JOHN BATTELY'S *ANTIQUITATES S. EDMUNDI BURGI* AND ITS EDITORS

by FRANCIS YOUNG

IN 1745 the first history of Bury St. Edmunds, John Battely's *Antiquitates S. Edmundi Burgi ad Annum MCCLXXII Perductae* ('Antiquities of St. Edmundsbury to 1272,' henceforth referred to as *Antiquitates*), appeared in print, half a century after it was left unfinished on its author's death. The publication of this early antiquarian account of a Suffolk town was a significant event for the historiography of the county, and the work was to become the foundation for all subsequent research on the life of St. Edmund and Bury Abbey. John Battely and his work have been undeservedly forgotten, largely because he wrote in Latin for a narrow academic audience. This article will examine why and how Battely wrote a history of Bury, why the work remained unpublished for so long, and the personalities that lay behind its publication in the mid eighteenth century.

Antiquitates was a product of the antiquarianism of the seventeenth century, acutely sensitive to the political and theological implications of Saxon and mediaeval history. Battely died in 1708, already celebrated as an antiquary despite having published nothing in his lifetime, apart from one sermon on I John 5:4. His manuscripts were inherited by his nephew, Oliver Battely, but it was Dr. Thomas Terry, Greek Professor at Christchurch, Oxford, who edited his *Antiquitates Rutupinae* ('Antiquities of Richborough') in 1711. When *Antiquitates S. Edmundi Burgi* was published in 1745, it was printed bound together with a second edition of Antiquitates Rutupinae as the complete posthumous works of John Battely.

Battely's work on Bury found itself overshadowed by the earlier work; richly illustrated with maps and engravings of archaeological finds, and fully indexed, *Antiquitates Rutupinae* was a work of scholarship that was deemed worthy of translation into English by John Dunscombe as late as 1774. *Antiquitates*, by contrast, occasionally reads like an unfinished compilation of notes. Long passages are excerpts from Battely's sources, sometimes introduced without authorial comment. *Antiquitates* thus falls into the category of 'still-born' antiquarian works of the late seventeenth century remarked upon by White Kennett in 1693 (Sweet 2004, 18). It was a collection of 'materials towards' the history of Bury that was in the process of becoming a narrative at the time it was abandoned by Battely.

Unlike *Antiquitates Rutupinae*, Battely's history of Bury was never reprinted, much less translated. In 1719, John Randall addressed the departed antiquary and fellow alumnus of the Bury Grammar School in his mournful Latin verses:

O utinam vestros scripsisset, Buria, fastos,
(Cui praelucebat nullus in Orbe locus)

'If only you had written your pages on Bury, which no place in the world outshone.' In spite of his reverence for John Battely as *Battleiorum doctum* ('the learned one of the Battelys'), Randall was evidently unaware of the existence of Battely's unpublished manuscript (Randall 1719, 39). Thirty years of silence from Oliver Battely ensured that, when *Antiquitates* was eventually published, even Battely's enthusiastic admirers did not know it existed. Nevertheless, *Antiquitates* made an impact on the antiquarian world that lasted well into the nineteenth century. As late as 1895, M. R. James

dedicated his work on Bury Abbey to the memory of John Battely and Thomas Martin (James 1895, dedication), and in 1893, the Benedictine author J. B. Mackinlay bothered to refute Battely's arguments on the parentage of St. Edmund as if he were still an authority with whom to be reckoned (Mackinlay 1893, n. 25).

Neither the author nor his editor gives any precise indication of when John Battely wrote *Antiquitates*. However, Battely makes no reference to any work published after 1691, including the *Notitia Monastica* of Thomas Tanner (1674–1735), a brilliant young antiquary who was at the time Chaplain of All Souls' College, Oxford. This was a significant work of monastic scholarship that Battely would scarcely have neglected had he been working after 1695. The footnotes to *Antiquitates* wrongly state that Henry Wharton's *Anglia Sacra* was published in 1692 (Battely 1745[2], n. 55); it was actually published in 1691. The only later text that Battely may have used was Edmund Gibson's 1692 edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but although Battely frequently refers to the Chronicle there is never a citation of Gibson's edition as his source. It is more probable that Battely used the same manuscript source as Gibson. The footnotes also give Henry Wharton's *Historia de Episcopis et Decanis Londinensibus* (published in 1695) as a source (Battely 1745[2], n. 131), but it is likely that this is an interpolation of the editor, like the citation of the 1743 edition of Francis Godwin's *De Praesulibus Angliae* (Battely 1745[2], n. 72). Wharton was appointed a Chaplain to William Sancroft in 1688 (a position Battely also held) and Oliver Battely states in his bibliography of the manuscript sources that Battely made use of the copy of the Lichfield Codex in Wharton's possession (Battely 1745[2], 162). Battely wrote *Antiquitates Rutupinae* as an imaginary dialogue between himself, Wharton and Henry Maurice, another of Sancroft's chaplains, and it is therefore very likely that the two antiquaries co-operated closely. It seems more probable that the manuscript sources used by Battely were later incorporated into Wharton's book of 1695 than that Battely consulted one book published after 1691, and no others.

