

In: Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe* (Past and Present Supplement; 11, Oxford, 2016).

## **Dislocation and Record Keeping: The Counter Archives of the Catholic Diaspora**

Liesbeth Corens

When early eighteenth-century English Catholics looked back on the first wave of exiles in the sixteenth century, they remarked specifically on the importance of writing and record keeping. Though they were otherwise vicious opponents in their attempts to discredit the other's Catholic party, both the Jesuit Thomas Hunter and the secular priest Charles Dodd agreed that the sixteenth-century expatriate Robert Persons continued to participate in the mission through writing. Hunter celebrated the reputation of his predecessor in the Society of Jesus, stating that:

He [Robert Persons] was look'd upon by all, as the chief Support of Religion in England; hence no Endeavours were wanting to apprehend him, and because the Means made us of for this End brought grevous Inconveniencies upon most Catholick Families, it was thought proper, he should withdraw for some Time out of the Nation. There was another Motive which hasten'd his Return into France, viz. That he might both find Time to Write, and Convenience to Print what was necessary for the Defence of Religion.<sup>1</sup>

---

\* I am very grateful for thoughtful comments on earlier drafts by Jennifer Bishop, Tom Hamilton, and Tom Tölle and my fellow editors. This essay has also benefited greatly from helpful audiences in Cambridge, Dublin, London, Oxford, and Sheffield.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hunter, *A Modest Defence of the Clergy and Religious against R.C.'s History of Doway* ([London], 1714), 16.

Even Dodd, whose assessment of Persons was generally negative, granted that Persons' contribution to the mission was not yet at an end when he left the country following Campion's execution. He stated that 'Providence might have a Design in this Flight of his to enable him to carry on the same Work with less Danger, yet equally contributing to the good work of Religion'.<sup>2</sup> Thus Dodd and Hunter were convinced that the written record allowed the expatriate Persons to continue his participation in English developments.

The exchange between these two early-eighteenth-century English Catholics highlights the point that the interpretation of the recent past was polemical and engaged. Hunter's defence of Persons also hints at the significance of scholarship as an active element in the English mission. Hunter glossed Persons' stay abroad both as saving English Catholics from the further persecution which his presence could provoke, and as an opportunity to undertake scholarly pursuits for their benefit. That balance between forced mobility and scholarship opens up issues about the role of scholarship and written memory for a dispersed community. This essay explores that relationship by taking a closer look at the process of creating the collections of source material which Catholics across the diaspora brought together in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The convergence of multiple English Catholic record-collecting projects in the decades around 1700 indicates a shared concern with the creation of memory.<sup>3</sup> These collections were neat transcriptions of a wide array of accounts, publications, and letters by sixteenth-century Catholics, with very limited additional glossing. Given this format, to late

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles Dodd, *The Secret Policy of the English Society of Jesus. Discover'd in a Series of Attempts against the Clergy* (London, 1717), 103.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of Ralph Weldon's life and work: Geoffrey Scott, 'The Collector: A Look at Benedictine Archives, through the Eyes of Bro. Benet Weldon', *Catholic Archives*, vi (1986). Christopher Grene is extensively discussed by John Morris, *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers* (London, 1872). The Collectanea were recently the topic of research in Andrew Czaja, 'Catholic History and Memory in Christopher Grene's Collectanea' (Univ. of Cambridge MPhil thesis, 2013). John Knaresborough does not even have an entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. His collections are mentioned in: Alison F. Shell, *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), 119, 142.

historians they seemed neutral and have been used as direct sources for the sixteenth century. To this day, they form the foundation for research on English Catholicism. The Jesuit Christopher Grene's efforts to collect and preserve English martyrs' accounts in late seventeenth-century Rome provided historians with a major source for English Catholic martyrologies.<sup>4</sup> Much of the material collected by Grene was edited by Henry Foley in nineteenth century and has been directly quoted in research on sixteenth-century Catholics ever since.<sup>5</sup> The secular priest John Knaresborough assembled a five-volume collection of material on the 'Sufferings of Catholics' in the early eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Richard Challoner quoted heavily from Knaresborough's collection in his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (1741), and subsequent scholarship has mined this rich resource.<sup>7</sup> The material which the Benedictine Ralph Weldon incorporated in his multi-volume 'Memorials' created between 1707 and 1711 is still the most extensive available collection of sources on the early modern English Benedictine congregation.<sup>8</sup> However, we need to take into account the documents' 'communicative context', not only at the time of their first production but also their later appropriations and contextualisations. Documents could be reactivated and attributed different meaning and significance after their initial creation.<sup>9</sup> While historians have used the

---

<sup>4</sup> Archives of the British Province of the Society of Jesus, London (hereafter ABPSJ), Christopher Grene, *Collectanea*.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Foley, *Records of the English province of the Society of Jesus: Historic Facts Illustrative of the Labours and Sufferings of its Members in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 7 vols. in 8 (London, 1875–83).

<sup>6</sup> Hull History Centre, Hull, 'Constable Maxwell Family of Everingham', DDEV 67/1: 'Sufferings of the Catholics'.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests, as well Secular as Regular; and of other Catholics, of both Sexes, that have Suffered Death in England, on Religious Accounts, from the Year of Our Lord 1577, to 1684* ([London], 1741).

