] They continued the practice of printing the names of these holy days in red ink – the 'red-letter days'. They also retained references to zodiacal days and positions of the sun, which had been included in the calendars in the 1552 and 1559 BCPs.[24] The commissioners made two changes. The names of four minor saints' days had already been restored to the calendar in 1552; now they reinstated the names of a much larger number of these days (as many as 57)[25] that had been included in the calendars of the medieval church, together with various customary named days.[26] None of these reinstated days was to receive religious observances,[27] and their lower status was indicated by use of ordinary black ink – the 'black-letter days'. The second change was the introduction of a wholly new feature into the Church's calendar, the date of the sovereign's accession: 'Init. Reg. Elizabet.'. This was printed in red.[28]

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[23] 'An Acte for the keping of Hollie daies and Fasting dayes', 5 & 7 Edward VI. c. 3 (1552), in *The Statutes of the Realm* (11 vols, 1810–22), IV, 132–3. This statute had been repealed by Mary and had failed to be re-enacted during Elizabeth's first parliament, but the bishops treated it as remaining in force: Norman Jones, 'Elizabeth, edification and the Latin prayer book of 1560', *Church History*, 53 (1984), 182–3. The 'named' holy days (25 in 1549, 24 in all editions from 1552) were commemorations of events in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary and of the apostles, major evangelists, St Michael the archangel, and certain martyrs, which all had settled dates. The further holy days of Easter and Whitsunday, their following Mondays and Tuesdays, and Ascension day were not listed in the calendar tables because their dates were 'moveable', varying from year to year; the means of calculating these was by 'An Almanacke' and a further table on how 'To finde Easter for ever', both also printed in the BCP.

[24] These were also printed in red, but it would have been evident that these days were not for religious purposes. The inclusion of these traditional almanac features is ignored in most scholarly references to the BCP calendar, though see David Siegenthaler, 'Zodiac and prayer book', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 26 (1975), 427–32, and *Book of Common Prayer 1559*, ed. Booty, pp. 381–2, 389–90. They were removed when the BCP was revised in 1662.

[25] Proctor and Frere, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 337. The first restoration of these saints' days had been in a Latin translation of the BCP during the previous year, *Liber precum publicarum, seu ministerij ecclesiastic[a]e administrationis sacramentorum, alioru[m]q[ue] rituu[m] & c[a]eremoniarum in Ecclesia Anglicana* (1560, STC 16424), sigs. Ci–Dii^{v} (repr. in *Liturgical Services*, ed. Clay, pp. 317–22); see Jones, 'Elizabeth, edification', 183–4.

[26] E.g. both the start (6 July) and the end (5 September) of 'Dog days', referring to the hottest time of the year, derived from ancient Roman traditions which associated this period with the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star.

[27] For this point, see below, p. 000.

[28] As given in the BCP of 1562, STC 16295, sig. Avii^{r}, and see *Liturgical Services*, ed. Clay, p. 454. At first the entry was printed in a Roman font, but in later editions it appeared in the same 'gothic' font used for holy days: see e.g.

The commissioners finished their work by 15 February 1561, when Parker sent Grindal a printed copy of the revised calendar with instructions that he should, in his capacity as dean of the province of Canterbury, circulate copies to all the bishops in the province, evidently with the intention that the calendar should be distributed to parish churches as soon as possible.[29] Parker presumably also sent a copy to the archbishop of York with similar instructions for distribution in his province, although no order to this effect has survived.[30] From the end of the month and during the following year, churchwardens' accounts over a wide geographical area record purchases of the printed calendar, as sent or directed by the bishop or a bishops' official: 'the newe order of the Service booke', 'a booke with a calendr', 'the new Kalender', 'a Kallynder'.[31] One set of accounts records 'the sowinge of the sayd kallendar in the servis booke',[32] which was presumably a common practice; this explains why the 1561 calendar is contained within at least one surviving BCP that had been published in 1559.[33] The revised

1570?, STC 16299, sig. A7r. References to editions of the BCP, the Bible and other contemporary publications are chiefly to copies viewed on *Early English Books Online* (in these monochrome images, the ink colours can be deduced from the shade of grayscale).

[29] LPL, Parker Register, part 1, fos 228r–228v, and see *Parker Correspondence*, p. 135.

[30] The archiepiscopal and episcopal registers are not comprehensive in recording correspondence; orders regarding provincial or nationwide special worship during times of plague, war etc., are rarely recorded.

[31] *The Accounts of the Churchwardens of … St Michael, Cornhill*, ed. W.H. Overall (London, 1871), p. 153 (dated 27 Feb 1561); *The Transcript of the Registers of … S. Mary Woolnoth and S. May Woolchurch Haw*, ed. J.M.S. Brooke and A.W.C. Hallen (London, 1886), pp. xxiii, xlix; *The Accounts of the Churchwardens of St Martin's, Leicester*, ed. Thomas North (Leicester, 1884), p. 95; *Churchwarden's Accounts of … Ludlow*, ed. Thomas Wright (Camden Society, 1s., 101, 1869), p. 103; and see also, e.g., *Calendar of the Tavistock Parish Records*, ed. R.N. Worth (Plymouth, 1887), p. 26; *Ancient Churchwardens' Accounts … North Elmham*, ed. Augustus Legge (Norwich, 1891), p. 85; *Churchwardens' Accounts of St Mary the Great Cambridge*, ed. J.E. Foster (Cambridge, 1905), p. 162; *The Parish of Ashburton in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, [ed. John Butcher] (London, 1870), p. 39; *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512–1578*, ed. Joanna Mattingley (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, ns 10, 2018), p. 108. Churchwardens commonly purchased these calendars together with a sheet of the ten commandments, as the ecclesiastical commission of 1561 had also been charged with ensuring that these were distributed for display on the walls of churches.

[32] *St Martin's in the Fields. Accounts of the Churchwardens 1525-1603*, ed. John Kitto (London, 1901), pp. 190–1.

[33] See a copy of the 1559 BCP in the British Library (STC 16292a) with a later annotation to this effect on a flyleaf. Independent copies of the calendar, as originally distributed, do not seem to have survived; one reason is this binding into copies of the BCP.

calendar was included in all new editions of the BCP beginning in 1562,[34] in a psalter of 1563,[35] in translations of the BCP into Welsh from 1567,[36] and in early editions of the new 'Bishops' Bible' from its first publication in 1568,[37] all printed and published by the queen's printers. The bishops in both Canterbury and York provinces wanted to be sure that this new calendar was being used in their dioceses: during the early 1570s, several asked explicitly in their visitation articles whether churches and chapels had copies of the BCP 'with the New Kalendar',[38] and others enquired whether its provisions were being observed.[39] Entries in the new BCP calendar, including the reference to accession day, were also incorporated with impressive speed in popular almanacs, with the first to adopt them issued for the year 1562.[40]

The new church calendar of February 1561 supplies the date for official recognition of accession day, preceding by three years the earliest evidence for celebrations of the day in churchwardens' accounts and by fifteen years the first surviving form of prayer. No

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[34] Printers exercised some discretion; subsequent editions of the BCP gave various versions, e.g. 'Ini. Reg. Eliz.'.
[35] *The Psalter, or, Psalmes of Dauid* (1563), STC 2384.5, sig. Biii^{r}. Accession day was also included in the calendar of a book of private prayers published in Latin with royal approval, *Preces Priuatae in Studiosorum Gratiam Collect[a]e, & Regia Authoritate Approbat[a]e* (London, 1564; STC 20378), sig. *4v-*5r: see W.K. Clay, *Private Prayers put forth by Authority during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Parker Society, Cambridge 1851), p. 223.
[36] 'Dechre teyrna Eliza.', in *Lliver Gweddi Gyffredin …* (1567), STC 16435, sig. [symbol] 10r [see file 'STC 16435 sign for ref in footnote 36.tif' for the symbol required between 'sig.' and '10r']].
[37] *The Holie Bible* [1568?], STC 2099, sig. (i)^{r}. Editions of the BCP and the Bible can be difficult to date, as not all of them bear a printed year of publication, and subsequent handwritten dates may be inaccurate: in such cases STC offers an approximation. The first year given in the 'almanacke' that accompanied the calendar may indicate a more precise publication date, or the insertion of an earlier printed version of the calendar: in this case, the almanacke begins with 1561.
[38] E.g. articles for Guest (Rochester, 1565), Grindal (province of York, 1571) and Sandys (London, 1571) in W. H. Frere and W.P.M. Kennedy (eds), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation* (3 vols; London, 1910), hereafter 'Frere and Kennedy', III, 157, 254, 283, 303.
[39] See references in notes 81 and 83 below.
[40] John Securis, *An Almanacke and Prognostication for the yere 1562* (London, 1562; STC 510), sig. Ciii^{v}; Nostradamus, *An Almanack for the Yere. M. D. lxiij. Composed by M. Michael Nostradamus Doctour in Phisicke, of Salon of Craux in Prouince ...* ([London: s.n.], [1563]; STC 492.9), sig. Avii^{v}; Joachim Hubrigh, *An Almanacke, and Prognostication, for the Yeare of our Lorde God, 1565* (London, 1565; STC 462.5), sig. B5v; Philip Moore, *A Fourtie Yeres Almanacke, with a Prognostication …* (London, [1567]; STC 484), sig. Bviii^{r}; Thomas Stephins, *A Newe Almanacke and Prognostication for the Yeare of our Lorde God, MDLXIX* (London, [1569]; STC 515.27), sig. Bvii^{v}.