A letter of Thomas Madox dated 30 August 1697 records that a certain 'C.B.' asked him to consult Augustine Baker's *Acta Benedictinorum in Anglia* in the library of Jesus College, Oxford, and that he had also consulted Leland in the Bodleian, 'which afforded me more, relating to Mr Battelys instructions, than what this paper shews' (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 165). The 'instructions' appear to have been to find references to Bury St. Edmunds, Reculver and Sandwich, which Madox had transcribed on the paper enclosed with the letter. The letter is addressed to the Archdeacon of Canterbury, which makes puzzling the reference to 'Mr Battely' in the third person in the body of the letter. One possibility is that 'C.B.' is Charles Battely, John's youngest brother, who had passed on John's wishes to Madox.

Oliver Battely tells us in his 1745 introduction to the double edition (Battely 1745[1], iii) that when Battely became Archdeacon of Canterbury,

> He naturally left off investigations of this kind so that, in the meantime, he might never neglect those sacred offices he took upon himself. In this way he was never away from his duties as Archdeacon (which he administered most prudently) nor from his flock, whom he assiduously watched over as a most diligent shepherd.

The seriousness with which Battely treated his appointment is borne out by the publicly expressed trust of Archbishop Sancroft's successor, Thomas Tenison, in a letter to the clergy of his diocese (Gregory 2000, 245). Yet Battely must have used some of his time in Canterbury to make use of the archives of Canterbury Cathedral and Lambeth Palace. The safest assumption is that Battely's research was only sporadic after 1692, and the main text of *Antiquitates* probably dates from the early 1690s. In the same introduction, Oliver Battely acknowledges the discrepancy between the two works and the disappointment it might cause the citizens of Bury:

No-one, therefore, is justly able to charge him with diligence too great in this explanation of the monuments of Richborough, except perhaps his own people of St. Edmundsbury. It was their right to hope that their town, and the most celebrated monastery within it, might be somewhat roused from its torpor by this incomplete work.

It was to be a long time before Bury was 'roused from its torpor.' Antiquarian interest in Bury St. Edmunds had, until now, been slight. Between 1708 and 1724 Humfrey Wanley, librarian to Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford and a founding member of the Society of Antiquaries (Sweet 2004, 35, 48), published an undated three page pamphlet entitled *Notes concerning Bury St. Edmund In Com. Suffolk. Extracted out of the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford's Library by Mr. Wanley.* Wanley became the 1st Earl's librarian in 1708, but since Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl, was not a member of the Privy Council, the pamphlet must date from his father's lifetime. A copy of this is included in the *Collectanea Buriensia* (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 637–40) and it was presumably owned by Sir James Burrough. Wanley's account is taken from 'Eight Abbey Books of that Monastery now in your Lordship's Library,' and focuses on the privileges of the Lord Abbot and the conflicts between the Abbey and the townsfolk.

The Thetford-born lawyer and antiquary Thomas Martin of Palgrave (1697–1771) contemplated a history of Bury in the early eighteenth century and began a collection of source materials (some of which were acquired by Sir James Burrough), but it was not until 1769 that George Ashby published a historical 'Description' of Bury in English for the gentleman traveller (Ashby 1769, frontispiece). Ashby, perhaps surprisingly, makes no reference to Battely or his work, yet it seems likely that Ashby made use of the *Collectanea*, since he quotes from material transcribed there such as Henry Spelmann's poem 'Iconotypicon Buriensis' (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 181–4). A string of guidebooks followed on from Ashby's, but the first scholarly antiquarian study of the Abbey, by William Yates, did not appear until 1805.

