

How Effective Was Elizabeth's Religious Settlement?

1558 - 59

Key Questions

- **1. What do we *know* about Elizabeth's personal religion ?**
- **2. Do we *know* what Elizabeth I actually wanted as a religious settlement ?**
- **3. What have historians made of the settlement ?**
- **4. How effective was the settlement of 1559?**

Elizabeth and Religion



1. Elizabeth's personal religion

- **A G Dickens:**
- *As the child of Anne Boleyn... above all as the idol of the anti-Marian Londoners, the new queen was deeply committed to reverse the religious settlement of her predecessor.*
- *The English Reformation 1964*

- **Patrick McGrath**
- ***Elizabeth was not, it would seem, deeply committed theologically in the great disputes over doctrine which divided men at this time. She was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made.***
- ***Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I 1967***

Elizabeth awaited

- *Wel, you hope and you hope: but your hope shall be a slope. For though the Quene [Mary] faile, she that you hope for, [Elizabeth] shal neuer come at it.*
- Bishop Bonner's chancellor to Julia Living [former nun] married to William Living, priest, 1558.

Timeline 1559

- **9 February: 3 bills are passed, one to establish the monarch as Head of the Church; the other two to establish a Protestant form of worship.**
- **21 February: A new bill combines all three earlier ones. It is passed by the House of Commons.**

- **March: The House of Lords amends the bill, so that it does not re-establish Protestant worship.**
- **Elizabeth arrests two bishops for disobedience.**
- **April: A new Supremacy bill is introduced, with the queen as Supreme Governor [*not Head*] of the Church. Passed by the Commons and, after much debate, the Lords.**
- **A new uniformity bill is introduced which allows some concessions to Catholics. It passes in the Lords by 3 votes.**

- **2) What kind of settlement did Elizabeth want ?**
- **3) What are the key 'debates' amongst historians, and what conclusions have they reached about the reasons Elizabeth settlement emerged as it did ?**

Sir John Ernest Neale [1890 – 1975]



Neale: *Elizabeth I* [1934]

- *Elizabeth did not wish to establish a thoroughly Protestant Church, but to return to her father's Catholicism without the Pope.*
- *Her plans were thwarted by a Puritan party in the House of Commons, led by returned religious exiles. It was this that made the Parliament of 1559 so stormy.*

Christopher Haigh [Christ Church, Oxford]



Haigh: *Elizabeth I* [1998]

- *Neale's view appears to be wrong. He exaggerated the weight of the Protestant radicals in the Commons.*
- *Only nineteen Marian exiles were elected to the 1559 Parliament, and some returned too late to play any active role. Above all, the Neale version of 1559 simply does not fit with what we know of the religion of Elizabeth and her advisers.*

Peter Marshall [University of Warwick]



Peter Marshall: *(Re)defining the English Reformation* [2009]

- ***But Elizabeth inherited a nation in which sharp religious difference was already entrenched, and her regime lacked both the coercive power and the unity of purpose to eliminate Catholicism or bring Protestant dissidents firmly to heel.***

4) How effective was the settlement in international terms?

- Had the settlement done enough to dissuade the Catholic powers from combining against England ?**
- Did it make Philip of Spain – King of England until 1558 – more or less likely to force the Catholic faith on England ?**
- How did it affect the issue of Elizabeth's marriage ?**

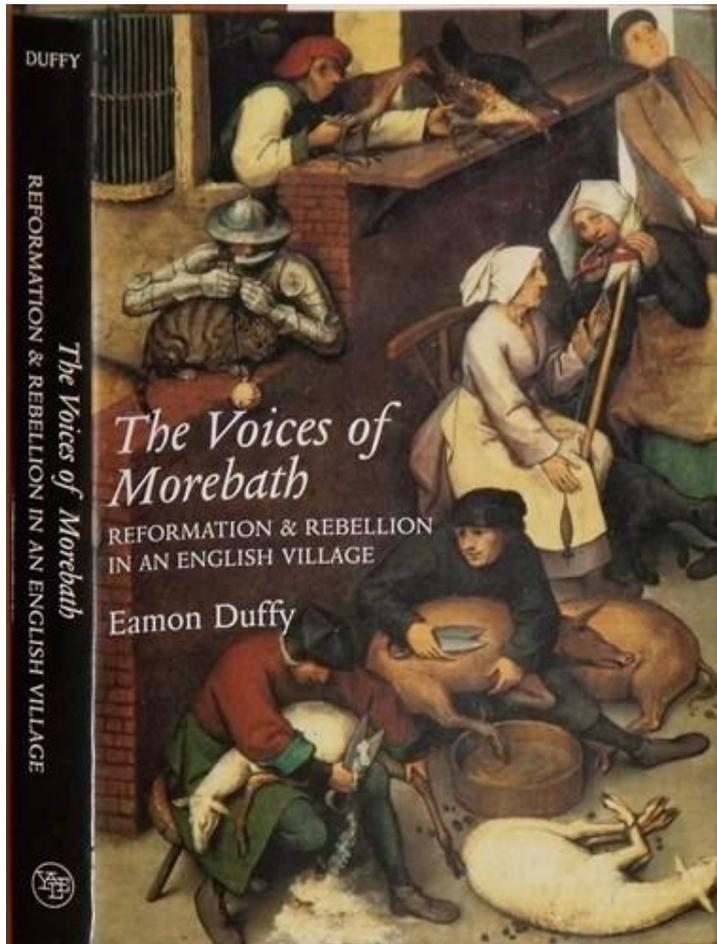
How effective was the settlement at local level ?