contemporary explanation for this recognition seems to exist, but two possibilities – these are not exclusive – can be inferred. First, it may have been a matter of practical convenience, which was the main motivation for most of the other revisions. The calendar of the 1549 BCP, in marking only a small number of holy days, had been unusual. The successive re-introductions of the names of further saints' days, other customary days and astrological and astronomical notations in the 1552 and 1559 calendars and more fully in the 1561 calendar restored a supplementary purpose of many medieval church calendars – the provision of a secular almanac. While some of the lesser saints' days were deemed to have continuing ecclesiastical relevance as patronal days of churches and colleges and as dates of historical significance, the chief reason for all the re-introduced 'days' was that the names of these days – rather than numbered days of the month – were commonly used to mark dates or periods in the year. As Cressy in particular has emphasized, this customary method of dating by the names of days was used for legal documents and economic transactions; for the start of terms in law courts, schools and the universities; for the beginning of seasons, and for the days for markets, fairs, and agricultural tasks.[41] Another indication of these almanac features was that from 1559 the BCP calendar was accompanied by 'A brief declaration when euery terme beginneth and endeth'. Given these traditional practices, the addition of accession day may have been a

[41] The civil convenience of including the lesser saints' days was stated in the *Preces Priuatae* of 1564, sig Bbvii^{r}, and later by Archbishop Whitgift, quoted in David Cressy, 'God's time, Rome's time, and the calendar of the English Elizabethan regime', *Viator*, 34 (2003), 396. See also J.T. Tomlinson, *The Prayer Book Articles and Homilies* (London, 1897), pp. 6–7, 10; Proctor and Frere, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 340–1; Siegenthaler, 'Zodiac and prayer book', 427–32 (though note that the commissioners in 1561 confirmed the inclusion of astrological notations, even if, as Siegenthaler states, the printers may earlier have decided some of the details); *The Book of Common Prayer: the Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford, 2011), pp. 751–4; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, chs. 1–2. A further almanac feature added to the monthly tables in the new calendar from 1561 was the times of sunrise and sunset.

matter of civil convenience: to record the start or change of regnal years, which was another common method of dating documents – in the fifth, sixth, seventh year (or suchlike) of a king's or queen's reign. One style of churchwardens' records of bell-ringing on accession day was for 'the Beginninge of the Quenes yere' or the day of the 'Chandge', 'exchaunge' or 'alteracion' of the year of her reign.[42] Churchwardens' accounts were commonly dated by, or contained references to, regnal years.[43]

However, no earlier church calendar had included the sovereign's accession day; evidently the date of Elizabeth's accession was considered to have exceptional significance. The main purpose for its official recognition was surely the obvious religious and political reason: to mark the replacement of the Catholic rule of Queen Mary and the restoration of a protestant sovereign and a protestant church, now that the new reign and a new religious settlement were becoming established. The queen was already being portrayed as an English version of Deborah, the Old Testament prophetess who had restored the true faith and brought peace to Israel (Judges, 4-5).[44] This restoration of protestantism was sufficient cause in itself, but the commissioners responsible for the new calendar may have been influenced by an example from the previous change of religious regime, during the reign of Mary – to emulate in some degree Cardinal Pole's creation of a general anniversary commemoration for the reconciliation of

[42] Churchwardens' accounts for St Mary Woolchurch, London, 1579, London Metropolitan Archives [LMA], P69/MRY14/B/006/MS01013/001, fo. 34v, and for St Mary Woolnoth, London, 1574, LMA, P69/MRY15/B/006/MS01002/001a, fo. 173r; *Selections from the Records of the City of Oxford*, ed. William Turner (Oxford, 1880), p. 356 (1572); *St Martin's in the Fields. Accounts*, ed. Kitto, pp. 321, 323, 349, 365, 425, 433 (1580–91); J.P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire* (2 vols, London, 1877, 1880), II, 221 (Prestbury, 1584); *REED Norwich 1540–1642,* ed. David Galloway (Toronto, 1984), p. 95 (Norwich, 1589).
[43] E.g. All Hallows London Wall, LMA, P69/ALH5/B/003/MS05090/002, fo. 6r; All Hallows Staining, LMA, P69/ALH6/B/008/MS04956/002, fo. 114v), St Mary Woolnoth, LMA, P69/MRY15/B/006/MS01002/001a, fo. 177r.
[44] A.N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth. Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 23–5.

England with the papacy, ordered in 1556 and observed on 30 November both in that year and in 1557; [45] Parker owned a copy of Pole's order.[46] Each of the commissioners also had their own reasons for annual remembrance of the queen's accession. All of them – not just Parker and Grindal, but also William Bill, dean of Westminster, and the ecclesiastical lawyer, Walter Haddon – had been theologically unsympathetic to Mary's regime and had to varying degrees suffered personal disappointments and difficulties during her reign.[47] With Elizabeth's accession they had regained positions of power and influence, from which they were now working to achieve still further protestant reforms in the Church.

The queen's birthday was added to the church calendar by at least 1580.[48] At first, 'Nati. of Eliza.' on 7 September was printed in red. In some of what appear to be later copies it appears in black,[49] but red letter became standard from the mid 1580s, both in the BCP and in calendars included in some volumes of the Bible.[50] In contrast to the inclusion of accession day,

[45] *The Anglican Canons 1529 –1947*, ed. Gerald Bray (Church of England Record Society, 6; Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 74–7; *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* vol. 6, *1556–1557*, ed. Rawdon Brown (2 vols, London, 1881), I, pp. 274, 348, II, p. 836; and Eamon Duffy, 'Cardinal Pole Preaching, St Andrew's Day, 1557', in Eamon Duffy and David Loades (eds), *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 176–200, esp. pp. 184–5, 187–8 (evidence for observances appears to survive only for London, but this may be because of the limitations of parish records for anniversary celebrations, described below). An anniversary celebration (both religious and secular) had been proposed during Henry VIII's reign, to mark the original break with Rome; but this was suggested privately and was probably not known in the 1560s: Stanley Anglo, 'An early Tudor Programme for Plays and other Demonstrations against the Pope', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 20 (1957), 176–9, and see Strong, 'Accession day', 97.

[46] *Anglican Canons*, ed. Bray, p. xlvi, citing 'Constitutiones legantine editae Londini sub anno 1555…', in Synodalia, Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 121, p. 7.

[47] See their articles in ODNB. Grindal and Bill were denied promotion to the episcopate by Mary's accession; Grindal went into exile; Bill was ejected from the mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge, Haddon from the presidency of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Parker from the mastership of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and other ecclesiastical posts, although it should be noted that Parker enjoyed his time as 'a private individual'; Bill conformed quietly, and Haddon practiced in the Court of Arches and sat as an MP in Mary's parliaments.

[48] Brightman, *English Rite,* I, ccxiii, states 'by 1578', which may refer to the BCP, STC 16306.7, sic. Cv^{r} but see more definitely STC 16307 (1580), sig. [Di^{r}], and 16309.1 (1581), sig. [Di^{r}], and the Bible, STC 2129 (1580), sig. ¶¶7r.

[49] The BCPs STC 16309.5 [1582?], sig.C6^{r}, and STC 16310 [1585], sig. C6^{r}.

[50] The BCPs STC 16311.3 (1586), sig. [Di^{r}], and STC 16311.7 (1587), sig. [Di^{r}], and the Bible, STC 2142 (1584), sig. Avi^{r}.

this addition followed, rather than preceded, the first known evidence of parish celebrations of the birthday, by about six years – again, perhaps significantly, at Lambeth, beside the archbishop's palace.[51] No instruction for any change in the calendar has been found, and it is possible that the royal printers acted in response to the celebrations that had begun in and near London; but such an addition could not have proceeded without some approval from the Church authorities.