It is unlikely that many local people read Battely's work. He wrote principally for an academic audience with an appreciation of erudite Latin prose. In the editor's own words, 'Whether happily adorned with literary wit or scattered everywhere with an elegant style of prose, you will find here something to delay you.' The modestly educated touring gentleman for whom local guides and pocket histories poured from the presses at the beginning of the nineteenth century had no counterpart at the end of the seventeenth. For this reason, Battely's work is not a historical guide designed to appeal to visitors or local residents, although he concedes that his own personal association with the town was his chief motivation for writing: 'Love of the place persuades me that, if only because I was born there, I ought to bring together into one collection whatever I find that known and unknown authors have written about it, [lest I should seem to be unworthy or forgetful of my beloved homeland.]' (Battely 1745[2], 2; SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 2). Rosemary Sweet dismisses the antiquary's invocation of a personal association with a place as a 'formulaic utterance' designed to impress the reader, yet Battely does not dwell on a childhood fascination with antiquities (Sweet 2004, 32). Indeed, the text shows no evidence of familiarity with the physical remains of the Abbey, and only a few lines of Battely's surviving notes refer to artefacts excavated in Bury (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 147).

Notwithstanding the editorial work of his nephew on a more or less inchoate manuscript, it is clear that Battely always intended *Antiquitates* to be a narrative history of Bury, rather than a collection of historical curiosities. Battely's choice of a narrative form is an interesting one in the light of his experimentation with a dialogue form in *Antiquitates Rutupinae.* The dialogue form distinguished the antiquary from the narrative historian and emphasised the study of antiquities as a social activity conducted by groups of interested gentlemen such as the Society of Antiquaries that Battely helped

to re-found at the end of his life. By the time he came to write *Antiquitates*, Battely may have been attempting to distance himself from the stereotype of the antiquary 'obsessed with minutiae' and incapable of narrative. On the other hand, the narrative structure of the work may owe more to the nature of its sources than to any self-conscious imitation of the historians on Battely's part. With a largely mediaeval rather than Roman subject before him, Battely makes scant use of 'archaeological' curiosities in his argument and relies almost entirely on printed and manuscript sources.

John Battely was baptised on 18 November 1646 in the Parish of St. James, Bury St. Edmunds. He claimed descent from an ancient East Anglian family whose origins can be traced to the 14th century (Battelle 1985, 7). His father, Nicholas Battely (d. 1680), was an apothecary (Gage 1838 n. 496) and twice Alderman of the borough, in 1668 and 1680. John was the eldest of eight brothers, five of whom survived infancy. He inherited land in Bury (presumably his father's house) and, since he died without issue, he bequeathed some of it for the maintenance of two poor men in his will of 1708 (Gillingwater 1804, 258). John's brother Nicholas (1648–1704), also a clergyman, shared his antiquarian interests, and in 1703 he edited the *Antiquities of Canterbury* of William Somner (originally published in 1640) and added a second part, *Cantuaria sacra*. John, too, followed in Somner's footsteps since it was Somner who included the first history of Richborough in *A treatise of the Roman ports and forts in Kent*, published by James Brome in 1693. Samuel Battely, the third son, continued his father's business and held an estate at Horringer. He was Alderman in 1696 and 1708, and was returned as MP for the borough in 1712. Thomas Battely, the fourth son, followed John and Nicholas to Trinity College, Cambridge and the eighth son, Charles Battely, became a government rate collector in Westminster (Suffolk Green Books 1908, 19–20). John and Nicholas' mother, Ann Battely (d. 4 February 1699) was buried in Bekesbourne church in Kent, where Nicholas was vicar from 1685.

Battely was educated at the Bury Grammar School under Thomas Stephens, a committed Royalist who, in the last days of the Commonwealth, attended a secret Anglican chapel with some of his pupils—most of whom, according to Dr. John North, were imbued with his principles as a result (Elliott 1963, 59–60). John Battely matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge in April 1662. In September his old school awarded him an exhibition of £5. He became a fellow of the college in 1668 and proceeded to the degree of Doctor of Divinity the following year. He was ordained priest at Ely Cathedral on 2 October 1675. On 19 November 1684 Archbishop Sancroft collated Battely to the rectories of Hunton and Adisham in Kent (Robertson 1882, 167). In the same year he was appointed Chancellor of Brecknock and St. David's (Dict. Nat. Biog. 2004, IV, 371). It was while at Adisham that Battely began his research at Richborough Castle (Battely 1745[1], 103), as well as becoming a chaplain to Archbishop Sancroft. William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury 1677–91, was born at Fressingfield in Suffolk and educated at the Bury Grammar School, albeit some twenty years before the Battely brothers. Battely's later preferment for the First Prebendal stall at Canterbury could have owed something to his being related to Sancroft by marriage; his cousin Elizabeth Battely of Rumburgh married Thomas, William Sancroft's brother (Battelle 1985, 42).

