

The Heads of Houses and Religious Change in Tudor Oxford 1547-1558¹

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With the rise of the colleges to dominance in university affairs in the sixteenth century came the accession of their heads to power in the government of the universities.² At Cambridge their position as the real rulers of the university was enshrined in the new statutes of 1570. At Oxford unambiguous statutory recognition of their power only came in the 1630s, but Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII had already shown a marked preference for dealing with the university through the heads and Elizabeth I's regime favoured oligarchy even more.³ In the middle of the sixteenth century, when official religious policy was subject to rapid fluctuation, the heads inevitably gained added importance as men through whom the government could ensure that the universities would properly fulfil their role as 'wells and fountaynes of religion' within the realm.⁴

In their attempts to advance the Protestant cause at Oxford, the governments of Edward VI (1547-1553) could therefore not afford to ignore the beliefs of the heads of the colleges nor, for that matter, of the principals of the eight surviving academic halls. If anything more than a grudging, outward conformity was to be achieved, if 'lerning and godes glorye' were to have 'frear course',⁵ the government would need more heads like Richard Cox of Christ Church, a willing instrument of religious change at the head of a new and immensely wealthy royal foundation.⁶ Protector Somerset believed that appointments to college headships required as 'great care and furtheraunce' as nominations to bishoprics,⁷ yet his rule (1547-1549) brought no change at this level of university life. As with the bishops so it seems with the heads of colleges: moderate enforcement of religious changes enabled the conservatives to survive until the days of the Duke of Northumberland's regime (1550-1553).⁸

¹ This article is based on research undertaken for the History of the University of Oxford Project: I am indebted to Mr T.H. Aston, Dr J.K. McConica and Dr P.H. Williams for valuable advice in its preparation and to Mr T.A.R. Evans for his generous help at all stages. I am further indebted to Dr G.L. Harriss, Dr L. Mitchell and Mr T.H. Aston for permission to consult respectively the archives of Magdalen College, University College and the University of Oxford.

² For the much humbler place of the colleges in the medieval university see in general H.E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. c), 94-7.

³ M.H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642* (1959), 41-3; W.A. Pantin, *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives* (1972), 26-7.

⁴ C.H. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, (1842-1905), ii, 46.

⁵ Draft instructions to the royal visitors about an investigation into the conduct of the Warden of New College, November 1550: British Library, Microfilm M 485/52, Cecil Papers 198/47. I am grateful to the Marquess of Salisbury for permission to quote from this manuscript.

⁶ As Dean of Christ Church (1546-1553), Chancellor of the University (1547-1552) and leading light in the royal commission of 1549 Richard Cox was a powerful promoter of the Protestant cause at Oxford: see A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford A.D. 1501 to 1540* (1974) (hereinafter *BRUO 1501-40*), 146.

⁷ *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J.A. Muller (1933), 494.

⁸ M.L. Bush, *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (1975), 101 & n.5; cf. *ibid.* 118-19 and R. Houlbrooke,

Not that Somerset's government was unaware of the problem. In April 1548, pending a royal visitation of the university and its colleges, the government ordered a moratorium on all elections to vacancies in colleges, including headships,⁹ but it was not until May 1549 that a strong reforming commission was appointed to visit Oxford.¹⁰ The Visitors had the power to remove unsuitable heads¹¹, but during their first visitation in 1549 they did not find it expedient to exercise it; all they did was to extend William More's term of office as Rector of Exeter College.¹² Thus, at the time of Somerset's fall in October 1549, eleven of the thirteen colleges retained their Henrician heads, and of these only the incumbents at Exeter and Christ Church could be said positively to have favoured the Reformation.¹³ At University College and Brasenose the heads had entered office early in Edward's reign, but there is no indication that either had any real sympathy with religious reform.¹⁴ Peter Martyr's complaint to Bucer in June 1550 that at Cambridge there were 'several Heads of Colleges who favour religion; while we are miserably destitute of that advantage' aptly summed up the state of affairs on the eve of Northumberland's more rigorous policy.¹⁵