Accession day and St Hugh's day

To the modern reader, there is a striking anomaly in the first printed records of the queen's accession day. In the new calendar of 1561 as published during most of the 1560s in BCPs, psalters and Bibles and copied into unofficial almanacs, its date is given as 18 November – not 17 November.[52] This was possibly because during the early years of the reign, the start of the regnal year followed an earlier practice, common from the reigns of Edward II to Henry VIII, of being dated from the day *after* the death of the previous sovereign.[53] However, this practice had been set aside in 1547, and the placement of accession day in the calendar may well have been for a more mundane reason, that of typography. Among the names of lesser saints that were reinstated in the church's calendar, the commissioners included St Hugh. If the queen's accession was indeed reckoned to be 17 November, the same date as 'St Hugh's day', this

[51] *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts,* ed. Drew, p. 120.
[52] Noted without explanation in *Liturgical Services*, ed. Clay, p. 454. See the references to BCPs in note 28 above, and the almanacs compiled by Securis, Nostradamus, and Hubrigh in note 40. William Johnson, *A New Almanacke and Prognostication, for the Yeare of our Lorde, 1569* … (London, [1569]; STC 466.9), sig. Biv^{r}, placed the date of Elizabeth's accession between 18 and 19 November.
[53] C.R. Cheney (ed.), *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (Cambridge, 2000 edn), pp. 34–8, with thanks to Shelagh Sneddon, Michael Prestwich and Robin Frame for advice.

created a difficulty for the royal printers, because, in the columns of the calendar's cramped monthly tables, there was no space to include two named days on the same line. The printers appear to have followed customary calendrical usage and given priority to the traditional date for St Hugh, and simply placed 'Init. Regni. Eliza.' in the next available space, on the line below and so ostensibly for 18 November.

This calendar entry may have resulted in some early celebrations of accession day taking place on 18 November. Payments for bell-ringing on the anniversary do not always record it for the numbered day of the month and, as is noted in the next section, accounts only record extraordinary payments: if, for instance, extempore prayers were said, no evidence for these would survive. The chief significance of the calendar entry was the provision of permission and encouragement to mark the occasion, rather than the precise date on which particular parishes observed it. Moreover, those churchwardens' accounts that do specify a date have the bell-ringing on 17 November,[54] which indicates both knowledge of the correct date (from recollection, or from records) and an understanding that the calendar contained a typographical double-entry. The effect, though, was that according to the calendars in all the BCPs and Bibles (and in almanacs) published from 1562 until the late 1560s, the celebrations for the anniversary on 17 November took place on St Hugh's day – and given the cost of buying new copies, these BCPs and Bibles would have remained in use for many years after their original purchase. This is the most likely explanation of an apparent conflation in numerous

[54] E.g. St Botolph Aldersgate, LMA, P69/BOT1/B/013/MS01454/068, 069 (for 1564–5, 1565–6], and All Hallows London Wall, LMA, P69/ALH5/B/003/MS05090/002, fo. 6r (for 1569–70). For St Peter Westcheap, London, 18 November is given for 1566, but in the previous two years and in later years the date is 17 November: LMA, P69/PET4/B/006/MS00645/001, fos 79v, 83v

churchwardens' accounts and other records between St Hugh's day and the queen's accession day, and the particularly puzzling references to Hugh in parishes with no known associations with him. Whether in institutions and areas which did have such associations, including parishes in the diocese of Lincoln, or in places elsewhere, those who referred to St Hugh were using the name of the day given in the official church calendar; and they were very likely doing so simply as a means of dating, rather than for any religious reason. They were not necessarily seeking to perpetuate St Hugh's memory, or using accession day as a way to satisfy conservative or Catholic religious preferences.[55] The churchwardens of a Hertfordshire parish were perfectly clear when in 1575 they recorded the 'Ringing [on] St Hewes daye in reioysing of the quenes prosperous Range [reign]'.[56] As a Victorian expert on churchwardens' accounts noted, 'the people were true to their Prayer Book in giving [accession day] the nomenclature which the church had conferred upon it'.[57]

The typographical ambiguity – if it was such – was ended in new editions of the BCP and the Bible published from around 1570 onwards (or, just possibly, a decision was taken to move the start of the regnal year). 'Hugh bish.' was removed altogether from the calendar, and 'Init. Regni. Eliza.' was moved to 17 November.[58] It is not known who was responsible for these alterations, but it is improbable that the royal printers alone would have altered the church's

[55] See also the story associated with Lincoln College, Oxford, below p. 000.
[56] *The Records of St Michael's Parish Church, Bishops' Stortford*, ed. J.L. Glasscock (1882), p. 58, and similarly (for St Peter's in St Albans) *Tudor Churchwardens' Accounts*, ed. Anthony Palmer (Hertfordshire Record Society, 1, 1985), pp. 91, 130, and see the comments in Thomas North, *The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln* (Leicester, 1882), pp. 229–32.
[57] J. Charles Cox, 'The registers, and churchwardens' and constables' accounts of the parish of Repton', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,* 1 (1879), 34.
[58] For BCPs see STC 16297 [1566?, though its almanacke begins with 1572], sig. [Dii^{r}], and STC 16299 [1570?], sig.Cvii^{r}; for Bibles, STC 2105 [1569?], sig. Cvi^{r}, and STC 2107 [1572?], sig. [Di^{r}].

calendar to the extent of expunging the name of a saint. If not initiated by the archbishop of Canterbury, the changes must have been sanctioned by him. Other changes were more within the remit of the printers. In some of the new editions of the BCP the anniversary of the queen's accession was given more space, spreading the fuller 'Initium regni. Elizabeth' over the two lines for 17 and 18 November,[59] or the phrase was translated from the Latin, into 'Elizabeth began her reign'.[60] Hugh was also replaced by accession day in at least some of the almanacs.[61] Although references to St Hugh continued in a few parishes, even to the end of the reign,[62] they became less common. This was not, though, as Strong assumed, a matter of 'an evolution from St Hugh's day into Accession Day',[63] so much as more parishes acquiring new BCPs and Bibles which contained the adjusted version of the calendar.

Churchwardens' accounts and church bells

The inclusion of accession day and the queen's birthday in red letter in the church calendar were invitations to the clergy and churchwardens to take notice of the anniversaries. For reasons that will be considered in a later section, the calendar entries were not accompanied by instructions on how the anniversaries were to be observed: any thanksgiving was permissive rather than a requirement. To a substantial degree, Strong, Cressy and Hutton were therefore

[59] STC 16306.9 [1579?], sig. Cvii^{r}.
[60] STC 16305a [1570?: the almanacke begins with 1575], sig. [Avii^{r}].
[61] E.g. Joachim Hubrigh, *An Almanacke and Prognostication, for the Yere of our Lorde God, 1569* (London, [1569]; STC 463), sig Aviii^{r}, and Stephins, *A Newe Almanacke and Prognostication for the Yeare of our Lorde God, MDLXIX* (London, [1569]; STC 515.27), sig. Bvii^{v}.
[62] Strong, 'Accession day', 90; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells,* p. 51. In Bedfordshire, Northill changed from 'St Hewe's daye' to the 'quen's day' in the 1580s, but Shillington persisted with 'saynt Hewe' or 'St Hughe' until the end of the reign: *Elizabethan Churchwardens' Accounts*, ed. J.E. Farmiloe and Rosita Nixseaman (Bedfordshire Record Society, 33, 1953), pp. xxi, 22–4, 28–9, 63–8, 74, 84–5, 103, 106.
[63] Strong, 'Accession day', 89.

correct in arguing that the celebrations indicated in churchwardens' accounts and civic records were 'spontaneous' local initiatives. But this was within a context of encouragement from the church's leaders; the calendar in the BCP and in Bibles supplied a general or 'national' communication of the idea for local observances. This goes a long way towards explaining the sporadic beginnings of bell-ringing for these occasions. These could arise from independent decisions to act on the calendar entries by clergymen or churchwardens scattered across the realm; they were not solely dependent on transmission by the proximity of local example, from one parish to another.

Payments for bell-ringing listed in churchwardens' accounts provide the most numerous, the best available and, for most parishes, the only records for local commemorations of the two royal anniversaries. The ringing on these days plainly had much importance for the communities in which it became a settled practice, and here accession day became 'the primary bell-ringing occasion of the year'.[64] But the evidence from churchwardens' accounts deserves further reflection, as it is both partial and potentially misleading. As Andrew Foster has calculated, only a small proportion of the accounts survive – for perhaps 8% of the 9,244 parishes in England and Wales, and these are distributed very unevenly between the regions and between the ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses. Not only is there a preponderance of accounts for southern, wealthier and urban parishes – the northern province is particularly poorly represented – but regional and diocesan survival rates within the province of Canterbury are out of step with concentrations of population and parishes.[65] These patterns

[64] Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 480.
[65] Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts of early modern England and Wales: some problems to note, but much to be gained,' in Katherine L. French, Gary M. Gibbs and Beat A. Kumin (eds), *The Parish in English Life, 1400-*

of survival cast doubt on arguments about the pattern of observance, as they favour the southern parishes that Strong, Cressy and Hutton have argued adopted both commemorations quickly. Even for parishes where accounts survive, the evidence should not be mistaken as comprehensive. Churchwardens could be careless in their record keeping. By definition, accounts only recorded items and services for which payment was required, and details of disbursements were usually limited to extraordinary expenses, rather than ordinary or regular types of expenditure. They do not normally report the holding and character of church services and the preaching of sermons. Nor do they record the most common use of the church bells, the ringing of a single bell for a short period to summon parishioners to services and sermons.[66]

As extraordinary payments for bell-ringing are the chief evidence for local observances of the royal anniversaries, it has been easy to conclude both that the churchwardens' accounts are substantially adequate as records of the character and extent of commemorations of the two anniversaries, and that, in Strong's words, the ringing of bells was the 'most essential feature' of these occasions.[67] Strong also argued that the payments often made it possible 'to establish when a particular parish began to observe Accession Day',[68] and Cressy and Hutton have similarly assumed that they enable assessment of the pattern of the celebrations. Given that any additional evidence in these accounts, in archives of town councils and in modern collections of records of public performances[69] is often concerned with drinking, eating,

1600 (Manchester, 1997), pp. 76–84. The number of parishes is from Archbishop Whitgift's report to James I in 1603, in Roland Usher, *The Reconstruction of the English Church* (2 vols; New York and London, 1910), I, 241.