<sup>8</sup> Douai Abbey, Woolhampton, Ralph Weldon, 'Memorials of the English Benedictine Congregation', 5 vols. (1702–11) (hereafter Weldon, *Memorials*).

<sup>9</sup> Randolph C. Head, 'Collecting Testimony and Parsing Texts in Zurich: Documentary Strategies for Defending Reformed Identities in Thurgau, 1600–1656', in Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer and Robin Bruce Barnes (eds.), *Ideas and Cultural Margins in Early Modern Germany: Essays in Honor of H.C. Erik Midelfort* (Farnham, 2009); David Warren Sabean, 'Village Court Protocols and Memory', in Heinrich Richard Schmidt, André Holenstein, and Andreas Würgler (eds.), *Gemeinde, Reformation und Widerstand: Festschrift für Peter Blickle zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1998); Eric Ketelaar, 'Records out and Archives in: Early Modern Cities as Creators of Records and as Communities of Archives', *Archival Science*, x (2010); Randolph C. Head, 'Documents, Archives, and Proof around 1700', *The Historical Journal*, lvi (2013).

collections fairly uncritically and considered the editions issuing from them as neutral, passive repositories of distinct documents, we need to be alive to the collections' underlying agendas and assumptions, as well as to the ways in which they created a particular version of the past.

Therefore, this essay studies the collections as creative pursuits rather than finished products. Recent research on archives, libraries, and museums shows that collecting was an intellectual contribution and a means of generating knowledge in its own right. It was not a by-product of printing books or of creating a static exhibition. Rather, collecting, selecting, and structuring constituted an engaged process which created meaning. The considerations and decisions which underlay and shaped the compilation of material had a bearing upon what was included, how it was ordered, and how it could be interpreted.<sup>10</sup> As Jennifer Summit puts it, collections 'did not 'invent' the objects that they contain, but they do produce ... "standards of coherence" by which those objects are used and understood'.<sup>11</sup>

Understanding the record collections as processes reveals the cultural practices which were shaped by the life of the Catholic community and which shaped it in turn. More than straightforward repositories of material about the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the production of the collections reveals the preoccupations and characteristics of the decades around 1700. They thereby offer a window onto a defining yet little-studied period for English Catholics, and bring back to light the geographically scattered networks that made the undertaking possible.

English Catholics were dislocated in both a geographical and political way. They

---

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2008); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994); Anja-Silvia Goeing, Anthony Grafton, and Paul Michel (eds.), *Collectors' Knowledge: What Is Kept, What Is Discarded / Aufbewahren Oder Wegwerfen: Wie Sammler Entscheiden* (Leiden, 2013); Anke Te Heesen and E.C. Spary (eds.), *Sammeln Als Wissen: Das Sammeln Und Seine Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Bedeutung* (Göttingen, 2002); Elizabeth Yale, 'With Slips and Scraps: How Early Modern Naturalists Invented the Archive', *Book History*, xii (2009); Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven and London, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Summit, *Memory's Library*, 3.

were excluded from the dominant narrative of English national identity and from the communication structures that furthered this. This exclusion encouraged dislocated groups to develop alternative assertions of belonging.<sup>12</sup> Exilic writing ‘registered the sense of loss and uprootedness’, it ‘also negotiated and attempted to configure these consequences’.<sup>13</sup> While much research has been devoted to these processes in poetry and rituals, this essay shows how dislocation was also negotiated through record keeping. The first section discusses how the dispersed community was captured within the pages of the collections. Distance was not an unnegotiable burden for community formation. Commemoration united Catholics beyond the grave and across the Catholic diaspora,<sup>14</sup> and exchanges of information and compilation of record collections helped to cement the bonds which connected spiritual fellowship. The second section discusses the political dislocation and shows that archives were not solely about internal identification but also functioned in response to external factors, namely English Protestant archives. English Catholics created ‘counter archives’: the collections served both as a counterpart to the Protestant narrative and as a way of countering and refuting it. In all these, the format of compilation proved able to carry meaning in itself. Far from a neutral container of distinct sources, that perceived neutrality was carefully crafted for specific purposes.

### **Connecting a Dispersed Community**

Record collecting created coherence for a dispersed community. There is a tendency in the

---

<sup>12</sup> For broad discussions: Edward W. Said, *Reflections On Exile: And Other Literary And Cultural Essays* (London, 2000), esp. 173–86; George Hugo Tucker, *Homo Viator: Itineraries of Exile, Displacement and Writing in Renaissance Europe* (Geneva, 2003). For importance of exile in early modern English literature, see: Timothy Raylor, ‘Exiles, Expatriates and Travellers: Towards a Cultural and Intellectual History of the English Abroad, 1640–1660’, in Philip Major (ed.), *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and Its Aftermath, 1640–1690* (Farnham, 2010); Christopher D’Addario, *Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> D’Addario, *Exile and Journey*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Natalia Muchnik, ‘Charité et Communauté Diasporique Dans l’Europe Des XVIe-XVIIIe Siècles’, *Revue D’histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, lxi (2014).

historiography to focus on the localised element of memory and record keeping.<sup>15</sup> However, while the study of settled communities does indeed show the significance of locality, looking at scattered communities indicates that there were other ways in which they could foster belonging. The creation of records, written communication, and preservation of documents of mutual interest not only served the practicalities of organising the community, but also gave a sense of common direction and purpose.<sup>16</sup>