For a short time after Somerset's fall there were rumours of a return to more Catholic policies, but it soon became clear that the new government was committed to further reform and that an acceleration of liturgical and doctrinal change was in the offing.¹⁶ At Oxford this meant official pressure for heads more amenable to the Reformation. Oriel College was the first society to encounter the new policy. On the morning of 17 June 1550 the fellows of Oriel accepted the resignation of William Haynes, their Provost since 1540, on the grounds of ill-health (he died in July). John Smyth, a fellow since 1530, was elected to succeed him at 2.00 p.m. the same day.¹⁷ These hurried proceedings were almost certainly designed to forestall the intrusion of William Turner, the King's can-

'The Protestant Episcopate 1547-1603: The Pastoral Contribution' in F. Heal and R. O'Day eds., *Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I* (1977), 78-9. John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, became Duke of Northumberland in October 1551. For convenience I refer to him throughout as Northumberland. His power was established by February 1550: G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (1977), 350-2.

⁹ The complete text of the order, dated 4 April 1548, is to be found in Magdalen College Archives, C.11.2.7 (Admission Register C, 1538-1615), f. 14. J.R. Bloxam, *A Register of . . . Saint Mary Magdalen College, Oxford*, (1853-1885), ii, 300 prints an abstract from the Oxford University Archives.

¹⁰ The text of the commission is printed in *Foedera*, ed. T. Rymer and R. Sanderson (1704-1735), xv, 183-5 and in A. Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, ed. J. Gutch (1792-1796), ii, 96-9. For the work of the commissioners in the university and colleges see C.E. Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford* (1924-1927), ii, 82-93; J. Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (1966), 257-9; W.K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King* (1968), 329-31.

¹¹ *Foedera*, xv, 184.

¹² *BRUO* 1501-40, 400.

¹³ Merton, Thomas Reynolds (22 Dec. 1545); Balliol, James Brooks (4 Oct. 1546); Exeter, William More (17 Oct. 1546); Oriel, William Haynes (18 Oct. 1540); Queen's, William Denysson (c. Jan. 1541); New College, Henry Cole (4 Oct. 1542); Lincoln, Hugh Weston (8 Jan. 1539); All Souls, John Warner (3 June 1536); Magdalen, Owen Oglethorpe (21 Feb. 1536); Corpus, Robert Morwent (26 Nov. 1537); Christ Church, Richard Cox (4 Nov. 1546). *BRUO* 1501-40, 479, 73, 400, 277, 167, 128, 616, 607, 423, 404, 146.

¹⁴ Richard Salvin was admitted Master of University College 26 September 1547: *BRUO* 1501-40, 503 & W. Carr, *University College* (1902), 81. John Hawarden was elected Principal of Brasenose College 27 February 1548: *Brasenose College Register 1509-1909*, 2 vols. in 1 (Oxf. Hist. Soc., 1v), i, 3 (the date 1547 given in *BRUO* 1501-40, 275 is an error).

¹⁵ G.C. Gorham, *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears During the Period of the Reformation in England . . .* (1857), 151-2.

¹⁶ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (1967 edn.), 315.

¹⁷ *The Dean's Register of Oriel 1446-1661*, ed. G.C. Richards and H.E. Salter (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxxiv), 130; *BRUO* 1501-40, 522-3.

didate, a Cambridge man and a radical Protestant.¹⁸ Turner himself, writing to William Cecil in November 1550, had no doubt that the election had been in the nature of a conservative conspiracy: 'they beyng in poynt of dethe resygne theyr offices to sum of theyr brother papistes, as Haynes dyd unto Smith hys successor now master of oriel college'.¹⁹ When the college received the royal mandate in favour of Turner on 9th July the Dean was sent to explain to the Council that it was too late!²⁰ There was some talk of using the authority of the Visitors to expel the new Provost, but it came to nothing and Smith held office until 1565.²¹ The government had proved unable to overcome well-planned opposition to its schemes.