[66] For instructions on the use of bells included in the royal injunctions of 1559 and in later visitation articles, Frere and Kennedy, III, 14–15, 165, 257, 341, and see also Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 469–70.

[67] Strong, 'Accession day', 88.

[68] Ibid.

[69] The *Records of Early Modern Drama [REED]* (Toronto, 1979 and continuing).

bonfires and other entertainments, a further implication is that the anniversaries were primarily occasions for festivities in a 'secular' sense (Haigh's 'booze-up'). Yet as the royal anniversaries were marked in the *church* calendar, a safer assumption would be that the earliest and the most widespread types of observance were religious. The calendar entries were available as a prompt and a theme for sermons, and probably for adjustments in church services. When the anniversaries fell on the most regular days for worship, on Sundays and on Wednesdays and Fridays, when reading of the litany was required, there may have been use of or special emphasis on the BCP prayer for the queen, or embellishment by singing of psalms or 'godly songs'. On other days of the week, some churches (and collegiate chapels and cathedrals) may have arranged to hold services. These religious observances did not necessarily require special expenditure, or such expenditure might not be readily apparent in the surviving accounts: for instance, especially for the early years of the reign the practice of psalm singing might be 'hidden' in the annual fees paid to 'singing men' or in the general references to song-, singing- and pricksong-books.[70] If no expenditure was required or if the expenditure was subsumed into other payments, the religious observance would not be indicated in churchwardens' accounts.[71]

Even much of ringing of bells on the anniversaries – to announce services or sermons – would not have been reported. The payments recorded for bell-ringing were for exceptional episodes, in places where and in years when there was ringing for longer periods than usual,

[70] For example, St Peter Westcheap, London, LMA, P69/PET4/B/006/MS00645/001, fo 57v and St Mary-at-Hill, London, LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/003, fo 817r; *Accounts of the Churchwardens of … St Michael, Cornhill*, ed. Overall, p. 149 and see Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Pre-Reformation England* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 108–112. For later specific references to purchases of psalms and ballads, see below, p. 000.
[71] A rare instance is *Churchwardens' accounts of S. Edmund & S. Thomas, Sarum, 1443–1702*, ed. Henry Swayne (Salisbury, 1896), pp. 285–6: a payment for 'great candels to light … the church … at service time and sermon'.

and often by a larger number of ringers – the payments were mostly for preparing the bells and greasing the ropes for prolonged ringing, or for food and drink to sustain and reward the ringers for these unusual sessions[72] – because the clergyman and churchwardens had decided to give special emphasis to the anniversary, making it an occasion not just for a sermon and prayers but for wider celebrations in the parish community. The prolonged bell-ringing was the festive 'music' that announced and accompanied these types of celebrations. Once some parishes had started to pay for special bell ringing, this is recorded for every succeeding year.[73] But numerous churchwardens' accounts show payments just for some periods or for occasional years.[74] In these parishes the records may have been poorly kept, or the costs were absorbed into general payments of annual fees or wages, or the ringers supplied their own provisions. But it is also likely that the records are accurate, and that it should not be assumed that the first record of payment for bell-ringing in a particular parish was the start of a continuing annual practice. Nor do payments for bell-ringing on the anniversaries appear in all of the surviving churchwardens' accounts.[75] In some parishes, particularly early in the reign and in parts of northern England, this was probably because they disliked the suppression of Catholicism or

[72] E.g. *The Transcripts of the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Tilney All Saints, Norfolk, 1443 to 1589*, ed. A.D. Stallard (London, 1922), pp. 237, 238, 240; *ECDD* for St Nicholas, Warwick in the 1568 list, p. 42, and churches in London, Eltham, and Wing in the 1571 list, p. 52; also the '7 men that rang the bells' at All Hallows, London Wall, in the 1569 list, p. 43; and the 'sixe' and 'vi' men for 1584 and 1586 in *St Martin's in the Fields. Accounts*, ed. Kitto, pp. 365, 386.

[73] E.g. ibid., from 1575 to the end of the reign.

[74] See e.g. Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse,* pp. 232–3, for payments at St Peter Westcheap in London from 1564 to 1567, but then none until 1576 (when the parish also paid for the form of prayer: see ECDD in the 1576 list, p. 38). Another example is *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St Nicholas, Strood,* ed. Henry Plomer (Kent Records, 5, 1927), pp. 53–76, which show only scattered references for accession day (1577, 1591, 1598) and the queen's birthday (1580, 1581); and see *Calendar of the Tavistock Parish Records*, ed. Worth, pp. 30, 38, which records ringing in 1573 and then 1588, at which point the editor, finding nothing further, resorted to stating that it 'was probably an annual charge'.

[75] Hutton, *Merry England*, pp. 149–50.

other aspects of the religious changes; later, it may have been because of instances of political, economic or social discontent. But for other parishes, the explanation may be that churchwardens could not afford the costs of prolonged ringing or find a sufficient number of experienced ringers, or that the bells (or a single bell) in the church were not suitable for this type of ringing.

More simply, parishes may not have wanted prolonged bell-ringing every year, or at all. But the absence of payment for bell-ringing does not necessarily mean an absence of local celebration, because this type of bell-ringing was not the primary form of commemoration. As churchwardens' accounts do not normally record sermons or services – or the ringing of a single bell to summon parishioners for these purposes – they almost certainly under-estimate the religious thanksgivings for the anniversaries. It is entirely possible that sermons and prayers for accession day and the queen's birthday began earlier and were more common and widespread than is indicated in these records.[76] But this can only be speculation. The unsatisfactory conclusion is that the evidence does not allow an adequate assessment of the local beginnings and the geographical spread and extent of the celebrations.

'Holy days'?

While the addition of the royal anniversaries to the church calendar was an innovation, it was a tentative one. The inclusion of accession day was not, at first, accompanied by any known instructions for observance of the day or by other comment from the authorities, and the first

[76] Nor, it may be added, does lack of payments for bell ringing necessarily mean a lack of popular festivities.

extant form of prayer for the occasion was not published for another fifteen years. Nor did the archbishops issue instructions for celebration of the queen's birthday. Why?

There is no indication of an impetus from the queen herself. Her religious instincts and preferences were conservative.[77] None of the surviving evidence suggests that she initiated general celebrations for the anniversaries, or took an interest in their religious commemoration. Although from the middle of her reign the queen did attend the tilts and other secular entertainments held on accession day, she appears not to have had sermons or special prayers for the day at court or in the royal chapels; and she is known to have been present at only one sermon on an anniversary, this on a Sunday and during the special circumstances of celebrations for the defeat of the Spanish Armada.[78]

The initiative came squarely from the ecclesiastical commissioners in 1561 and more generally from the bishops, though perhaps with approval from some members of the privy council. But these had a problem. They were persuaded that names of many saints' days should be restored to the church calendar, as a matter of civil convenience. But these had been traditional days for Catholic religious devotions, and the restored protestant authorities did not want the re-appearance of these saints' names in the calendar to encourage a continuance or revival of what they considered to be 'superstitious' practices. Their answer to this problem was to create a firm distinction between the holy days as officially defined in 1552, and the reinstated names of other saints' days. They did so not just by the use of 'red letter' and 'black

[77] Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethans* (London, 2003), pp. 109–18.
[78] See 'A calendar of sermons preached at court during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I', p. 47, on a disk included in Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court. Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998).

letter', but also by attaching to the revised calendar a new list of days headed 'These to be obserued as holy dayes, and none other'. This list was included in all subsequent editions of the BCP,[79] and the bishops were much concerned to enforce the difference between these types of named calendar days. The observance of holy days and suppression of catholic practices were among the matters which they addressed in private discussions during 1560 and 1561 on how to ensure the adoption of reformed practices in the Church.[80] These discussions resulted in the publication of a set of orders in October 1561 which, among its eleven items, prescribed that the only days to be observed as holy days were 'those expressed for holye dayes in the Kalendar late set foorth by the Quenes aucthoritie'.[81] A further set of orders, the *Advertisements* of 1566, stated that the only 'holidayes' were those set out in the Act of 1552 and in 'the new calendar authorysed by the Queenes maiesty'.[82] The implementation of these orders was investigated through episcopal visitations, often by use of similar terms or by references to days that had been 'abrogated or not appointed as holy days … by the New Kalendar'.[83] As part of their concern to suppress Catholic practices, the archbishops and bishops also regulated and investigated the use of church bells. During the early 1560s some London churchwardens recorded the purchase of injunctions or a 'precepte' against ringing.[84] Visitation