In the dialogue of *Antiquitates Rutupinae*, Henry Wharton expresses his surprise that someone born in East Anglia (*in Icenis*) should know so much about Kent, to which Battely replies (Battely 1745[1], 101–2),

> *Even you, my dear Wharton, you who were likewise born in East Anglia, have moved your hand to the ecclesiastical antiquities of Kent … I call myself a citizen of Canterbury since it is many years since I was sent to this province with my brother Nicholas by that holiest of men, William Sancroft, having been given benefices and comparable titles of honour.*

Despite his affinity with Canterbury, Battely returned to East Anglia in 1687. He was made Archdeacon of Suffolk on 1 November, which entitled him to a stall at Norwich Cathedral and gave him nominal pastoral oversight of his native county. He was installed as Archdeacon of Canterbury on 22 March 1688, and on 1 September 1688 he was appointed to the mastership of Eastbridge Hospital in Canterbury. On 14 November he became a Canon of Canterbury. In 1689 he was invited to join the Royal Commission for the Review of the Liturgy, whose intention (never achieved) was to revise the 1662 Book of Common Prayer so as to comprehend Dissenters. Battely's only published work in his lifetime was a sermon preached before Queen Mary at Canterbury Cathedral on 4 May 1694, entitled *The Original Institution of the Sabbath.*

It was while at Canterbury that Battely had access to the libraries of Lambeth Palace and Canterbury Cathedral that the Elizabethan Archbishop Matthew Parker had richly stocked with mediaeval treasures salvaged from the wreckage of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. He also made use of the 'Bury Archives,' probably the documents kept by the Corporation at the Bury Guildhall. By 1745, when Oliver Battely was in the process of tracking down Battely's manuscript sources, some of them were in the possession of another Bury antiquarian and clergyman, Cox Macro (1683–1767), an avid collector of mediaeval manuscripts.

Battely's fairly rapid promotion in the 1680s, his association with Edward Stillingfleet and his involvement with the Royal Commission of 1689 all suggest an allegiance to the Latitudinarian principles that characterised many high-ranking Anglican clergy of the late seventeenth century. The aim of the 1689 Commission was 'enlarging the boundaries of the Church of England to include the more reconcilable nonconformists, in particular the presbyterians' (Clark 1955, 154). It was, therefore, largely a 'broad church' and Latitudinarian Commission. Battely is typical of this spectrum of opinion in showing little interest in theology and devoting his energies to other learned pursuits. According to Charles Knighton, Battely 'viewed James II's policies with disfavour' (Dict. Nat. Biog. 2004, IV, 371), and in 1685 he wrote in protest to Edward Leedes, the Master of the Bury Grammar School, at proposals 'to relax the orders and statutes of the School in behalf of the children of recusants' (Elliott 1963, 71).

Battely was highly regarded as an antiquary by his contemporaries. In 1707, he was one of the first six members of the Society of Antiquaries to meet at the Bear Tavern in the Strand after its founders, Humfrey Wanley, John Talman and John Bagford (Sweet 2004, 84). Battely was an authority on Roman antiquities in particular, and several letters survive to him from other amateurs, usually accompanying excavated artefacts, such as a letter from a certain 'A. L. S.' on 9 July 1704 accompanying an urn recently excavated at Sandy in Bedfordshire (St. John's College MS WO5/2).

John Battely was twice married, first to Catherine Rawleins of Knightsbridge, in 1675; at this time he was living in the parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, apparently as a tutor. Catherine died in 1685 and Battely's second wife was Mary, the youngest daughter of Sir Henry Oxenden of Deane in Kent, who died in 1741 at the age of eighty-five. John himself died in Canterbury on 10 October 1708, leaving the two antiquarian works, the one unpublished and the other incomplete. On his deathbed he became uneasy about the extent of his clerical pluralism (Battelle 1985, 28).

John's nephew, Oliver Battely (1697–1762), inherited his uncle's papers and, as he confesses in the introduction to the double volume, it was thirty years before he could be induced to publish the work on Bury. Oliver was born in 1697, the son of Nicholas Battely, the vicar of Bekesbourne, and his second wife, the daughter of Dr. John Oliver. This Dr. Oliver may have been John Battely's

predecessor as Rector of Adisham, who died in 1661 as Dean of Worcester (Robertson 1882, 166–7). Oliver Battely was a scholar at Westminster School in 1712 and graduated B.A. at Christchurch College, Oxford in 1720. In 1728 he was assigned the curacy at Cowley just outside the city. In 1731 he returned to the University as Proctor, but walked straight into the controversy surrounding the election of John Andrews as Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. Battely came under pressure from the Vice-Chancellor, Robert Shippen, to vote for George Huddesford, the President of Trinity College. In 1734 he proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and in 1736 he was appointed Rector of Iron Acton in Gloucestershire. On 28 June 1757 he was made Prebend of Fairwell with a stall at Llandaff Cathedral. Oliver wrote a will on 23 July 1762 which was proved on 4 December (Dict. Nat. Biog. 2004, IV, 371).