In the following year, 1551, there was a similarly unsatisfactory outcome for the government at University College. The struggle began in October when Richard Salvin resigned the Mastership he had held since September 1547 because of serious ill-health.²² The Visitors (led by Dean Cox of Christ Church) wished to secure the election of Thomas Kay, sometime fellow of All Souls College (1525-1543) and scribe of the university since 1534, a man conformable to the new religious policies.²³ The fellows were duly ordered to elect Kay.²⁴ But once again the authorities met with resistance: George Ellison, a fellow of eight years' standing, was eventually elected on 30 November after 'iust delyberatyon and sufficyent tyme yn the premysses', and although Kay alleged that Salvin had resigned the office to him in writing, a delegation appointed by Convocation upheld Ellison's title and utterly quashed Kay's claims.²⁵ This was another serious reverse for Edward's government and its Protestant policies.

At Oriel and University College united bodies of fellows had doubtless determined not only to keep out men of unacceptable religious views but also to defend their independence against the intrusion of outsiders. At New College and Magdalen College things were quite different. Both colleges had vocal Protestant factions: there were particularly violent demonstrations against the Mass at Magdalen in 1548.²⁶ These internal dissensions offered the Privy Council better opportunities to secure the election of sound heads, for the reforming parties had no qualms about invoking conciliar aid against heads of whom they disapproved.

¹⁸ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 122; *Dean's Register of Oriel*, 115; *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. J.R. Dasent (1890-1907) (hereinafter *APC*), 1550-1552, 63-4. For Turner's career see *Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁹ P.R.O., SP 10/11/14, printed by P.F. Tytler, *England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary* (1839), i. 335.

²⁰ *Dean's Register of Oriel*, 131.

²¹ P.R.O., SP 10/11/14, Tytler, *Edward VI and Mary*, i. 334: Turner reports to William Cecil that according to learned opinion the King cannot put out the Provost of Oriel 'by the strength of his visitation'; *BRUO* 1501-40, 522.

²² *BRUO* 1501-40, 503. Carr, *University College*, 81 suggests that he may have left office under official pressure, but Salvin himself claimed emphatically that he left for reasons of ill-health: he resigned wishing the fellows to provide a new Master 'owte of hande' for 'I haue tolde youe sundrye tymes heretofore y^e I colde in noe wise for my infyrmyte of bodye, do suche thynges as the office requireth . . .' (Oxford University Archives, Registrum GG, f. 55v.).

²³ Carr, *University College*, 81-2 and University College Archives, Registrum I 1509-1722, p.9. For Thomas Kay, who eventually became Master in 1561, see *BRUO* 1501-40, 325-6.

²⁴ J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, (1822), ii(2), 268.

²⁵ Oxford University Archives, Registrum GG, f.55v; University College Archives, Registrum I 1509-1722, p.9; *BRUO* 1501-40, 189; Carr, *University College*, 82.

²⁶ For New College Protestantism see H. Rashdall and R.S. Rait, *New College* (1901), 100ff., esp. 113; cf. P.H. Williams and J. Buxton eds., *New College, Oxford 1379-1979* (1979), 45-8. The disturbances at Magdalen are recited in Bloxam, *Reg. Magd. Coll.*, ii. 301. For Protestantism at Magdalen see H.A. Wilson, *Magdalen College* (1899), 99-103; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 196. It should not be forgotten that New College was the centre in Oxford of the best Catholic humanist scholarship.

Henry Cole, Warden of New College since 1542, had at first conformed to the religious changes made under Protector Somerset (1547-1549), but he had come under fire by 1550 soon after Northumberland's rise to power; in October the Council ordered the college not to choose anyone to replace him without the King's licence.²⁷ Obviously some members of the college had mounted a campaign against their Warden, for in November 1550 the Oxford Visitors received instructions not only to examine the college statutes in so far as they dealt with the office of Warden, but also to hear the complaints of the 'company' of the college, to see if there were sufficient grounds for proceeding to Cole's deposition and the deliverance of the college from an 'evill hede'.²⁸ By the end of January 1551 Cole's position had become precarious. Three of the Visitors were ordered to call Cole and others before them to try the matter, and were empowered to remove the Warden 'if the same do waie to a matter deserving his removing from the Colledge'.²⁹ Although the exact grounds of complaint against Cole and the identities of those who opposed him are unknown, it may be supposed, in view of his distinguished ecclesiastical career under Mary and his successor's deprivation by that monarch, that the Protestant faction in the college was largely responsible.³⁰ At all events, Cole resigned in April 1551 and was succeeded by Ralph Skinner, the first married Warden (he had resigned his fellowship at the college to marry in 1539).³¹