In itself, the process of compiling the collections created bonds across the dispersed community. The collaborative processes connected the various religious houses and Catholic families across England and the Continent through the formation of shared opinions. Thus, Ralph Weldon relied on the archives of the Benedictine college in Paris in which he resided, but he also received records from the various religious houses across the Continent — both male and female. His superior provided him with transcripts of documents he copied during his visitations, not only of the various residences on the Continent but also in England.<sup>17</sup> Collapsing that wide geographical span into one collection would reveal deeper knowledge. Thus, when John Knaresborough's correspondent Henry Preston was disappointed with the official records from the secular chapter in London, he suggested that 'great light from abroad', could help to contextualise his fragments, as information was promised from Douai

---

<sup>15</sup> For some of the most interesting recent studies on the importance of early modern archives and memory for localised communities, see: Andy Wood, *The Memory of the People: Custom and Popular Senses of the Past in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2013); Laurie Nussdorfer, *Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome* (Baltimore, 2009); Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt Des Archivs* (München, 2013); Andrew Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London: Memory, Text and Community* (Basingstoke, 2013); Sabeen, 'Village Court Protocols and Memory'; Filippo de Vivo, 'Ordering the Archive in Early Modern Venice (1400–1650)', *Archival Science*, x (2010).

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the role of documents in uniting the Spanish empire, see: Sylvia Sellers-García, *Distance and Documents at the Spanish Empire's Periphery* (Stanford, 2014). Through networks and communication, the Jesuits acquired a sense of communal belonging: Markus Friedrich, 'Archives as Networks: The Geography of Record-Keeping in the Society of Jesus (1540–1773)', *Archival Science*, x (2010); Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge, 2008). France's Huguenot community relied on informal networks of communication to sustain their cohesion: Mark Greengrass, 'Informal Networks in Sixteenth-Century French Protestantism', in Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World 1559–1685* (Cambridge, 2002); Mark Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Religious Minorities and Their Scribal Networks', in Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (eds.), *Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Weldon, Memorials, preface.

and Paris.<sup>18</sup> The correspondents were alert to the fact that information came from geographically-scattered locations, and recognised the networks' instrumental role in bringing together a unified narrative.

The collectors integrated records which had been sources of local pride into a larger overarching project. Perhaps most indicative are the lists of names which many of the religious houses preserved of the martyrs who had received education in their particular institution. These lists served as an aid to commemoration and devotion for the local community. For instance, on the front page of a seventeenth-century catalogue of martyrs from the English seminary in Paris it was written that 'this catalogue belongs to the English seminary in Paris', and for each of the martyrs listed in it, the catalogue indicates clearly in which library book the reader can find more information about the person.<sup>19</sup> Other catalogues showed that the lists were made part of the history from the foundation to the present state of the college.<sup>20</sup> Upon their inclusion into the collections, the lists' original integration in their local houses was obscured — they became part of broader narratives. In the mid eighteenth century, for instance, Richard Challoner related how he had benefited from the resources of the transmarine foundations in writing his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*. He acknowledged those 'from whom we received the greatest part of our Materials particularly to the English Colleges of Doway and St. Omers, and to the English Benedictins and Franciscans'.<sup>21</sup> Throughout his work, Challoner referred to his sources as 'the Doway diary, and other

---

<sup>18</sup> Henry Preston to John Knaresborough, 2 April 1707: Hull History Centre, Hull, 'Constable Maxwell Family of Everingham', U DDEV/67/2: 'Sufferings of the Catholics, Appended Documents' (hereafter: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended').

<sup>19</sup> Archives of the Archbishop of Westminster, London, B 28, no. 10: The catalogue of the English seminary in Paris.

<sup>20</sup> [John Keynes and Thomas Stapleton], *Florus Anglo-Bavaricus: Serenissimo principi Maximiliano Emmanueli Duci Bavariae, &c. et Mariae Antoniae, Leopoldi Caesaris Filiae, auspicio nuptiarum foedere conjunctis inscriptus* (Liège, 1685); Archives of the Archbishop of Westminster, London, B 28, no. 11: catalogues martyrum; Archives of the Archbishop of Westminster, London, B 28, no. 7 (List of priests of Douai college, who suffered for the Faith).

<sup>21</sup> Challoner, *Memoirs*, i, sig. †4v.



monuments'.<sup>22</sup> One of the figures who provided him with this material was Alban Butler, who would go on to publish the *Lives of Saints*.<sup>23</sup> During his time as a teacher in the secular college in Douai, Butler copied or sent on the originals of manuscript relations of the martyr accounts of ex-students they preserved. These were the administrative and official documents of the houses abroad, and were crucial for the legitimacy and self-understanding of the house.<sup>24</sup> Challoner instead integrated martyrs from diverse houses with each other, and ordered them chronologically, rather than preserve their disparate geographical origins. The temporal framework and the order given to the material therefore shaped the conceptualisation of the kind of narrative they were creating.