Oliver hints at the extent to which he altered the manuscript in his introduction. He complains that Battely's work is a 'little long' but excuses it on the grounds that 'He [the author] preferred to prevent rather than to permit his adversaries, when they should attack, to impugn the trustworthiness of the writer. Otherwise it would have been easy to adorn all of this like a new garment, and to scatter it here and there with a skilful style.' In other words, Battely's prose is cumbersome because he wanted to close off any opportunity for his conclusions to be criticised. Oliver Battely may have been emboldened to publish his uncle's work by the spate of county and local histories that emerged in the first three decades of the eighteenth century.

The book's illustrator and co-editor, James Burrough (1691–1764), is better known. A native of Bury St. Edmunds, he was Master of Gonville and Caius College from 1754 and an important Cambridge architect of the eighteenth century (Dict. Nat. Biog., VIII, 1008–9). On his death, his widow Elizabeth Burrough bequeathed a folio and a quarto containing his antiquarian papers to the library of St. James' Church. However, it appears from letters of Mr. Tyson to Mr. Gough of 11 and 30 January 1772 that at least some of Burrough's collection was acquired by Sir Thomas Cullum; other papers were allowed to rot in a garret by Mrs. Burrough, who hoped that Caius would pay her a great sum to release them (Nichols 1822, 91-2). Whatever became of the other materials, the folio given to St. James' Church, known as *Collectanea Buriensia*, survives, and a large part of the material within it is research undertaken by John Battely for *Antiquitates*, as well as three partial drafts of the work. Burrough contributed a visual element to the collection, although the final publication of *Antiquitates* (presumably for reasons of cost) featured only large engravings of the Abbey Gateway, the frontage of the Abbot's Palace and the ground plan of the Abbey Church, as well as a small engraving of the Abbey Ruins at the head of the first page of text. Thomas Martin prompted Burrough to add the two turrets that appear on the gateway, since he remembered them from some years previously (Thomas Martin to Sir James Burrough, 18 November 1737, SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 643).

Oliver Battely asked Burrough for any existing illustrations of the conventual buildings, since Burrough wrote to him in December 1744 referring to three now unknown representations of the Abbey Gate by a Mrs. Gibbons, a Mr. Millicent and a Mr. Bees (Nichols 1822, 111-12):

The Abbey Gate, the West front I mean, has been often drawn by Mrs Gibbons of Bury, one of her draughts perhaps you have; but that can not be accurate enough for an engraver to work after. Mr. Millicent engraved a plate of the gate after his own drawing about 19 or 20 years ago, but where to get one of them now I cannot tell, but will endeavour to procure one. Mr. Millicent's, I think, was better than Mr. Bees's.

Burrough made sketches of coats of arms he had seen in the Abbey (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 633) and an engraving of the west front of the Abbey, now lost, was drafted by George Vertue (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 619). Thomas Martin, likewise, contributed sketches of coats of arms seen at Bury, and Burrough drew a ground plan of the Abbot's Palace as he remembered it before its demolition in 1720. He had already, in 1718, drawn a view of the west front of the Palace on which Vertue based his engraving.

George Vertue (1686–1756) was official engraver to the Society of Antiquaries from 1717, and the only engraver to be elected a fellow (Dict. Nat. Biog. 2004, LVI, 382). In 1727 he was appointed official engraver to Oxford University, and he became closely associated with Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford. He undertook numerous private commissions, many for members of the Society of Antiquaries, and was regarded as England's leading engraver. Among the *Collectanea* is the proof of Vertue's engraving of the Abbey Gateway, which he sent to Elizabeth Burrough on 22 October 1745 with instructions to show it to her husband (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 635). Burrough closely annotated the proofs, and at times he was quite critical of Vertue's drafts. Vertue was a prestigious choice of engraver for the book, yet with the involvement of Burrough, Thomas Martin and Thomas Madox, Battely's work had already attracted the interest of some of the most prominent antiquaries of the age.