- The experience of France – plunged into civil war after 1563 - seemed to suggest that Elizabeth's settlement had little chance of long-term success.**
- Religious reform in Scotland led to successful rebellions in 1559/60 and in 1567.**
- Why, in the end, did England avoid these problems ?**

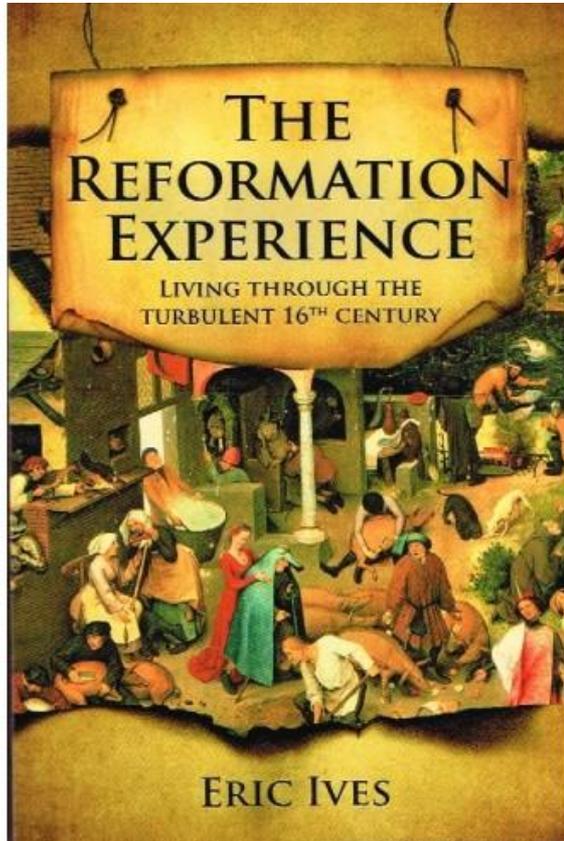
St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, 1572



Two key sources for the local impact



- 1) Eamon Duffy
- *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*
- Yale 2001



- 2) Eric Ives
- *The Reformation Experience: Living through the turbulent 16th century*
- Lion 2012

Document 2

What changed after 1559 ?

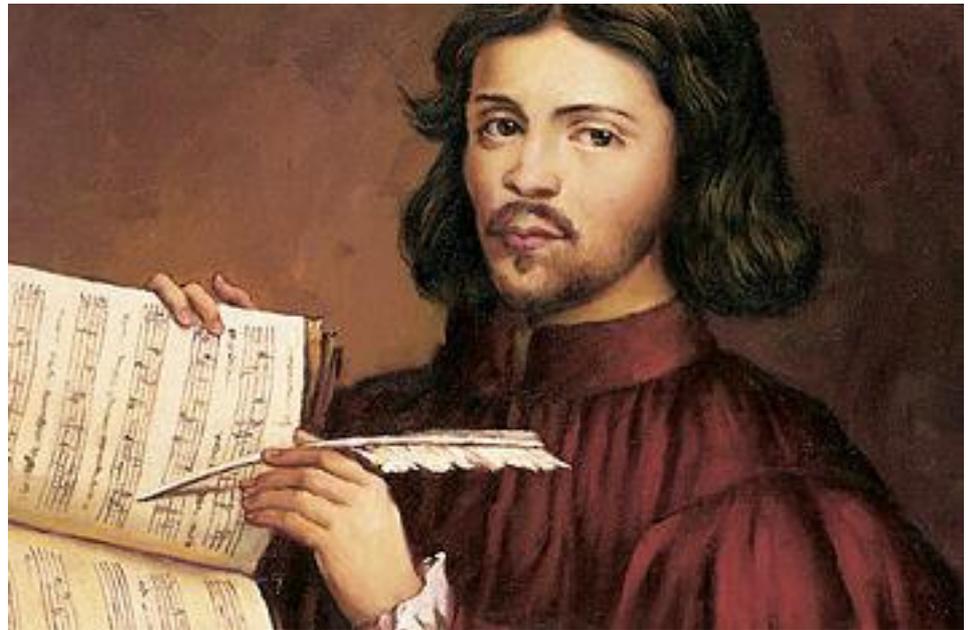
- **The language and music of the Church**
- **The physical appearance of the parish church**
- **The number and nature of the sacraments**
- **Leadership of the Church**
- **The emergence of Puritan and Catholic resistance to the settlement**

Tittleshall, Norfolk



Thomas Tallis [1505-85]

- 1) *Miserere nostri Domine* [for 7 voices, 1546]
- 2) *If ye love me* [for 4 voices, 1560]



Elizabeth's religious settlement: a final word ?

- *She commeth in like a mother, not like a step-dame; like a Lambe, not lyke a Lion; shee russheth not in to hang and drawe: her maiestie beheadeth none, burneth none, spoileth none, forgeueth all.*
- John Foxe *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Dayes*, 1563 edition.