At Magdalen, Owen Oglethorpe, President since 1536, found himself engaged in a long struggle to retain his post. A group of Protestant fellows waged war against him on and off from 1548 until his eventual resignation in September 1552.³² The details of this conflict need not concern us, for they involve a good deal of obscure college politicking;³³ only the government's somewhat erratic interest in the matter calls for comment here. As early as 1548 the disaffected in the college had complained directly to Protector Somerset about the failure of their conservative President adequately to advance the cause of the Reformation.³⁴ But Oglethorpe, supported by a majority of the fellows, made great play of his conscientious introduction of the new *Order of Communion* and must have satisfied the Protector.³⁵ He had a narrower escape in 1550. Ten fellows petitioned the Privy Council against him on grounds ranging from hostility to the King's proceedings in religion to maladministration of college property. This resulted in Oglethorpe's appearing before the councillors and in rumours that he was about to lose his place.³⁶ Later in the year there was certainly some question of his retiring. In September and October 1550 William Turner was once again a hopeful candidate, and may have had some kind of official support (as earlier in the year at Oriel).³⁷ However, he withdrew in November as being

²⁷ *New College Oxford 1379-1979*, 47-8; *APC, 1550-1552*, 139 (13 Oct. 1550).

²⁸ British Library, Microfilm M 485/52, Cecil Papers 198/47.

²⁹ *APC, 1550-1552*, 204 (29 Jan. 1551): the instructions were issued 'upon presentment of the Fellowes of New Colledge in Oxford of certein objections agaynst Doctor Coole'.

³⁰ For Cole's career see *BRUO 1501-40*, 128-9. He became a canon of Westminster in 1554, Provost of Eton in 1554 and Dean of St Paul's in 1556; deprived of all his preferment in 1559-60.

³¹ For Skinner and his Protestant associations see *New College Oxford 1379-1979*, 48; *BRUO 1501-40*, 518; A.H. Smith, *New College Oxford and its Buildings* (1952), 64.

³² There are accounts of the dispute in Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 89-90, 93-8; W.K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King* (1968), 332-3.

³³ See, for instance, the agreement between Oglethorpe and his successor Walter Haddon, dated 6 August 1552, printed in Bloxam, *Reg. Magd. Coll.* ii. 320-3.

³⁴ P.R.O. SP 10/5/12, printed in Bloxam, *Reg. Magd. Coll.* ii. 303-4.

³⁵ P.R.O. SP 10/5/12, printed in Bloxam, *Reg. Magd. Coll.* ii. 301-2.

³⁶ *Reg. Magd. Coll.* ii, pp. xlix, 309-17.

³⁷ Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 96. Writing to Turner in January 1551 Walter Bowyer, a reforming fellow, mentioned the King's favour to Turner in the matter: P.R.O. SP 10/13/4.

ineligible under the college statutes, and in January 1551 Oglethorpe managed to secure the support of a majority of the fellows for his staying on as President.³⁸