The pattern of research that emerges from Battely's manuscript papers is a very sporadic one. Battely gives the impression of having snatched the occasional moment to peruse mediaeval volumes for references to Bury; these he wrote down on any scrap of paper that came to hand, such as bills and the backs of old letters. Battely occasionally asked others to undertake research on his behalf. The involvement of Thomas Madox has already been mentioned; elsewhere in the *Collectanea* a certain 'H.B.' transcribed part of a chronicle (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 137). The majority of the transcriptions are undoubtedly John Battely's, however, since his distinctive monogram is doodled on many of them. The drafts of *Antiquitates* and most of the transcribed registers share a single watermark; an achievement of the arms of England with the letters 'A. J.' beneath.

The *Collectanea* also shed light on the extent of Oliver Battely's editorial involvement. Of the three drafts of the narrative of *Antiquitates*, the oldest runs to only three pages, and is identifiable as such since it contain corrections incorporated into the second, which is still more minimal at twelve lines. The third manuscript in the book is much lengthier, however, and takes the narrative up to the reign of Samson, the tenth Abbot. The manuscript shows evidence of having been prepared for a printer or editor, rather than for the author's personal use. The text is written on one page only, with the facing page being reserved for notes, and all quotations are underlined. Corrections become fewer as the narrative progresses. However, it is very unlikely that this manuscript was that from which Oliver Battely worked. A note to the printed text reads, 'In the margin the author has added, "unless perhaps this is that Faustinus who was a Consul of Severus at York. See Codex of Justinian III. 32. 1"' (Battely 1745[2], 2). There is no such note in the margin of John Battely's third manuscript in *Collectanea*. In addition, there are a number of grammatical differences with the printed text, and some excised passages, although these may be the work of the editor. Furthermore, the printed text ends at the reign of Simon, the fifteenth Abbot.

It is possible that the missing folio contained Battely's final text. According to A. A. H. Radice, the Librarian of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral who wrote notes on the *Collectanea* in 1969, this volume was missing from the archives as early as the 1770s. Alternatively, it may be that the final text was in the possession of Oliver Battely and Sir James Burrough possessed only incomplete drafts.

John Battely structured his history by the reigns of abbots, but there is evidence that Battely wanted to take his history of Bury up to the present. Oliver Battely recognised this to a certain extent, when he included a table of the later abbots up to the Dissolution. However, John Battely transcribed noteworthy events in the register of St. Mary's Church down to the interment of Dr. John Sancroft (apparently no relation of the Archbishop) on 20 April 1637 (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 517); elsewhere he recorded the fire of 1608 and the 'restoration' of the Grammar School in 1664 (SRO(W) FL541/13/4, 145).

Since the published work is organised by abbots, the length of the chapters varies according to the amount of source material available for the reign. The first chapter, telling the pre-monastic history, is by far the longest. Oliver Battely included no less than twenty-four appendices (although he numbers them twenty-six), mostly extracts from mediaeval registers and charters transcribed by Battely but only partially incorporated into his text. In any case, the publication of previously unedited manuscript sources was an important part of the eighteenth century antiquarian project, and could be justified in its own right.

In 1780 the antiquary James Douglas singled out William Somner and John Battely as 'theoretical and speculative' antiquaries determined to reconcile their finds with classical texts at all costs (Sweet 2004, 22). However, Battely displays a tongue-in-cheek attitude to his sources as often as he engages in specious argument. Oliver Battely claimed that Battely was not given to the 'jejune and tenuous argument' of some antiquaries, who were willing to make use of the most dubious evidence to set up flimsy but prestigious associations between their discoveries and famous historical figures. Classicism is less of an issue in *Antiquitates* than in *Antiquitates Rutupinae*, however, since almost all of Battely's sources are mediaeval and textual, apart from a solitary reference to an excavated coin of the Empress Faustina (Battely 1745[2], 2).

Battely reaches no firm conclusions on the early history of Bury and he is admirably circumspect. After citing André du Chesne's view that Bury was named after 'Bericus,' on whose account Claudius invaded Britain, Battely remarks with a hint of sarcasm that 'If this name does refer to Bericus then I should not doubt that the Bericans, who were ... brought from Arabia ... to replace the Brigantians, were located here, although more on account of the convenience of the site than the similarity of the name' (Battely 1745[2], 3). On the other hand, Battely had absolute faith in charters of the sixteenth century, even if they referred to events long past (Battely 1745[2], 5). He blames the difficulty of gaining certain knowledge of the life of St. Edmund on 'The negligence or contradiction in the traditions that have come down to us, chiefly because of the badly researched works dreamed up by the monks, and the untrustworthiness of mixing historical truth with fables' (Battely 1745[2], 12).

