Alexandra M. Walsham. *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700.*
Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. xvi + 364 pp. index. illus. bibl. $85. ISBN: 0–7190–5239–4.

Michael Questier. *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550–1640.*
Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xii + 560 pp. index. append. illus. tbls. $80. ISBN: 0–521–86008–3.

Until recently histories of English religion have, with a few exceptions, paid more attention to Protestants than to Catholics. Historians have also tended to regard religious persecution with distaste. This has obscured the complexity of the processes through which Catholic as well as Puritan minorities responded to official prosecution and popular hostility. In very different ways, these books both contribute toward the development of a more subtle and sophisticated picture of how religious persecution and accommodation actually worked.

Alexandra Walsham's general history of the relationship between tolerance and intolerance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is organized thematically rather than chronologically, in order to avoid the distortions of the conventional Whig narrative, in which toleration gradually triumphs over the spirit of persecution. She emphasizes continuities over the whole period, especially in the adherence of most people to a belief that deviations from orthodoxy ought to be actively discouraged. Although people sometimes managed to coexist peacefully with neighbors of differing religious views, "the virus of intolerance, if often latent and in abeyance, was nevertheless always present ready to flare up and wreak havoc when conditions were right" (12). Rather than standing in stark opposition to each other, tolerant and intolerant impulses constantly interacted within "an almost schizophrenic religious culture" (13), in which religious dissent might be tolerated as an unavoidable evil but was almost never approved.

The imperative to suppress deviance stemmed, Walsham argues, from a view first articulated by Augustine that heresy is a cancerous growth requiring surgical

removal to preserve the community's health. Religious prosecution was therefore a magisterial duty akin to the obligation to suppress sin and blasphemy. In the sixteenth century disagreements developed over whether magistrates needed to police privately held beliefs, as well as over the range of "indifferent" matters that might be left to individual discretion. But there was wide — if not quite universal — agreement on the need to punish public challenges to orthodox conformity. This intolerance permeated popular levels of society, as demonstrated by the ridicule and abuse often inflicted on condemned priests or Puritan radicals, as well as the tendency to scapegoat religious minorities after disasters like plagues.

Normally, however, religious dissenters who behaved as peaceful and constructive members of their community faced less hostility than those who deliberately provoked confrontation. Religious minorities therefore had to decide how far to accommodate the pressures exerted by majority opinion and the official Church. Responses ranged from occasional conformity to forms of defiance that courted martyrdom. Although strategies of accommodation might be justified on religious grounds, they often imposed a burden on the consciences of those forced to adopt them. Walsham acknowledges that a growing current of minority opinion rejected intolerance in the late seventeenth century, but she rejects the view that there was a radical change in the intellectual climate. Even those who advocated broad tolerance for Protestants sometimes wanted to persecute Catholics and atheists, and the measure of religious freedom accorded by the so-called Toleration Act of 1689 was hedged by restrictions. Moreover, the extension of official tolerance produced countervailing tendencies toward greater endogamy among religious minorities, as if the relaxation of persecution threatened group identity. In some cases official toleration also encouraged fiercer intellectual attacks on opponents' views. Rather than disappearing, impulses toward religious exclusivity and intolerance merely assumed different forms.

Walsham recognizes that the interplay between tolerant and intolerant impulses was often governed as much by local circumstances as by religious ideas. Nevertheless the thematic approach and broad chronological scope of her book tend to place the emphasis on enduring attitudes and ideas, rather than the playing out of social and political relationships in specific circumstances. Questier's study provides a useful corrective by offering a deeply researched and detailed account of the evolution of one aristocratic Catholic entourage, belonging to the Brownes of Sussex, between the 1540s and the Civil War. The story he tells challenges the conventional view of Catholicism as a declining force, increasingly confined to the north, by demonstrating the stubborn persistence — perhaps even the solidification and growth — of a southern Catholic community. It also provides a nuanced account of how the Brownes and their followers strove to maintain a stance of outward loyalty toward the monarchy, while actively upholding Catholic views.

Older studies, Questier argues, exaggerate the isolation of Catholics by concentrating on recusants and overlooking the degree to which outwardly conformist patrons sympathetic to the Roman faith continued to support and protect people who shared their beliefs. Although some Catholics did retreat into private lives

after the failure of the Northern Rebellion in 1569, while others fled to the Continent or suffered imprisonment, many religious conservatives conformed outwardly and hung on. They did so partly through "the shadowy influence of unseen webs of corruption, impeding the proper enforcement" of official religious policy (42), rooted in networks of kinship and alliance that united landed Catholic families with each other, and sometimes also with influential Protestants.

Sir Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montague, conformed and reportedly expressed his willingness to defend Elizabeth against a papal army, should it invade England. He consistently avoided active involvement in Catholic conspiracies and Jesuit missionary activity, and was rewarded by being allowed to remain active in Sussex affairs. Outwardly, he therefore fits the profile of the kind of moderate loyalist Catholic that historians have distinguished from a conspiratorial minority. But Questier questions the assumption that "there was an absolute and clear distinction between Catholicism of the 'moderate' and of the 'radical' kind" (159). Montague's kinship network and household included more radical Catholics, like his son-in-law the Earl of Southampton and some of his chaplains. His own attitudes were also probably more equivocal than he wanted the authorities to believe. Moreover, the household was probably becoming "more clericalised, even separatist, in its inclinations" (205) toward the end of his life and, following his death in 1592, as his widow, Magdalene, turned the family seat into a center of Catholic worship known locally as "Little Rome" (215). Montague's grandson and heir, Anthony Maria, also appears to have been a more rigorous Catholic. But the family remained suspicious of Jesuits and Spanish influence, and emerged in the Jacobean period as the leading aristocratic patrons of an anti-Jesuit appellant party among the Catholic clergy, whose campaign to gain royal and papal approval for the reintroduction of Catholic bishops into England he actively promoted.

But despite his alignment with this moderate faction, he refused to take the Oath of Allegiance in 1611. Questier sees him as a figure vying for leadership of the English Catholic community, against rivals aligned with the Jesuits, down to his death in 1629. The final chapters of the book trace the efforts of Montague's brand of Catholic loyalists to cultivate an alliance with the Laudian establishment under Charles I, by stressing irenic understanding and forbearance among Protestant and Catholic subjects loyal to the king and shared hostility toward Jesuit and Calvinist radicals. Whether sincere or opportunistic, this stance led the Browne family and its kin network into active support for the king in the Civil War.

As Questier would be the first to acknowledge, the story he tells is that of an English Catholic community, rather than the entire Catholic community. Following other Catholic dynasties, like the Wriothesleys, Treshams, and Howards, would undoubtedly yield somewhat different perspectives. But this remains an invaluable study that greatly illuminates the complexity of Catholicism as a political, as well as religious, force throughout the period under discussion.

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