So far Oglethorpe had thwarted all the Protestant attacks, but in 1552 the government at last took positive steps to remove him. This time the King's candidate was Walter Haddon, a distinguished Protestant scholar who had early in the year been made Master of Trinity Hall in Cambridge in succession to the disgraced Stephen Gardiner.³⁹ On 3 July 1552 the Vice-President and the 'more' part of the fellows begged the King not to force them to elect Haddon, however worthy a candidate he might be, for as an outsider and no 'minister' he was disqualified under the statutes to which they were bound.⁴⁰ This, perhaps the last effort of the conservatives to stave off the imposition of a reforming President, failed: by 14 August 1552 the fellows had promised to elect Haddon the following Michaelmas.⁴¹ Oglethorpe resigned on 27 September and Haddon was elected President on 1st October.⁴² The letter presenting him to the Bishop of Winchester (Visitor of the college) leaves no doubt about the strong government pressure for his appointment: the college had received two letters from the King urging his election and a special mandate dispensing with the statutory impediments and forbidding them to elect anyone else.⁴³

These hard-won successes for the government at New College and Magdalen must, however, be set against those colleges where the heads in office at the time of Somerset's fall in October 1549 survived the rest of Edward's reign. Nothing is known about the religious positions of John Hawarden, Principal of Brasenose 1548-1565, or of William Denysson, Provost of Queen's 1541-1559. Perhaps the latter was a careful conformist: he was chaplain to the young King by May 1547, but was made a canon and prebendary of St. George's chapel, Windsor in the reign of Edward's Catholic sister (April 1554).⁴⁴ John Warner, Warden of All Souls 1536-1556 and again 1558-1565, may well have been another such. In the university he served as Pro-Vice-Chancellor in 1551 and as Vice-Chancellor in 1554, to which post he was admitted on the orders of Sir John Mason, the Chancellor, who thought him 'for his gravity and wisdom to be a mete man for that place', an indication that he was acceptable to Mary's regime.⁴⁵ Outside Oxford, he received important ecclesiastical preferment under both Edward and Mary, including a canonry at Winchester in 1550 and canonries at Salisbury, Canterbury and Lincoln in 1554 and 1555. He was chaplain to the King by 1549 and accompanied Sir John Mason on his mission to France in 1550. His re-appointment as Warden in 1558 (he may also have been one of Elizabeth's Visitors for Oxford in 1559) might just indicate that his

³⁸ P.R.O. SP 10/11/14; Tytler, *Edward VI and Mary*, i. 334; P.R.O. SP 10/13/4.

³⁹ For Haddon see *Dict. Nat. Biog.* and C.H. Cooper and T. Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses* (1858-1913), i. 299-302, 559.

⁴⁰ Magdalen College Archives, Register E, f. 96; Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 97.

⁴¹ *APC*, 1552-1554, 112.

⁴² Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 98. For Oglethorpe's agreement with Haddon see note 33 above.

⁴³ Magdalen College Library, 'Presidents of S.M. Magdalen College, Volume I', p.197 contains a copy of the letter made by W.D. Macray; Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 98. Haddon was admitted on 4 October 1552: *Registra Stephani Gardiner et Johannis Poynt, Episcoporum Wintoniensium*, ed. H. Chitty (Canterbury & York Soc. xxxvii), 102; Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, ii (2), 271-2 notes two royal letters of June and July 1552.

⁴⁴ For Hawarden see *BRUO* 1501-40, 275 and for Denysson *ibid.*, 167. Cf. A.B. Emden, *An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times* (1927), 253-7, esp. 256.

⁴⁵ Oxford University Archives, Registrum I, f. 143v: Mason to the university, 15 April 1554.

resignation from All Souls in 1556 had something to do with religion, but there is no evidence that he suffered under Mary.⁴⁶

At Balliol, Merton, Lincoln and Corpus Christi it is clear that the heads remained Catholic throughout Edward's reign, practising only a superficial conformity. They were all to prosper in the Marian church. James Brooks, Master of Balliol 1546-1555, was Bishop of Gloucester 1554-1559, papal subdelegate and head of the commission for the trial of Cranmer in 1555, and one of Cardinal Pole's commissioners to visit the university in 1556.⁴⁷ Thomas Reynolds, Warden of Merton 1545-1559, held the deanery of Exeter from 1555-1559, became chaplain to the King and Queen in 1555, and was nominated as Bishop of Hereford in 1558. He was deprived of the Wardenship on 4 September 1559.⁴⁸ Similarly successful (until his deprivation for adultery and arrest in 1557) was Hugh Weston, Rector of Lincoln College 1539-1556. He was Dean of Westminster 1553-1556 and Dean of St. George's chapel, Windsor 1556-1557.⁴⁹ Robert Morwent, President of Corpus Christi 1537-1558, was made a canon of Gloucester in 1554 and of Wells in 1556.⁵⁰