The collections became more than the sum of their components. The Catholic community's unity was conceptualised in the overarching narrative which the collectors gave to these snippets of information from geographically disparate origins. They did not create the histories of localised houses, but of orders, of congregations, and of the English mission. Thereby, the collections reflected the diffuse character of the English Catholic community, and enabled its members to create some unity in the midst of dispersal. This is perhaps best illustrated in Ralph Weldon's memorials. Weldon's work was part of the upsurge in European-wide Benedictine scholarship at the time due to the Congregation of St. Maur, and especially their dynamic member Jean Mabillon. Even though they are better known for their extensive work on Benedictine saints and their method of strict source critique, a large proportion of the Maurists' work was devoted to the history of their monasteries.<sup>25</sup> Maurist

---

<sup>22</sup> For instance: Challoner, *Memoirs*, i, 419, 424.

<sup>23</sup> Alban Butler, *Lives of the fathers, martyrs and other saints, compiled from the original monuments and other authentic records; illustrated with the remarks of judicious modern critics and historians*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1759); Archives of the Archbishop of Birmingham, Birmingham, R942 (Contents of Alban Butler's Collection).

<sup>24</sup> Research on the role of these house chronicles and diaries has been particularly fruitful in the case of female convents: K.J.P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge, 2003); Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing About Women And Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Marie-Louise Auger, 'Les Mauristes et L'histoire Des Provinces de France', in Daniel-Odon Hurel (ed.), *Erudition et Commerce épistolaire: Jean Mabillon et La Tradition Monastique* (Paris, 2003);



preoccupations underlay Ralph Weldon's work. The English Benedictine had studied among the Maurists in Pontlevoy, and his memorials bore the imprint of their thought. The library of St Edmund's in Paris, which Weldon organised, contained the *Traité des études monastiques*, and he frequently referred to Mabillon's or his followers' source critique.<sup>26</sup> However, while the Maurists had encouraged members of their congregation to write the history of their own house and its immediate surroundings, Weldon's Memorials were not the history of a localised house on the Continent, but the narrative of the Benedictine mission. Fittingly, he started out his account with a discussion of Saint Augustine's mission to England — Weldon claimed that Augustine had been a Benedictine and as a consequence that the early modern Benedictine mission continued the line from the earliest Christians in England — and persisted in framing his sources as a narrative of a conversion mission.<sup>27</sup> He drew parallels between the work of the sixteenth-century Cardinal Pole, the apostle Saint Andrew, and Saint Boniface.<sup>28</sup> Continuing that line of apostles, English Catholics abroad and at home were united in their common mission of converting England.

The interconnection between past and future was worked into the narrative these collections told. Constructing a long line of conversions of England, and delineating the role of martyrs and missionaries, the expatriate writers sometimes explicitly continued that succession and anticipated that successful past missions guaranteed future successes. Thus Christopher Grene included Robert Persons' *Treatise of Three Conversions* (1603) in his collection.<sup>29</sup> Through his narrative of the past, Persons had also set an agenda for an English Catholic future. He did this very explicitly through his discussion of Saint Boniface, the English saint who played a central role in converting German tribes to Christianity in the

---

Damien Blanchard, 'A Propos D'un Texte de Dom Racine (1699–1777). Les Mongraphies D'abbayes, de Dom Mabillon Aux éditeurs Du XIXe Siècle', in Daniel-Odon Hurel (ed.), *Erudition et Commerce épistolaire: Jean Mabillon et La Tradition Monastique* (Paris, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Douai Abbey, Woolhampton, 'St Gregory's Paris Library Catalogue', 129.

<sup>27</sup> Weldon, Memorials, I, 1–4.

<sup>28</sup> Weldon, Memorials, I, 1–4.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Persons, *A treatise of three conversions of England from paganisme to Christian religion* ([St Omer], 1603, STC 19416).

eighteenth century. Persons thought that this prefigured the role England could play once it was reconverted again: then it could be a springboard to launch a fierce attack on the German Reformation.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the Benedictine Ralph Weldon claimed that ever since the Benedictine order's 'first planting' in England, the order has 'has grown up with the Church, becoming both its support and ornament, flourished with her, and shared more than all others in her sufferings and eclipses'.<sup>31</sup> As Weldon further remarked, the Benedictines currently were 'having their ebb, while previously their tide', but the cyclical nature of this metaphor implies that Weldon also anticipated a return to their former glory.

The collections themselves formed interconnections, for archives preserve the past for posterity. They responded to a perceived loss of documents about recent Catholic history. As Martin Grene wrote to his brother Christopher in the 1660s: 'I fear it will be hard to get them [documents about English Catholics] together. For it hath formerly been too dangerous in England to keep any writings of that kind, that the greatest part is lost, and no memory remaines of any galland actions since only in the verball relations which some of our old men can make'.<sup>32</sup> Christopher Grene wrote a similar message to the Italian Jesuit Daniel Bartoli, who had approached the English Jesuit for information for his project on the history of the entire Society of Jesus. In this letter, Grene wrote that he 'did not want to allow the memory of the things belonging to our martyrs to be lost through my negligence'.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Henry Preston warned John Knaresborough in 1707 that they would be able to obtain 'but little information from the records of the chapter'. The reason for this was partly their reluctance to enable easy access, and partly through 'the neglect of entring those important transactions

---

<sup>30</sup> Persons, *Three Conversions*, ii, 44, 47–48; Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot, 2002), ch. 7 and 336–337; Victor Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580–1610* (Aldershot, 2007), ch. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Weldon, *Memorials*, I, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Grene to Christopher Grene, 9 Oct. 1664: ABPSJ, Anglia V, no. 68.