[79] STC 16295 (1562), sig. Aviii^{r}, and see e.g. a 1601 edn of the BCP, STC 16324.5, sig. Aviii^{r}.
[80] Successive drafts of their resolutions moved from the phrase 'set out in red in the kalendar', to citation of the Edwardian Act, to citation of both this Act and the 'New Kalendar': Frere and Kennedy, III, 62, 69–70.
[81] *Orders taken the x. day of October* [1561]¸ STC 9186, sig. Aii^{v}, and see Frere and Kennedy, III, 110.
[82] *Aduertisements*, 25 Jan. 1566, STC 10027, sig. Bi^{r}, and see Frere and Kennedy, III, 176.
[83] E.g. Guest (Rochester, 1565), Bentham (Coventry and Lichfield, 1565), and Grindal (York province, 1571), in Frere and Kennedy, III, 160, 169–70, 256; *Articles … by [Horne] bishop of Winchester* (1570), STC 10352; *Articles … set foorth by ... [Cooper] bishop of Lincoln* (1571), STC 10228.5; Grindal (Canterbury province, 1576) in *The Remains of Edmund Grindal*, ed. William Nicholson (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1843), p. 160; *Articles … [Westfaling] bishop of Hereford* [1586], STC 10215.
[84] St Botolph Aldgate, LMA, P69/BOT2/B/012/MS09235/001 (part 1), fo. 75r: paid, between 13 and 20 December 1563, 'for the In iunccion for ringinge'; St Mary Woolnoth, LMA, P69/MRY15/B/006/MS01002/001a, fo. 119r: 'Itm paide the 29 of November [1563] to my lord of Londons officer for a precepte for ryng of bells order'.

articles enquired whether there was 'any ringing or tolling of bells to call the people together' on the 'abrogated' days or at 'unlawful' times, or which was 'superstitious' or 'contrary to good order or lawe'.[85] Even on holy days, Grindal as archbishop at York from 1570 and then at Canterbury from 1575 wanted to ensure that ringing was undertaken 'moderately', 'without excess', and was not 'superfluous'.[86]

In these contexts, the commissioners and the bishops had to be cautious. While stabilization and extension of the new religious settlement was proceeding, they could not issue orders requiring special sermons, prayers, lessons, psalms or services for a new annual religious observance, beyond those established in the act of 1552. To do so – and to seem to give the queen a status approaching that of the saints commemorated with holy days – would have compromised their efforts to suppress abrogated saints' days and other Catholic practices. But the commissioners could add accession day in red letter to the calendar, and during the following years the bishops could tolerate or encourage clergy and churchwardens who wanted to give substance to this calendar entry by introducing their own thanksgivings for the anniversary. Given the vigilance of the Church authorities towards the use of church bells, Grindal as bishop of London must have been aware of the prolonged bell-ringing in London on accession day from the mid-1560s; and Parker and his officials could hardly have missed the bells rung in the church adjoining the gates of his palace at Lambeth from 1567.[87] Strictly, as the

[85] Frere and Kennedy, III, 209 (Parkhurst, Norwich, 1569), 256 (Grindal, York province, 1571), 309 (Sandys, London, 1571), 341, 344 (Freke, Rochester, 1572), 383 (Parker, Winchester, 1575); *Articles … by [Horne] bishop of Winchester* (1570); *Remains of Grindal*, p. 160 (Canterbury province, 1576); *Articles …[Bishop Chadderton] within the diocesse of Chester* (1580), STC 10174.5.
[86] Frere and Kennedy, III, 257, 286 (York province, 1571; and see 383 for Parker, Winchester, 1575); *Remains of Grindal*, p. 160 (Canterbury province, 1576).
[87] Haigh, *Elizabeth*, p. 162, observes that the bell-ringing at Lambeth parish church was 'presumably encouraged by Archbishop Parker'.

calendar stood during that decade, this bell-ringing was taking place on the 'abrogated' St Hugh's day, but it was not prohibited as superstitious or superfluous.

The episcopal injunctions and an early ambivalence of some protestants about the use of church bells[88] – because associated with catholicism – probably explain why the celebratory ringing of bells on accession day appears to have been slow to begin and to spread. But in all the parishes where it became established, and where, later, it began for the queen's birthday, it was allowed by ecclesiastical authorities and civic officials who judged that the Church's published rules need not apply to the royal anniversaries. This – and the original placement of accession day in the church calendar – presumably explains the story from about 1570 of the mayor of Oxford seeking to stop bell-ringing by fellows of Lincoln College on 17 November because he assumed that this was for a catholic purpose, until he was informed that it was for the queen's accession day, and thereupon decided that the bells of the city's other churches should also be rung.[89] Some further evidence survives of instructions from the authorities: in 1571, the ringing at Ludlow was 'at the appoyntment of mr Baylieffes', and at Wing in Buckinghamshire 'by coma[n]dmentt of the paryter ffrom the bossoppe'.[90] Where special sermons were delivered and where any special services were conducted on the day, these too were being tolerated, if not encouraged, by the ecclesiastical authorities. John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury, preached on the anniversary in 1567 (a Monday) at London's premier pulpit, Paul's

[88] Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 467–8, 499.
[89] Bodleian Library, Oxford, Twyne MS XXIII/276, printed in Andrew Clark, *Lincoln* [College] (1898), p. 46, and see Strong, 'Accession day', 88, and Cressy, *Bonfire and Bells*, p. 51. There are some factual difficulties with this story, recorded decades after the supposed event, but the essence may well be accurate and it is significant that the incident, or this version of it, was recalled. If true, the fellows were not necessarily mourning the death of Queen Mary (as the mayor is said to have assumed), or marking St Hugh's day.
[90] *Churchwardens' Accounts of … Ludlow*, ed. Wright, p. 153; Frederic Ouvry, 'Extracts from the churchwardens accounts of the parish of Wing', *Archaeologia*, 36 (1855), 238.

Cross, justifying religious rejoicings for a day that had brought deliverance and salvation.[91] In 1571, the city authorities in Oxford paid for a sermon, and from 1572 added bread and wine for a communion service, as well as the costs for entertainments.[92]

All the evidence supports the conventional conclusion that celebrations of accession day became more widespread from 1570, after the intensification of fears of Catholic plots following the Northern rebellion and the pope's excommunication of the queen, and probably also after the massacre of protestants in Paris on St Bartholomew's day in 1572. From this period, too, the anniversary began to be described in some churchwardens' accounts and civic records as 'the Quines holy day'.[93] Notwithstanding the developing popular festivities, the anniversary was increasingly regarded as having special religious significance, reinforced by the more widespread special ringing of bells – and it is important to stress that throughout the reign church bells remained 'powerful celebratory sounds because they were fundamentally heard as sacred sounds, intimately connected with the liturgical life of the parish'.[94] With indications during the 1570s and 1580s of more secure support for the queen's government and for the church settlement but also with growing fears of Catholic plots and a Spanish invasion, the bishops more openly endorsed religious commemoration of accession day, and now added the queen's birthday to the calendar in the BCP as an invitation for further thanksgivings of the queen's rule and the preservation of English protestantism. As will be

[91] Mary Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons 1558–1642* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 75, 136 (though note that the year of the sermon is not certain); John Jewel, *Certain Sermons Preached before the Queens Maiestie, and at Paules Crosse* (London, 1583; STC 14596), sig. D5v–D6r.
[92] *Selections from the Records of the City of Oxford*, pp. 344, 350, 356; Strong, 'Accession day', 88.
[93] E.g. H.T. Tilley and H.B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Warwickshire* (Birmingham, 1910), p. 251 (1575).
[94] Robert Adam Hill, 'The reformation of bells in early modern England' (PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2012), p. 28, and see pp. 4–5, 22–9.

noted in the next section, distribution of printed prayers and other religious texts for accession day began even before the publication of the surviving form of prayer in 1576. Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York, preached on accession day during the late 1570s.[95] Sermons at Paul's Cross were probably arranged on accession day each year from this period,[96] and in 1583 John Aylmer, bishop of London, arranged for the archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, to preach in the presence of leading members of the queen's council.[97] The day had acquired a status which caused members of the council to be notified of or to give attention to suspected incidents of disrespect shown towards the anniversary.[98] In parishes with members who were particularly zealous in their protestantism and royalism, there were probably further observances: during the early 1580s, Thomas Bentley, a churchwarden of St Andrew's, Holborn, published additional prayers for use on accession day and established charitable distributions both on that day and on the queen's birthday.[99] The extent and intensity of the religious observances and the use of the term 'holy day' were now such[100] that the anniversaries were criticized as idolatrous both by some puritans and by Catholic polemicists, charges considered