Of these four men the most interesting is Robert Morwent, President of Corpus. He was harried by the Privy Council in 1551 for using on Corpus Christi Day 'other service than is appointed in the Booke of Service', and in June was imprisoned in the Fleet with two other members of the college. John Jewel, later a pillar of the Elizabethan church settlement, was appointed by the Council to govern the college in his absence.⁵¹ Morwent's confinement was not rigorous; at the end of June he was given 'the libertie of the Fleete' on account of his age, and in July he was released under bond to appear before the Council and not to return to the college.⁵² The date of his return to Corpus is unknown, but he certainly was not deprived of his office. Shortly after the accession of Mary in 1553 he triumphantly produced all the vestments and ornaments of Catholic ritual.⁵³ There could be no more appropriate symbol of the failure of Edward's governments to establish Protestantism in the highest reaches of university life.

In addition to the heads of colleges, any government seeking to enforce conformity to religious change in Oxford would have to reckon with the principals of the academic halls. If the census of the colleges and halls instituted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor in 1552 may be taken as a reliable guide, the eight surviving halls accounted for about 260 scholars or just over a quarter of the total recorded, by no means a negligible contingent.⁵⁴ Indeed, New Inn Hall with forty-nine members, Hart Hall (45) and Broadgates Hall (41) appear as larger institutions than Merton, Oriel, Lincoln, Balliol, Queen's, Exeter or University Colleges.⁵⁵ If the notorious Catholicism of Hart Hall under

⁴⁶ For biographical details of Warner see *BRUO* 1501-40, 607-8; C.G. Robertson, *All Souls College* (1899), 65-7.

⁴⁷ *BRUO* 1501-40, 73-4. Cf. H.W.C. Davies, *A History of Balliol College* (1963 edn.), 76.

⁴⁸ *BRUO* 1501-40, 479; B.W. Henderson, *Merton College* (1899), 85.

⁴⁹ *BRUO* 1501-40, 616-17. For the conservatism of Lincoln College in matters of religion, see V. Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College, 1427-1977* (1979), 45-52, 83-94.

⁵⁰ *BRUO* 1501-40, 404. Cf. T. Fowler, *The History of Corpus Christi College* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxv), 97-9.

⁵¹ *APC*, 1550-1552, 305, 287, 295, 307.

⁵² *Ibid.* 311, 316-17.

⁵³ Fowler, *History of Corpus*, 97-8.

⁵⁴ *Register of the University of Oxford*, i, ed. C.W. Boase (Oxf. Hist. Soc. i), pp.xxi-xxv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: cf. Emden, *Oxford Hall*, 258; L. Stone, 'The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body 1580-1910' in L. Stone ed., *The University in Society*, (1975), i. 33-4.

Philip Rondell (Principal 1549-1599) is recalled, it is easy to see that the religious allegiances of the principals and of their halls might well have formed yet another obstacle to Edward's Protestant governments.⁵⁶

It is therefore most unfortunate that so little is known of these important academic communities in the period 1547-1558. Their domestic records have completely disappeared, and although the succession of principals can be largely reconstructed from the Chancellor's Registers,⁵⁷ it has proved impossible to uncover any external pressures which may have been at work in the appointments. By the middle of the sixteenth century the choice of a principal lay in theory with the members of the hall.⁵⁸ This remained the position throughout the reigns of Edward and Mary and until about 1570, when the right of nomination to the principalships of halls was vested in the Chancellor of the university and thus brought under firm government control.⁵⁹