Battely regarded consistency and antiquity as the best evidence of trustworthiness; beyond that, he is willing to quote his sources at length and to let his readers draw their own conclusions (Battely 1745[2], 12–13):

I place in the first rank of truthfulness those whose testimony I am least able to doubt, whether on account of the similarity of their accounts, or the antiquity and seriousness of the authors. Only then do I add those of whose trustworthiness I gladly allow my readers to be the judges.

Edmund Gillingwater, who saw Battely's original manuscript in the early 1800s (probably in the *Collectanea*), noted that the section of the manuscript dealing with the remote Roman origins of Bury was the most heavily edited. Gillingwater concluded that 'Battely ... who could not think of giving up Bury, as not being classical ground, has in his MS. varied the beginning of his excellent essay

several times: this looks as if he could not easily satisfy himself that what he said was perfectly true' (Gillingwater 1804, n. 28). However, the textual variations in the manuscript (such as whether to begin with the word 'oppidum,' or whether to mention Camden in a note or the main text) look more like a natural authorial anxiety about the first paragraph of a work, rather than evidence that the author doubted the veracity of what he was saying.

If Battely is less credulous than some historians of his time in associating his subject with classical sources, he is decidedly prejudiced against anything written by the monks. When obliged to make use of monastic sources, he tends to use the opportunity to display his sarcastic wit. For example, when commenting on the story in the Register of the Abbey of St. Bene't Hulme that the early monastery of St. Edmund gave sanctuary to monks ejected from their own monasteries he exclaims on 'The famous severity of this monastic discipline! Admiring the crime, while condemning the reason for it! Thus they opened their sanctuaries to each other, and whoever was most heinous would alter heaven that they might live together a life pure of crime from the beginning' (Battely 1745[2], 37–8). Indeed, at times Battely seems reluctant to write his history, so great is his distaste for his sources. Unlike Thomas Tanner, who declared that 'it would be but common justice to infuse a better opinion of Monasteries into the generality of Protestants,' (Tanner 1695, ix), Battely was not a monastic historian but a classically trained antiquary obliged to make use of monastic sources.

In 1695 Tanner complained that readers 'have always censured as well wishers to the introducing of Popery, who endeavoured to give any account of Monasteries' (Tanner 1695, viii). Academic reservations on the study of monasticism owed something to the fact that Catholic historians made their own use of antiquarianism to argue the case for Roman supremacy. In the 1630s the Benedictine Augustine Baker, the Jesuit Michael Alford and the secular priest Richard Broughton compiled and published historical material to prove that religious orders were not an intrusion but had always been at the heart of the English church. Notwithstanding the partisan nature of antiquarian scholarship in the seventeenth century, Battely was prepared to make use of Alford and Baker's work.

It was an integral part of the ideology of seventeenth century Anglican churchmen to establish continuity between themselves and the mediaeval church. To attack the mediaeval church as doctrinally corrupt to the point of apostasy could place them in a position of weakness when engaged in controversy with Protestant Dissenters, who held this view and could legitimately question why the Established Church clung to so many pre-reformation trappings, such as the episcopacy. Furthermore, the Church of England retained the endowments and, to a large extent, the legal and canonical structures of the mediaeval church.

Both Battely and Tanner downplay the theological differences between their own age and that of the monks, and assume that mediaeval Christians really were Christians, a fact that would have been hotly contested by ultra-Calvinist Dissenters. Instead, their critique aims at the supposed financial and moral corruption of the mediaeval church and the alleged conflict between the secular and regular clergy. This was an important device—the seculars, as Tanner points out (Tanner 1695, xx), were the direct predecessors of the canons and prebendaries of his own time. The religious, in their absence, could be loaded with all the opprobrium of the reformers. Tanner goes so far as to claim that, before St. Dunstan's reforms, the secular canons were married (Tanner 1695, xli), and Battely believes that the monastic project had as its aim the supplanting of the secular clergy; Dunstan's monastic reform was a 'battle signal' and the conflict between the secular and regular clergy an 'internecine war' (Battely 1745[2], 31).

Battely does everything possible to exonerate the secular clergy who guarded the body of St. Edmund and King Sweyn, their protector. The tone of his work becomes decidedly hostile when Battely describes the arrival of the monks in Bury in 1020, and this may have something to do with the fact that the eleventh century was seen as the transition from pure Saxon to decadent mediaeval Christianity. Knighton sees Battely as an Anglo-Saxonist, and compares his interest in the Anglo-Saxon roots of English Christianity to John Mill's insistence (in his preface to Benson's *Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum* of 1701) that it was in the Saxon church that the true form of the English church could be seen (Dict. Nat. Biog. XXXVIII, 154).