[95] Edwin Sandys, *Sermons made by the Most Reuerende Father in God, Edwin, Archbishop of Yorke* (1585; STC 21713), pp. 44–77. No dates are provided for the two sermons, but Walsham, 'A very Deborah', 149, gives 1578 for one of them.
[96] Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons,* p. 136; Millar MacLure, revised Peter Pauls and Jackson Boswell, *Register of Sermons Preached at Paul's Cross, 1534–1642* (Ottawa, 1989), pp. 61, 62, 66, 67, 68, 72, 74.
[97] John Strype, *Life and Acts of John Aylmer* (1701; Oxford, 1821), p. 68; John Whitgift, *A Most Godly and Learned Sermon Preached at Pauls Crosse the 17 of Nouember, in the Yeare of our Lorde. 1583* (London, 1589; STC 25432), repr. in *Sermons at Paul's Cross, 1521–1642,* ed. Torrance Kirby et al. (Oxford, 2017), pp. 283–99.
[98] Strype, *Aylmer*, p. 56; John Strype, *Life and Acts of John Whitgift* (1718; 3 vols, Oxford, 1822), II, 61–2.
[99] Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones* (London, 1582: STC 1892), pp. 253–306; 'The Bentley register', (1584-1614), LMA, P82/AND/B/008/MS04249, fo. 238r. Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (1988), p. 9, noted that from the 1580s some enthusiasts went so far as to present the day as 'the holiest date in the calendar'.
[100] E.g. *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St Michael's in Bedwardine, Worcester from 1539 to 1603*, ed. John Amphlett (Oxford, 1896), pp. 80 ('hoolie daye', 1579), 81, 83 (and most later years); *REED Coventry*, ed. R.W. Ingram (Toronto, 1981), pp. 286 ('hollyeday', 1578), 327, 344, 346, 359; *REED Bristol*, ed. Mark Pilkinton (Toronto, 1997), pp. 132 ('holliday', 1587), 135, 139–40 (and most later years)

so disturbing that their rebuttal became a common theme in published versions of accession day sermons.[101]

No royal or episcopal order required or suggested that the royal anniversaries should be observed as holy days, although for the more ardent clergy, churchwardens and laity the use of red letter in the calendar probably blurred the distinction. If the anniversaries came to be regarded as 'holy days', how were they observed? The 1552 Act for the keeping of holy days had stated that as these were set aside for religious devotions, 'Christians shoulde cease from all other kynde of labours', which might suggest that they were 'holidays' in the sense of whole days on which secular work and trade were suspended. However, both that Act and the royal injunctions of 1559 did allow work on these days when this seemed necessary, notably during harvests;[102] and from visitation articles it is evident that the concern of the archbishops and bishops was more limited, that work and entertainments should cease and shops and inns should close 'in the time of common prayer, preaching or reading of the homilies'.[103] If this was true of the days which, according to the list attached to the church calendar, were 'to be observed as holy days', then nothing further would have been expected on the royal anniversaries. As is now generally accepted, these were not whole days without work[104] – except in years when they fell on a Sunday, which would also have made it possible to have more extensive thanksgivings. Attention to days of the week for the anniversaries in particular

[101] Strong, 'Accession day', 100–1; Hackett, *Virgin Mother*, pp. 207–11.
[102] *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 132, 133; Frere and Kennedy, III, 15.
[103] Frere and Kennedy, III, 213 (Parker, Norwich, 1569), 266, 267, 287–9 (Grindal, York province, 1571), 299–300 (Cox, Ely, 1571), 307–8 (Sandys, London, 1571), 344 (Freke, Rochester, 1572), and *Remains of Grindal,* p. 171 (Canterbury province, 1576), and see Arthur Hussey, 'Visitations of the archdeacon of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 27 (1905), 224, for a butcher charged in 1586 'for keeping his shop on the holy days in the time of Divine Service'.
[104] See Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 53, 55, for accession day never being 'an official public holiday'.

years may explain some of the variations in the records of the observances for these occasions. Otherwise, aside from a general religious significance that became attached to them, the description of the royal anniversaries as holy days meant only that they were days for special sermons, prayers or services. As noted by Cressy and Hutton, churchwardens' accounts indicate that in some churches the bell-ringing on week days – and, it may be presumed, the sermons and services – occurred outside work hours (the purchase of candles is sometimes recorded), in a few cases early in the morning and more often in the evening (at 'nyght'), which was also more convenient for bonfires and feasting.[105]

Prayers and the purposes of the royal anniversaries

It has been argued that, by having accession day printed in red letter in the church calendar and by allowing special bell-ringing, the archbishops and at least some of the bishops encouraged clergy to mark the anniversary by sermons, prayers, and special arrangement of services, and that from the early 1570s this encouragement was becoming effective and more overt. Texts for use in churches on the anniversary were also becoming available. In 1571 the churchwardens of St Botolph Bishopsgate purchased 'Three newe Prayer Bookes for the Quene'; in 1572 those of St Mary Aldermanbury bought 'viij psalmes appoincted for the day of the [start of the] Quenes Raigne', and those of Tewkesbury paid 'for a prayer sent frome my

[105] Ibid., p. 55; Hutton, *Merry England*, pp. 150–1; Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor state*, p. 24, and see e.g. *Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary the Great, Cambridge,* ed. Foster, pp. 202, 211, 212–3 (and later entries); Charles Mayo, *A History of Wimborne Minster* (London, 1860), pp. 108, 109, 111; Earwaker, East Cheshire, II, 222, and J.C.L. Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent* (London, 1887), pp. 233–5, for ringers at Cranbrook being given dinner in some years, and breakfast in another. For some accession days during the 1590s in Houghton-Le-Spring, bells seem to have been rung for much of the day, as payments were made for the ringers' breakfast, dinner and supper: *Churchwardens' Accounts of Pittington and other Parishes in the Diocese of Durham,* ed James Barmby (Surtees Society, 84, 1888), pp. 267–9.

lorde byshope for the quene'.[106] Three years later, St Mary Aldermanbury obtained 'bookes and ballettes [ballads] concerning ye Quenes maiestie', and St Peter Westcheap 'ij litle bookes of servis for the seaventeenth daie of november'.[107] No copies of these items have been found, but it is evident that the publication of the form of prayer in 1576 did not represent a wholly new practice but a developing trend, in at least some cases on the instructions of particular bishops, including Sandys in London. Given the relatively poor survival of copies of publications from the Elizabethan period and also the loss of the Stationers' Register for 1571 to 1576, it is even possible that the form of prayer was originally published before 1576 and was among the 'books' recorded earlier in some churchwardens' accounts.

Like forms of prayer for special fast and thanksgiving days that had been issued since the early 1560s,[108] the form for accession day made special provisions for the complete succession of daily services prescribed in the BCP, by modification of the lessons and psalms and addition of new prayers to the texts for morning prayer, the litany, holy communion, and evening prayer.[109] The form was reprinted in 1577, and during the following year two new and fuller editions were published, the second of which was also reprinted at least once (a copy for 1590 survives), and possibly in other years. As well as including small alterations to the

[106] LMA, P69/BOT4/B/008/MS04524/001, fo 13v; LMA, P69/MRY2/B/005/MS03556/001, fo. 42v; *Tewkesbury Churchwardens' Accounts, 1563-1624*, ed. CJ Litzenberger (Stroud, 1994), p. 24.
[107] LMA, P69/MRY2/B/005/MS03556/001, fo. 76r; LMA, P69/MRY2/B/005/MS03556/001, fo. 100r, and see lists for 1572 and 1575 in *ECDD*. References to books of prayers 'for the queen' which may seem to be associated with her birthday in 1586 (see *ECDD* list for that year, p. 36) probably relate to the thanksgivings in August of that year for her escape from the 'Babington plot'.
[108] *National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation, vol. I, Special Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings in the British Isles, 1533–1688*, ed. Natalie Mears, Alasdair Raffe, Stephen Taylor and Philip Williamson (Church of England Record Society, 20, Woodbridge, 2013), pp. lxxviii, and see esp. 56–79 for the 1563 form for fast days during a plague epidemic.
[109] The litany was always to be read on accession day, not just when it fell on the 'litany days' of Sunday, Wednesday and Friday prescribed in the BCP; evening prayer was originally specified for cathedrals and collegiate churches only, but for all churches from 1578.

services, one of the new editions added a thanksgiving song, and the other had a further 'antheme or prayer' and 'song of reioysing'.[110] As Jonathan Willis and Katherine Butler have argued, the inclusion of these songs is significant. Along with the psalms specified in the forms of prayer, this confirmed the effect of the psalms and ballads (meaning 'godly' songs) that were already being published for the occasion – the encouragement of congregational singing.[111] With its texts for services and the provision for singing, the intention of the forms of prayer was to make accession day into an impressive religious occasion.