Although the commissioners of 1549 were authorized to visit halls,⁶⁰ there is no trace of their activity there, and indeed no real indication that Edward's governments took much interest in academic halls. Mary's regime was more active, and in 1556 Cardinal Pole issued new statutes relating to halls. Their general aim was simply to reinforce the aularian statutes of the late fifteenth century, but they did tighten up the requirement for principals to be resident and ordered that their scholars should hear Mass daily.⁶¹

The biographical evidence about the principals is inconclusive, for their careers outside the university are rarely recorded in any detail. Some were undoubtedly Catholic in sympathy. Morgan Phillips, Principal of St. Mary Hall from the earliest days of Edward's reign until his resignation in October 1550, was a leading Catholic and an opponent of Peter Martyr in the celebrated disputation on the Eucharist in 1549.⁶² According to Anthony Wood, William Marshall, Principal of St. Alban Hall 1547-1567, was eventually 'ejected for his Religion'.⁶³ On the other hand, David Lewys, Principal of New Inn Hall 1546-1548, became the first Principal of Jesus College in 1571 and enjoyed a prosperous legal career under Elizabeth,⁶⁴ and Thomas Randall, Principal of Broadgates Hall 1549-1553, was commended to Peter Martyr by John Jewel as indispensable to the Protestant cause.⁶⁵

Matters become clearer once more when we turn to the heads of the colleges under Mary (1553-1558). The failure of Edward's governments meant that Mary faced a group of heads largely sympathetic to her declared policy of restoring the ancient statutes of the university and colleges.⁶⁶ Those who had shown themselves actively in favour of the religious changes introduced under Edward VI did not survive the first six months of the new reign. William More of Exeter College, Richard Cox of Christ Church and Ralph Skinner of New College were deprived, while Walter Haddon resigned from the

⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 311. Dr N. Saul, who has made a thorough study of Hart Hall for the forthcoming history of Hertford College, confirms its reputation as a refuge for Catholics.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Register of the University of Oxford*, ii (i), ed. A. Clarke, (*Oxf. Hist. Soc.* x), 282-6.

⁵⁸ Emden, *Oxford Hall*, 262; these elections are listed in *Reg. Univ. Oxf.* ii (1), 282-6. See also *ibid.* i. 300.

⁵⁹ A. Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls in the University of Oxford*, ed. J. Gutch (1786), 653; Emden, *Oxford Hall*, 262.

⁶⁰ *Foedera*, xv. 184.

⁶¹ Emden, *Oxford Hall*, 219-21.

⁶² *BRUO* 1501-40, 448.

⁶³ Wood, *Colleges and Halls*, ed. Gutch, 657.

⁶⁴ *BRUO* 1501-40, 354.

⁶⁵ D. Maclean, *A History of Pembroke College Oxford*, (*Oxf. Hist. Soc.* xxxiii), 80.

⁶⁶ Announced in a letter of 20 August 1553: *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1547-1580*, p.54.

Presidency of Magdalen to avoid the indignity of expulsion.⁶⁷ The meagre successes of the previous regime were thus quickly overthrown.

But beyond these initial upheavals there is little evidence of government intervention in elections to headships: there was presumably no need. In the one recorded case, at Magdalen in 1558, the attempt was unsuccessful. The Queen's letter of 12 August, announcing to the fellows her 'speciall desire & care to have wise grave & vertuous men placed in the rome of heddes of suche howses', recommended to them three Magdalen men, Thomas Marshall, John Somer and Thomas Slythurst. But the college had already elected Thomas Coveney on 2nd August.⁶⁸ There is no reason, however, to suppose their choice was unacceptable to the Crown.⁶⁹