<sup>33</sup> Christopher Grene to Daniel Bartoli: ABPSJ, Grene MS AE/7. Quoted in: Czaja, 'Catholic History and Memory', 20.

there'.<sup>34</sup> Preston regretted that collecting material on the martyrs had been omitted for such a long time, for he was unable to gather all the details he would wish and 'by a more early enquiry many discoveries might have been had by these [deceased members of the Radcliffe family] & Bp Leyburn'.<sup>35</sup>

The collections were a means actively to perpetuate the memory of the martyrs and the Catholic past. The understanding that action had to be undertaken since forgetfulness was setting in, puts the record collections directly into Pierre Nora's category of 'lieux de mémoire'. In Nora's original definition, 'lieux de mémoire' were a remedy against forgetfulness, and worked at the interface between an active memory and history writing 'where memory crystallizes and secretes itself'. They are called into existence at 'a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn'.<sup>36</sup> The Catholic compilations were actively creating continuity: their use of words like 'perpetuating' shows that they understood that they had an active role to play in conveying information further down the chronological line. Referring to Knaresborough's collecting records in the early eighteenth century, the Catholic antiquarian Charles Eyston was glad that 'there is so pious and usefull a designe in hand, as to perpetuate the memory of our English Martyrs'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, T. Roydon wrote to John Knaresborough that he was 'extremely pleased with your zeal to perpetuate the memorie of these glorious champions of God's holy Church'.<sup>38</sup> Both contributed lists of dates and information to the collection, and thus had been able to uphold the martyrs' memory, but believed that the sustained effort of gathering all known material and tracking down that which was nearly lost, would help substantially. This practice of compiling in order to prevent further losses and aid retention

---

<sup>34</sup> Henry Preston to John Knaresborough, 2 April 1707: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended'.

<sup>35</sup> Hull History Centre, Hull, 'Constable Maxwell Family of Everingham', U DDEV/67/3: 'Sufferings of the Catholics, Foul drafts' [hereafter: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Foul Drafts'], 552.

<sup>36</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, xxvi (1989), 7.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Eyston to John Knaresborough, 8 March 1707: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended'.

<sup>38</sup> T. Roydon to John Knaresborough, 31 July 1706: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended'.

was one aspect of the early modern period's important transformations in recording, storage, and record management as studied by Ann Blair.<sup>39</sup>

By ensuring the continued existence of the records of their past, expatriates maintained in paper form their claims to a Catholic England. Records were about asserting rights and defending interests as much as about the daily business of institutions or societies. Authority and legitimacy resided in legal deeds, historical documents, and authentic information, ensuring increasing importance of documentary evidence and source-based defence of rights and claims.<sup>40</sup> In these compilations, the Catholic community retained documents that supported its customs, practices, and legitimacy. For instance, Ralph Weldon included much material that supported the Benedictine order's claims to continuity and future legitimacy. He transcribed treatises about the encounter in 1602 between the Benedictine missionaries and Sigebert Buckley, the only surviving English Benedictine from the monastery established under Mary. Through Buckley, the English Congregation laid claim to an unbroken continuity. As Weldon reported, the Benedictine congregation would 'receive a joint & larger Authority from the Ancient English Congregation which still survived in the person of the R.F. Buckley upon whom was devolved & in whom preserved unviolated all the priviledges of the former English Congregation'.<sup>41</sup> Weldon underscored the significance of reports to record these events, stating that the encounter had been 'repeated & authenticated by the grave penn of the Venerable father Austin Baker who best of all could relate it, both that he did his noviceship at S Justina's in Padua & the known vertue & admirable Sanctity of the person renders the story out of dispute'.<sup>42</sup> He copied testimonies by

---

<sup>39</sup> Blair, *Too Much to Know*; Ann M. Blair, 'The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe', *Intellectual History Review*, xx (2010); Margaret Aston, 'English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxvi (1973).

<sup>40</sup> Jacob Soll, 'The Antiquary and the Information State: Colbert's Archives, Secret Histories, and the Affair of the Régale, 1663–1682', *French Historical Studies*, xxxi (2008); Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor, 2009); Peter Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2000), 85.

<sup>41</sup> Weldon, *Memorials*, I, 14.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 13.

Baker, including the Pope's granting of the faculties of mission to the Benedictines.<sup>43</sup> These official statements and testimonies from authoritative figures were supporting their claims to English resources, for as Weldon indicated 'by the said aggregation & union those father upon the death of Fa Buckley should come to have lawfully & sufficiently in them the whole & sole right of the English Benedictine Congregation both as to houses Lands & rents & also as to spiritual & temporal Privileges exemptions & other commodities whatsoever pertaining to the said English congregation that had consisted of all the chief houses of the order within the realm & whereof the whole right now remained in the said father Buckley being the sole survivor of the said congregation'.<sup>44</sup> Preserving those testimonies supported their claims to the true English tradition and to resources. In case of a restoration of Catholicism to the English shore, Catholics would have material on which to base their claims and practices. By preserving the paper records of their past, expatriates maintained in documentary form their claims to a Catholic England and provided foundations for a restoration.