However, interpretation of the significance and meanings of the forms is not straightforward. It is usually assumed that they were widely if not universally obtained for annual use, and that they were 'official' publications. The 1578 editions stated that the form was to be used by 'all the Queenes Maiesties louing subiects euery yeere', but except when the anniversary was on a Sunday it is unlikely that congregations could have been sustained in many parishes for the whole series of services, stretching through much of the day. As already noted, in practice services on weekdays were commonly arranged outside the normal work hours. Moreover, while the evidence of churchwardens' accounts suggests numerous early purchases of the form (particularly in London), some parishes did not obtain copies until the 1580s, and others left no record of doing so.[112] When, in 1585, the sub-dean of York Minster

[110] *A Fourme of Prayer, with Thankes geuyng, to be vsed euery yeere, the. 17. of Nouember, beyng the Day of the Queenes Maiesties Entrie to her Raigne* (London, 1576; STC 16479; London, 1577; STC 16479.5); *A Fourme of Prayer with Thankes giuing, to be vsed of all the Queenes Maiesties Louing Subiects euery yeere, the 17. of Nouember, being the Daye of her Highnesse entry to her Kingdome* (London, 1578; STC 16480 and 16481). See *Liturgical Services*, ed. Clay, pp. 548–61; and Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects', 283–5, 309 (which explains problems with STC datings, and with copies in *Early English Books Online*).

[111] Willis, *Church Music*, pp. 187–8; Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects', 283–94.

[112] See Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor state,* p. 25, and lists in *ECDD* from 1576 to 1586. Purchases are recorded in subsequent years, as late as 1600. Part of the explanation may be that churches in time obtained further copies, either replacing the shorter first version or earlier, worn copies, or to have more copies to assist the conduct of their services. Conversely, absence of references to purchases might be due to poor record keeping.

published his own collection of prayers, psalms and lessons for accession day, his justification was that services for the day were being neglected in northern England.[113]

The evidence for official promotion of the forms is ambiguous. While the forms were published by the queen's printers and the 1578 editions declared that they were 'set forth by authoritie', quite what or whose authority was being asserted is unclear. There were no settled arrangements for ordering other special forms of prayer issued during this period, for such occasions as warfare, epidemics, poor weather, and catholic threats;[114] some were ordered by the queen and more by the council, and others by the archbishops and individual bishops.[115] No evidence of general orders for the composition, publication, distribution or use of the forms for accession day has been found; and although these forms were published for use each year, episcopal visitations of the parishes did not enquire about their purchase, or the observance of the anniversary. Thomas Holland, regius professor of divinity at Oxford, declared in 1601 that one of the glories of accession day was that its 'continual observation … hath not beene imposed upon the church of England by any Ecclesiastiall decree, neyther by any Canon of the Church: but hath bin … voluntarily continued by the religious and dutifull subjects of this Realme in their thankfulness to God'. But this was clearly an overstatement,[116] as the forms of

[113] Edmund Bunny, *Certaine Prayers and Other Godly Exercises, for the Seuenteenth of Nouember …* (London, 1585; STC 4089), sigs. Aii^{r}–Aii^{v}. However, this may have been a rhetorical device; the statement was in a preface of dedication to Archbishop Whitgift, in which Bunny had reason to inflate his purposes.

[114] Published royal orders for special days of worship and their forms of prayer became usual only from the 1620s.

[115] Natalie Mears, 'Brought to book: purchases of special forms of prayer in English parishes, 1558–1640', in Pete Langham, *Negotiating the Jacobean Printed Book* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 33–4; and see the range of types of surviving orders during the 1560s and 1570s in *National Prayers,* I, ed. Mears et al., pp. lxxiv, 50, 54, 59, 79–80, 87–88, 130–1, 132,140–1.

[116] Thomas Holland, [*A*]*n Apologeticall Discourse … for Observing the 17. of November Yeerely in the Forme of an Holy-day*, attached to his *Paneguris D. Elizabethae, Dei Gratiâ Angliae, Franciae, & Hiberniae Reginae. A Sermon Preached at Pauls in London the 17. of November … 1599* (Oxford, 1601), sig. N4. Holland was defending observance of the day against catholic critics, and had particular reason to assert that the religious and popular thanksgivings were wholly spontaneous.

prayer did imply that they bore a degree of 'authoritie', and some London churchwardens recorded that they bought copies of the forms on the instruction of their bishop.[117]

The Elizabethan 'state' was not monolithic, and the queen, her councillors and the higher clergy had different religious as well as political preferences and agendas. As Elizabeth is not known to have encouraged sermons or religious services on the anniversaries, it should not be concluded that she or her council initiated or ordered the publication of the forms of prayer for accession day. If they had done so, this would have made use of the forms compulsory for all dioceses and parishes, resulting in many more records of purchases by churchwardens during the late 1570s. Rather, the evidence suggests that the forms were approved and made available by the archbishops, possibly with tacit support from like-minded councillors, but that their use was left to the decisions of particular bishops and clergymen. If they were 'official … propaganda',[118] this was only to the extent that they were the work of leaders of the church, rather than leaders of the government.

For many, accession day no doubt soon became simply an occasion for expressions of patriotic loyalty to the queen. But the form of prayer expressed more specific purposes. There was a call to obedience, notably in use of the classic scriptural texts on this theme for the second lesson (Romans 13), the epistle (1 Peter 2, 11–17) and the gospel (Matthew 22, 16–22)[119] – a common theme in the Edwardian and Elizabethan homilies, but one that had

[117] E.g. St Mary Woolnoth, LMA, P69/MRY15/B/006/MS01002/001a, fo. 188v, and St Margaret Moses, LMA, P69/MGT2/B/004/MS03476/001, fo. 103r. The bishops were Edwin Sandys and John Aylmer.
[118] Strong, 'Accession day', 94, and see Willis, *Church Music*, p. 188, and the assumption of the queen's active role in Butler, 'Creating harmonious subjects'.
[119] Including, respectively, 'the powers that be are ordeyned of God; whosouer therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'; 'submit your selues unto al maner [of] ordinance[s] of man for the Lordes sake', and 'Giue therefore to Cesar, ye thinges which are Cesars, and giue unto God, those things which are Gods'.

renewed pertinence after the arrival of seminary and Jesuit priests and with the persistence of Catholic recusancy. Obedience would be the theme of Archbishop Whitgift's accession day sermon in 1583. In the use of the BCP 'prayer for the Quenes majesty' and in a new prayer added to the end of the litany, there was thankfulness to God who, by placing and maintaining the queen on the throne, had delivered the English people from the danger of war, oppression, tyranny and superstition, and restored peace, true religion and liberty. This was glorification not primarily of the queen herself – and not prayers for the queen in place of the earlier catholic prayers for the saints – but of divine providence. More strikingly, in the Old Testament readings for the first lesson, there was a choice of long yet carefully selected extracts from stories of rulers who had learned to comply with providential designs: Jehosaphat, who had sent out evangelists to teach the true faith, appointed judges who executed the laws not of man but of God, and ordered prayers that had caused defeat and fear among enemies (chosen from 2 Chronicles, 17–20); Hezekiah, who had removed idols, and listened to the godly when resisting enemies (from 2 Kings, 18–20); and Josiah, who had also purged false images, and had kept a covenant with God (from 2 Chronicles, 34, and 2 Kings, 22–3). The implication was that the queen's duty to the realm was to continue to fulfil God's will in advancing true religion. This was not necessarily a role that the queen wished to undertake – another reason for doubting that the forms of prayer were issued with her approval.