Further changes under Mary occurred in the normal course of events, in the main through death or through preferment outside the university. Catholic heads succeeded without the intervention of the government. James Brooks left Balliol in 1555, some months after his appointment as Bishop of Gloucester.⁷⁰ His successor, William Wright, was deprived in 1559 for failure to take the oath of supremacy.⁷¹ George Ellison of University College, whose election in 1551 had thwarted the Privy Council and the royal Visitors, died in May 1557.⁷² He was followed by Anthony Salvin who had left office by December 1558 and who was described in 1561, after losing all his preferment, as a stubborn papist.⁷³ The extended rule of William More, Rector of Exeter College since 1546, was ended by his ejection in 1553 and the college reverted to its normal practice of short tenures of the Rectorship.⁷⁴ Hugh Weston vacated the Rectorship of Lincoln College in August 1556 — he became Dean of St. George's chapel, Windsor later in the year.⁷⁵ His successor, Christopher Hargreaves, died in October 1558, and the next Rector, Henry Henshaw, resigned in June 1559 rather than subscribe to the oath of supremacy.⁷⁶ Magdalen saw the restoration of Owen Oglethorpe in 1553. He left the college for good in 1555, going on to become Bishop of Carlisle (and as such to crown Elizabeth in 1559).⁷⁷ Arthur Cole, who succeeded him, died in July 1558 and the next President, Thomas Coveney, was deprived in 1561 'being . . . thought an enemy to the sincere Religion of Christ and therewith an evill husbnde for the Colledge . . .'.⁷⁸ Finally, Robert Morwent's successor at Corpus Christi College, William Chedsey, elected in 1558, suffered deprivation in 1559.⁷⁹

In all the cases reviewed above the new heads were chosen from among the members

⁶⁷ *BRUO* 1501-40, 400; C.W. Boase, *Registrum Collegii Exoniensis*, (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxvii), pp. lxxix, 61 (More); *BRUO* 1501-40, 146 (Cox); 518 (Skinner); Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 101 (Haddon).

⁶⁸ P.R.O. SP 11/13/55. For Marshall, Somer and Slythurst see *BRUO* 1501-40, 381-2, 519-20, 528; Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 105-6.

⁶⁹ The Privy Council wrote in his favour to the Bishop of Winchester, 5 September 1558: *APC*, 1556-1558, 394.

⁷⁰ *BRUO* 1501-40, 73.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 642.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 189.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 503.

⁷⁴ Cf. *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 108. The succession was: William Corindon 1553-1555, Stephen Marks 1555-1556, Philip Rondell 1556-1557, Robert Newton 1557-1559 (*Reg. Coll. Exon.* pp. lxxix, 64-6).

⁷⁵ *BRUO* 1501-40, 616-17.

⁷⁶ J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714*, (1891-1892), ii. 651; *BRUO* 1501-40, 281.

⁷⁷ *BRUO* 1501-40, 423-4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 128 (Cole); Wilson, *Magdalen College*, 115 (Coveney).

⁷⁹ *BRUO* 1501-40, 113.

of the college concerned; there was no attempt and no need to impose outsiders. The best measure of the compliance of the heads under Mary is the fact that after the deprivations and resignations of the first two years of Elizabeth's reign only one head appointed under Mary, White of New College, remained in office.⁸⁰ Mary's government had benefited signally from the abject failure of Edward's to convert the university, in heads and members, to Protestantism. The high hopes engendered in some by the foundation of Christ Church under a Protestant Dean and the zealous activity of Peter Martyr and his circle of advanced Protestants had come to nought.⁸¹ The returning Marian exiles were in no doubt of the prostration of their cause at Oxford. John Jewel found that Peter Martyr's work as Regius Professor of Divinity (1548-1553) had been undone and that the Lord's vineyard had been reduced to a wilderness: 'you would scarcely believe so much desolation could have been effected in so short a time'.⁸² Oxford remained a Catholic university and was only fully to be brought into conformity with the new Protestant establishment in the course of Elizabeth's long reign.

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⁸⁰ I am indebted to Dr P.H. Williams for this observation. Provost Smythe of Oriel (1550-1565) survived both Mary's reign and the hazards of the first two years of Elizabeth.

⁸¹ There is an excellent discussion of Peter Martyr and the Protestant 'Christ Church Circle' in J.E.A. Dawson, 'The Early Career of Christopher Goodman and his place in the development of English Protestant Thought' (University of Durham Ph.D. thesis, 1978), 10-97.

⁸² *The Zurich Letters . . . during the Early Part of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. H. Robinson (Parker Soc., 1842), 33.