

# Church Papists (Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Mo)

Alexandra Walsham

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## **Church Papists (Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional** Polemic in Early Mo)

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Church Papists (Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Mo) Alexandra Walsham 'Church Papist' was a nickname, a term of abuse, for those English Catholics who outwardly conformed to the established Protestant Church and yet inwardly remained Roman Catholics. The more dramatic stance of recusancy has drawn historians' attention away from this sizeable, if statistically indefinable, proportion of Church of England congregations, but its existence and significance is here clearly revealed through contemporary records, challenging the sectarian model of post-Reformation Catholicism perpetuated by previous historians. Alexandra Walsham explores the aggressive reaction of counter-Reformation clergy to the compromising conduct of church papists and the threat they posed to Catholicism's separatist image; alongside this she explains why parish priests simultaneously condoned qualified conformity. This scholarly and original study thus draws into focus contemporary clerical apprehensions and anxieties, as well as the tensions caused by the shifting theological temper of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart church.



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