As cases like these make clear, archives work at the interface between past and future. Perhaps this was even more explicit in archives of a dispersed community, since dislocation spurred reflections on their relation to past and future. Many exiled writers defined their situation as transient, and claimed that they were upholding a true tradition while preparing for a return. The record collections' instrumental role in bridging the time between dislocation and anticipated future return highlights their future-mindedness. Far from an aberration, this was a more explicit expression of collectors' storing of information for the future – 'treasuries of knowledge' to be studied for patterns or yielded as future proof of authenticity.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., III, 982.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., III, 982.

<sup>45</sup> Lorraine Daston, 'The Sciences of the Archive', *Osiris*, xxvii (2012).

## Creating Counter Archives

The compilations these Catholics created were not just an exponent of and contribution to the internal identity formation of the dispersed Catholic community, but worked in correspondence with Protestant archives and histories. For archives were not simply institutions of power and authority, but also of contestation. By their very capacity to enable power, they also invited challenges to that power.<sup>46</sup> English Catholics recognised the importance of documents and records, not simply within the archives of English legislations, but also through their own undertakings. They realised they needed to practise their own record keeping to safeguard their memory and reputation. The official English Protestant accounts had either written Catholics out, or turned them into the villains of the story. Many English public ceremonies and monuments were openly anti-Catholic — such as the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot or the monument to the Fire of London — as if Catholics were not part of the English nation.<sup>47</sup> Protestant England could promote its narrative through the development of official archives, libraries, through the public celebrations, and multiple publications. Catholics could tell their story by other means, by collecting, preserving, and organising the records of their recent past.

The record collections were explicitly responding to the omissions and distortions which Catholics discerned in Protestant narratives. That is, for instance the stated purpose in the correspondence of Christopher Grene with his brother Martin Grene. As Martin Grene lamented, some of the English Protestant historians such as Thomas Fuller and Peter Heylyn might be worth reading for the general narrative, but they ‘have little of our matters and lesse of truth when they treat of ours’.<sup>48</sup> In order to rectify these misconceptions, a Catholic

---

<sup>46</sup> Filippo de Vivo, ‘Cœur de l’Etat, Lieu de Tension. Le Tournant Archivistique vu de Venise (XVe–XVIIe Siècle)’, *Annales HSS*, lxxiii (2013); Wood, *The Memory of the People*.

<sup>47</sup> David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells* (London, 1989); Frances E. Dolan, ‘Ashes and “the Archive”: The London Fire of 1666, Partisanship, and Proof’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, xxxi (2001).

<sup>48</sup> Martin Grene to Christopher Grene, 18 Sept. 1664: ABPSJ, Anglia V, no. 67.

counterpart was needed. Thus the Grene brothers tried to meet the challenge of ensuring that the Catholic side of the story was not lost to posterity and that their reputation could be saved. They gave shape to this design in various ways. They conveyed material to the Jesuit Daniello Bartoli for his six-volume history of the Society of Jesus.<sup>49</sup> Christopher Grene put together a vast collection of all material concerning the martyrs. Martin Grene wrote *An Account of the Jesuites Life and Doctrine* in order to counter the stereotypes that haunted the Jesuits,<sup>50</sup> and reportedly also produced a manuscript ‘ecclesiastical history of England’.<sup>51</sup>

The format of the compilation served a purpose in the response to Protestant narratives, for ‘mere’ compilations would generate information about the Catholic past and provide documentary proof. Compiling was a tool with which to think methodologically: it was a way of retrieving information. These practices have been most extensively studied by medievalists, who pay attention to the technical traditions of ‘compilatio’ and ‘ordinatio’ as methods of writing.<sup>52</sup> However, more recently scholars have shown that, rather than an out-dated practice, the interrelationship between the materiality of compiling and the creative process remained crucial throughout the early modern period.<sup>53</sup> Through collecting they managed to recall knowledge that was almost lost. By compiling various sources and creating order and connections, Catholic record collectors recovered deeper knowledge which had not

---

<sup>49</sup> Daniello Bartoli, *Istoria della compagnia di Giesù L'Inghilterra* (Rome, 1676). In his current research on the making of Roman Catholicism as a world religion, Simon Ditchfield devotes much attention to the role of Bartoli.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Grene, *An account of the Jesuites life and doctrine* ([London?], 1661).

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Gillow, *A literary and biographical history, or, Bibliographical dictionary of the English Catholics, from the breach with Rome, in 1534, to the present time*, 5 vols. (London, 1885–1902), iii, 50–2.

<sup>52</sup> Malcolm Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London, 1991), 35–70; Sarah Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record, or Story?’, in Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretti (eds.), *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout, 2006); Sarah Foot, ‘Remembering, Forgetting and Inventing: Attitudes to the Past in England at the End of the First Viking Age’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (Sixth Series)*, ix (1999); Julia C. Crick, ‘St Albans, Westminster and Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past’, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xxv (2002); Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millenium* (Princeton, 1994).