During the 1560s and 1570s the queen and the leaders and more 'godly' members of the church were in tension. As Patrick Collinson commented, Grindal and other reforming bishops felt 'defeated and disappointed' by the religious settlement of 1559, and frustrated by

the queen's 'deep lack of sympathy for cherished principles of reformed religion'.[120] This is evident from close readings of sermons that were addressed to her. As Anne McLaren, Alexandra Walsham and Susan Doran have argued, these had persistent themes of 'oblique criticism' and exhortations to still greater godliness, often expressed by implicit comparisons with Old Testament kings and prophets; in Margaret Aston's words, there was 'endless lecture by analogy'.[121] As Collinson also commented, Grindal and other bishops found 'many opportunities to lead the Church in directions which the queen had not intended', and 'outran what was required by statute and injunctions'.[122] The inclusion of accession day and the queen's birthday in the BCP calendar and the publication of the forms of prayer for accession day were instances, and the forms extended the themes of numerous sermons. During the early 1570s the archbishops and bishops were concerned especially with the persistence of English catholicism, and they were exasperated with the queen's tolerance towards the imprisoned Queen Mary of Scotland, the focus of catholic intrigues. If, as is generally accepted, Grindal was responsible for the form of prayer published in 1576, this may have been one of his initiatives after becoming archbishop of Canterbury during the previous year, and while he was taking a leading part in seeking firmer measures against Catholic recusants and for further reformation in the Church, measures which were being resisted by the queen. From June 1576 Grindal was in outright dispute with her, over his reluctance to carry out her instruction that

[120] Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519–1583. The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London, 1979), pp. 85–6, 99, 118.
[121] McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth*, pp. 23–1; Walsham, 'A very Deborah', 144–51; Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I: an Old Testament King', in Alice Hunt and Anna Whitelock (eds), *Tudor Queenship: the Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 96–104; Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 96–126 (quotation p. 125); and see Collinson, *Elizabethans*, p. 113: 'Queen Elizabeth did not like to be compared to King Hezekiah'.
[122] Collinson, *Grindal*, pp. 99, 118.

the bishops should be told to suppress what she regarded as the unsettling 'prophesyings' of zealous protestant ministers. The second editions of the form of prayer were published after Grindal had effectively been suspended from his post in May 1577, for disobeying the queen's orders.[123] These editions may have been the responsibility of Aylmer, who as dean of the province undertook some of Grindal's duties.[124] The more laudatory praise of the queen in the new songs and anthem were in accordance with Aylmer's more conformist approach, and they perhaps expressed an effort to adjust the delicate balance between 'loyalism' and exhortation.

The forms of prayer were a product of conditions of considerable anxiety for the Elizabethan bishops, and their composition and publication should be understood in these terms. Like the prophetic rhetoric of numerous accession day sermons, their intention was 'double-edged'.[125] The queen was eulogized, but this was the queen in a particular role: as the providential deliverer of protestant godliness. The publication of the forms of prayer is best explained as an escalation of the original purpose for the inclusion of accession day in the church calendar.[126] Archbishops Parker, Grindal and other bishops had their own religious and political agenda. In the new calendar of 1561 they provided an occasion that they hoped would stimulate and sustain bodies of opinion that favoured further protestant reformation, and in time persuade the queen to allow advances on the religious settlement of 1559. Given the

[123] See esp. ibid., chs. 12–13.
[124] However, it should be noted that in 1580 Grindal was trusted by the council to issue a special form of prayer after an earthquake in London, for use throughout the realm: *National Prayers,* I, ed. Mears et al., pp. 140–1.
[125] Walsham, 'A very Deborah', 149.
[126] See also the parallel case of the references to the queen in successive editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*: Thomas S. Freeman, 'Providence and prescription: the account of Elizabeth in Foxe's "Book of martyrs", in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Myth of Elizabeth*, pp. 27–55, argues that the first (1563) edition contained 'prescriptive advice' to the queen, which in the 1570 and 1576 editions – whose distribution was encouraged by the bishops and some members of the privy council – turned into 'implied criticism', as earlier hopes of a thorough reformation were disappointed.

queen's resistance, they had to be cautious and incremental. But during the 1570s the increased observance of accession day, the intensified external and internal threats from catholicism, and renewed efforts to promote reform persuaded Grindal, Sandys[127] and other bishops to encourage further godly enthusiasm by publishing and elaborating the forms of prayer – though they lacked the authority and the support from the queen to make use of the services compulsory in all dioceses. New catholic plots during the early 1580s and war with Spain encouraged growing loyalist sentiments and celebrations of the queen's birthday as well as accession day, and gave the anniversaries a momentum beyond the intended audiences among those who supported or sympathized with the 'godly' cause. The thanksgivings acquired multiple 'patriotic' meanings, including a quasi-religious cult of the queen herself, indicated in the courtly tilts; and particularly after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, they became occasions for mythologizing Elizabeth as the stout defender of the realm and ally of the protestant princes in continental Europe.

The legacy

After the queen's death in 1603, the red-letter entries for her accession day and birthday were removed from the BCP calendar, and 'Hugh bish.' was restored for 17 November.[128] Nevertheless, the significance that the queen's accession day had acquired by the end of her reign gave it a long legacy; as has frequently been noted, for over a century various groups

[127] Sandys may well have been important in the decision to produce the forms. As already noted, he circulated prayers to London parishes during the early 1570s, and preached on accession day in the later 1570s; and records of purchases of forms of prayer were particularly common in London churchwardens' accounts for 1576 and 1577 (see *ECDD*, 1576, p. 38; 1577, p. 34), with St Mary Woolnoth specifying, in 1576, that theirs were on Sandys' instructions (LMA, P69/MRY15/B/006/MS01002/001a, fo. 188v).

[128] See BCP STC 16326, sigs. B6^{r}, B7^{r}.

periodically revived celebrations of the queen on 17 November, sometimes as an implied or explicit criticism of the religious policies of the Stuart monarchs and as an occasion for anti-Catholic demonstrations.[129]

The queen's 'holy days' had another and longer-lasting legacy. They had been specific to Elizabeth, in celebrating a sovereign whose reign ended catholic rule and restored a protestant church. They were not necessarily transferable to her successors. But widespread celebrations of royal anniversaries were useful precedents for a new monarch, especially one who, coming from another kingdom, had particular reasons to impress his new subjects with his own claims to divine sanction. The earlier anniversaries were adapted for James I, and he himself created new religious anniversaries. The king's accession day (24 March) and birthday (19 June) were added in red letter to the Church calendar, and a new form of prayer for accession day was produced, with prayers for the royal family which, as a contrast to the long anxieties about the succession to Queen Elizabeth, emphasized the prospective endurance and stability of the Stuart dynasty. James quickly introduced into England the innovation of an annual royal

[129] Neale, 'November 17th', pp. 14–18; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 130–40, 180–4; Hutton, *Merry England*, pp. 186–7, 222, 253; Walsham, 'A very Deborah', pp. 157–62. For examples of uses of the queen's reputation in favour of the Stuarts, see D.R. Woolf, 'Two Elizabeths? James I and the late queen's famous memory', *Canadian Journal of History*, 20 (1985), 167–91. Modern reference works – e.g. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2nd edn, 1974), pp. 460–1; *Book of Common Prayer … 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Cummings, p. 755, and see David N. Griffith, *The Bibliography of the Book of Common Prayer 1549–1999* (2002), p. 82 – state that an effort was made to preserve some indication of the queen's birthday. It is asserted that in 1603 her surviving bishops marked 7 September by restoring a long–neglected saint, St Enurchus, to the church calendar (he does not appear in earlier editions of the BCP) whose name, like that of the queen, began with the 'E': 'Enurchus bish.'. This story originated as an ingenious solution to an otherwise baffling anachronism, proposed by a liturgical scholar: Vernon Staley, 'St. Enurchus – a liturgical problem', *Church Times,* 1 Sept. 1905, summarized in Vernon Staley, *The liturgical year* (1907), pp. 41, 44–5. But it is not supported by modern historical studies. The restoration had further odd features: 'Enurchus' is a misprint in the *Preces Privatae* (1564) from an earlier scribal error in a breviary printed in York in 1524, referring to St Evurtius, an obscure fourth-century archbishop of Orléans. The name persisted in the BCP calendar; the correction to 'Evurtius' was made as late as 1894.

holiday, with cessation of work, which he had established earlier in Scotland to mark what he claimed to be his providential escape from an attempted assassination, the Gowrie plot (5 August). After the Gunpowder plot (5 November) in 1605 he ordered annual thanksgiving services for his escape, an observance reinforced by act of parliament during the following year. Special forms of prayer were published for both 'Gowrie day' and 'Gunpowder treason day'.[130] What had begun as an Elizabethan commemoration of accession day had been expanded into an annual round of thanksgivings for the Stuart monarchy, most of them now ordered by the sovereign or the council and, from the late 1610s, with episcopal visitations checking that parish churches had bought and were using the forms of prayer.[131] Observance of Gowrie day lapsed with the king's death in 1625, but the other anniversaries were continued or adjusted for Charles I, and revived after the Restoration in 1660 – with the addition of new anniversaries, and with the special services now annexed to the revised edition of the BCP – again to bring worship to the support of the monarchy. With some further adjustments, for two centuries the annual royal thanksgivings were renewed at the start of each new reign, until all but accession day were abolished by convocation, parliament and Queen Victoria in 1859.[132] The service for the anniversary of the accession of the second Queen Elizabeth remains available, bound with copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

[130] The authors are preparing an article on the early Jacobean thanksgivings.

[131] See *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Church of England Record Society, 1 and 5; Woodbridge, 1994, 1998). Laudian bishops included a requirement for observance of accession day in new church canons in 1640 (see *Anglican Canons*, ed. Bray, pp. 560–1), but these were nullified by parliament's abolition of the episcopacy and its victory in the civil war.

[132] For the long history of the royal religious anniversaries, see *National Prayers volume 4: Anniversary Commemorations 1560–2005, with Appendices and Indices 1533–2016,* ed. Philip Williamson, Natalie Mears, Alasdair Raffe and Stephen Taylor (Church of England Record Society/Boydell, forthcoming).