<sup>53</sup> Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia, 2013); Sjoerd Levelt, *Jan van Naaldwijk's Chronicles of Holland: Continuity and Transformation in the Historical Tradition of Holland during the Early Sixteenth Century* (Hilversum, 2011), 22–5.



been visible in the discrete sources. They relied on a large correspondence network to bring snippets of information together, which allowed each of the various sources to illuminate the insufficiencies of the other. One of Knaresborough's correspondents acknowledged that some of the disparate information he passed on did not make much sense to himself, 'but to you who have lights from many other' informants, they might help piece together the puzzle.<sup>54</sup>

The practice of compiling aided in rescuing information from wilful oblivion and heroic secretiveness. It saved documents that others would have wished forgotten. For instance, in a note on the outside of a scaffold speech among Knaresborough's drafts was written: 'In making enquiryes of this kind, there might be hopes of getting som light on what passed in those dark times where everthing [sic] is very obscure & uncertaine nothing but the bare names left upon record, without the least accounts of the particulars of their sufferings'.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Henry Preston wrote to John Knaresborough that they engaged in a 'pious design to retriev (by your ingenious labours) the memory of what our predecessors suffer'd for their faith'.<sup>56</sup> Knaresborough 'retrieved'. He was recognised as an active agent in ensuring the disclosure of information, but merely brought back to light what had been already there all along though invisible. In this light, compiling was subversive, for it aided in revealing what had been obscured.

These metaphors of retrieval are about truth claims. Their choice of format — the compilation — was part of their argument. Compilation was a method of building up authority. It was a return to the original sources from which authenticity was derived. The creators stated that the collections would counter the Protestants' silencing and inaccurate depiction of Catholics by allowing the sources to speak for themselves without an author's bias. The 'truth' these sources revealed was Catholics' innocence. As Anthony Grafton, Barbara Shapiro, and others have shown, many major early modern historical projects were

---

<sup>54</sup> Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Foul Drafts', 550.

<sup>55</sup> T. Roydon to John Knaresborough, 13 Nov. 1706: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended'.

<sup>56</sup> Henry Preston to John Knaresborough, 2 April 1707: Knaresborough, 'Sufferings: Appended'.

wary of rhetoric and instead promoted documentary-driven histories. Bollandists and Maurists on the Catholic side, and the *Magdeburg Centuries* and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* on the Protestant side, brought together a wide range of material and refrained from writing a narrative with a strong authorial voice. They prioritised documentation and the implied authenticity of the original documents.<sup>57</sup> Claims about unbiased method are very pronounced in the Benedictine Ralph Weldon's early-eighteenth-century Memorials. Weldon denied his own intervention, stating that 'these things are not my inventions but what I found in authentick instruments & such like papers'.<sup>58</sup> His role had been confined to 'gathering faithfully together all that seem'd to me able to help a better head & pen than mine whensoever any such would have the heart to compose the history of our congregation'.<sup>59</sup> Setting themselves up as merely the precursors of the authors of histories, compilers of records argued that their collection was more truthful than the biased narratives of their opponents. Whereas authors would create a narrative and argue a case, collectors purportedly merely brought the sources to light. Showing the naked sources would show the truth and support their case.

Documentary collections were built on the implied authenticity of sources. The polemical implications of this rhetorical device were most explicitly illustrated in Charles Dodd's defence of his *Church History* in the early eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup> The Jesuits had

---

<sup>57</sup> Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 2003); Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (London, 1997); Anthony Grafton, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge MA and London, 2006); Anthony Grafton, 'Church History in Early Modern Europe: Tradition and Innovation', in Katherine Elliott van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan (eds.), *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford, 2012), 15–21; Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True False Fictive* (Berkeley, 2011), 16–21; Stefania Tutino, *Shadows of Doubt: Language and Truth in Post-Reformation Catholic Culture* (Oxford, 2014); Stefania Tutino, "For the Sake of the Truth of History and of the Catholic Doctrines". History, Documents, and Dogma in Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xvii (2013); Patrick Collinson, *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 2011), 216–44.

<sup>58</sup> Weldon, Memorials, I, sig. D.

<sup>59</sup> Weldon, Memorials, I, sig. C–D.

<sup>60</sup> Gabriel Glickman, 'Gothic History and Catholic Enlightenment in the Works of Charles Dodd (1672–1743)', *The Historical Journal*, liv (2011).

attacked Dodd for undermining their reputation.<sup>61</sup> In his Apology, Dodd used his methodology as his defence, stating that he had produced ‘a great many original Letters, and manuscripts, which had never seen the light before’, whereby he could proceed to ‘clearing al the matters of fact, which had so shamefully been misrepresented’, and about which historians had ‘either been silent, or misinform’d’.<sup>62</sup> Dodd stated that he had recounted episodes from Catholics’ recent past ‘without making himself a party, by pronouncing upon the merits of the cause, any farther than a bare exhibiting of Records, which any judicious person will look upon as the most disinterested way of proceeding in an Historian’.<sup>63</sup> Dodd’s use of words is revealing for it was all about negation: the absence of interest and partiality. The ‘bare exhibiting of records’ would undermine all misrepresentations which his opponents created in their narratives. Dodd did not see any disjuncture between claiming the impartiality of his method and defending his own cause. Rather, he stated that he was ‘not ignorant that the word Partiality, in the common acception, is of a malignant nature, and import’s several things to the prejudice of an Author; particularly when he favour’s his own party, by unfair and unjust methods; as forging Records, perverting their genuine meaning, by fallacious arguments, and illegal inferences’.<sup>64</sup> By contrast, partiality could also be interpreted ‘in an innocent and more favourable sense’ if it ‘implye’s no more than an Author’s behaviour in favour of a party ... is not every man supposed to talk and write in his own character?’<sup>65</sup>

Unbiased *method* and partisan *purposes* were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, claims to impartiality in method served partisan agendas. Catholics were battling for truth claims, because they claimed that letting the sources speak for themselves would show the

---

<sup>61</sup> John Constable, *A specimen of amendments candidly proposed; to the compiler of a work, which he calls, The church-history of England, from the year 1500, to the year 1688* (London, 1741).

<sup>62</sup> Charles Dodd, *An Apology for the Church history of England, from 1500 till 1688* ([London], 1742), ix.

<sup>63</sup> Dodd, *An Apology*, xii–xiii.

<sup>64</sup> Dodd, *An Apology*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Dodd, *An Apology*, 9–10.

truth, whereas they accused their opponents of being too partisan in their method of creating their own unauthentic narrative out of it. The methodology of compilation was in itself a tactic in confessional battles.

The compilations were deemed to provide the constructive answers which proved their innocence. Rather than merely refuting accusations, they built up documentary evidence against Protestants' slander and protected the Catholic community's reputation. Reputation and credit was central to Catholics' writing. For instance, in 1668, the Catholic earl Roger Palmer (a frequent traveller and prolific polemicist) stated that the records and books Catholics produced were 'the preservers of it, which will for ever record our Innocence, in despite of such detraction and calumny'.<sup>66</sup>

Documenting innocence was crucial because slander and loss of reputation endangered people's ability to act. Ralph Weldon articulated the significance of reputation, and in the process also explained how he was taking part in the mission even though he remained within the walls of his monastery in Paris. In his preface to the Memorials, Weldon stated that he had 'no other design in it all I declare again then the Glory of God & the maintaining of the credit of our Congregation against the dirty light talk of ignorant & considerate tongues'.<sup>67</sup> This statement came just after a long discussion of how some missionary saints had been hampered in their actions because their enemies had given them a bad reputation. Weldon noted the danger of this bad reputation, for

every where a good Christian owes good example but how can he give any when  
 blasted in his reputation? & much more religious men, especially such as are  
 destin'd to a mission, ought to be careful of their good fame as a thing not only

---

<sup>66</sup> Roger Palmer, *A Reply to the answer of the Catholique apology, or, A cleere vindication of the Catholiques of England from all matter of fact charg'd against them by their enemyes* (London, 1668), 5.

<sup>67</sup> Weldon, *Memorials*, I, sig. C.

belonging to them & which is as much worth as their lives, but also as a thing altogether belonging to the church for what service can they render the church of God when stript of the good name?<sup>68</sup>

Loss of reputation was damaging to the Catholic cause, and as a consequence negating slander and reproducing the Catholic side of the story was a crucial contribution to the English mission. Weldon therefore aimed to provide the Catholic story in the most creditable manner by collecting and reproducing sources, declaring this method the best means of showing the bare truth, and therefore of restoring Catholics' reputation. Documents mattered in real life. By setting the record straight on the Benedictine congregation, Weldon insisted he was taking part in the mission from his writing desk.

## **Conclusion**

Approaching 'record keeping' as a broad category moves our gaze beyond the recognisable national and institutional archives to more unexpected elements in early modern society in which recording, compiling, and preserving played a central role. Integrating the practice of compiling counter archives into our reinterpretation of record keeping helps to cast into relief some unspoken assumptions about archives. The compilations discussed in this essay were not archives in the strictest legal sense in which archives are currently defined, as repositories which had public legitimacy and which consisted of records created in the process of the government of institutions and communities. Yet they draw our attention to the influence exercised by the overarching structure of collections as well as archives. Administrative archives highlight the initial production of distinct documents and their meaning, which overshadows the large conglomerations of which they were part. By contrast, the compilers

---

<sup>68</sup> Weldon, *Memorials*, I, sig. C.

did not produce new records, but they created systems of interpretation, through which we observe the distinct documents. Embracing this dimension of collecting as part of our interpretation of record keeping ensures that we do not lose sight of the ‘tacit narratives’ in archives: collections not merely observe and describe; they also reflect perceptions of reality.<sup>69</sup>

Thereby, the counter archives also dispel the optical illusions created by readily available national and institutional archives. The ‘tacit narrative’ of the official English archives had erased Catholics or cast them as opponents. Despite their official status and their creation through administrative processes, the past to which they give access is only partial and shaped by political and religious preoccupations. Catholics’ counter archives produced a more explicitly engaged memory, yet the need for their creation alerts us to the biased narrative created in the seemingly neutral official archives. These were in the hands of particular parties who shaped an archival truth according to their own interpretation.

Moreover, breaking down the boundaries of the physical archive and instead studying the practices of collecting highlights the importance of the geography of information. There is a tendency to focus on localised places of both information and memory. However, neither were necessarily confined to one spot, and looking beyond geographical boundaries offers new perspectives on the process of record creation and keeping. While the study of static communities does indeed show the significance of locality, looking at scattered communities shows that collections both reflected and helped to make sense of the dispersal of those communities. The compilers were participating in the mission through their record keeping, but they were working towards a future in which their role would no longer be necessary; they merely facilitated a mission which would make their own position obsolete and left little direct material on their own activities. The writers of the histories had written themselves out.

---

<sup>69</sup> Eric Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives’, *Archival Science*, i (2001).