It is certainly the case that Battely saw monasticism as a deliberate campaign to destroy the seculars and impose Roman authority. The monks *inhiabant* (literally, 'were eying up') the churches of the secular clergy, so that 'when the seculars had been ejected everywhere' they might 'easily occupy their churches' (Battely 1745[2], 31). The idea of a natural antipathy between the secular and regular clergy served the purpose of the antiquaries by creating what modern scholars would acknowledge as an artificial distinction between the corrupt and pure parts of the mediaeval church. What was pure had been retained by the Church of England; however, in the words of Camden, 'In a loose age some rank weeds run up too fast, which required rooting out' by the process of reform (Tanner 1695, lxxx).

Battely is keen to prove the greatness of St. Edmund, who was a figure of political as well as religious significance in Battely's time. Battely's reasons are patriotic and parochial—he refers repeatedly to 'our Edmund.' To Catholics, however, Edmund was the prototype of the martyred missionary priests and a patron of the reconversion of England. Yet he was also a king who, with only a remote hereditary right, was chosen to rule by the people. To this extent Edmund was a Saxon William of Orange, although Battely would scarcely have drawn such a direct comparison in a work whose aim was not primarily polemical. However, it is noticeable that Battely plays down the kinship of Edmund and Offa, the preceding king, and never mentions that both belonged to the dynasty of the Wuffings. The sources he quotes indicate that Edmund derived his authority from election rather than from Offa's approval. On the other hand, the year 1691, around the time Battely was drafting the narrative of *Antiquitates*, was the year William Sancroft was finally deprived of the see of Canterbury for refusing to swear the Oath of Allegiance to William. Battely called Sancroft *sanctissimo viro* (Battely 1745[1], 102). If Battely was in sympathy with Sancroft, was he unwilling to publish a book that shed a favourable light on the idea of elected kingship?

Sensitive to the common Catholic criticism that the dissolution of the monasteries had destroyed a welfare system, in an age of growing philanthropism Thomas Tanner was anxious lest any of his readers should think that he was promoting the monasteries by demonstrating the extent of their charity. He suggests that if anyone were to take account of the charitable foundations made since the Reformation they would find that Protestant generosity exceeded that of the monasteries. Nevertheless, he is very much impressed by the mediaeval monks: 'These Religious places were by the well intended charity of their Founders and Benefactors built, endowed and adorned (how much soever they were afterward abused) to the Glory of God, the service of Religion, and the relief of poor Christians' (Tanner 1695, ix).

Battely is less apologetic than Tanner, and makes no similar claims on behalf of the monks. However, despite his scepticism of some of the monastic sources, it is notable that Battely does not always dismiss the miracles recorded by mediaeval authors out of hand, nor does he condemn the preservation of St. Edmund's body for veneration. When recording the story of two thieves mysteriously bound by invisible chains while attempting to steal from the martyr's shrine, he concedes that it was at least possible that the miracle occurred (Battely 1745[2], 29). Although he mocks the

fondness of monastic authors for miracles, Battely does not advance the conventional theological argument used by many Protestants against them. Cessationism, the view that miracles ceased with the death of the last Apostle, was a prevalent doctrine in seventeenth century Anglicanism, but clearly not one that appealed strongly to John Battely. Knighton notes with interest that Battely was sufficiently free of anti-Catholic prejudice to be the owner of a reliquary of St. Thomas Becket (Dict. Nat. Biog. 2004, IV, 371).

The significance of Battely's work lies as much in its study of monastic history as in its treatment of a local theme. Camden, the father of English antiquarianism, had treated the subject of mediaeval relics in his *Britannia* (1586), and Sir William Dugdale's three volume *Monasticon* (1655–73) was still the standard work on the subject. However, Battely wrote at a time when the study of monasticism was at a low ebb. The early enthusiasm of the patriotic antiquaries—Camden, Cotton, Selden and Dugdale—had largely dried up. More than ever, there was a nervous fear of 'Popery' in the aftermath of the Revolution. The eighteenth century fascination with things Gothic had yet to blossom into full flower, and mediaevalism was unfairly associated with the Tories in both church and state.

Although interest in antiquarianism was growing, the Society of Antiquaries was not to be conceded a royal charter until 1717. Studies of individual churches and towns remained scarce; John Stow had written a history of the diocese of London in 1598 and the monastic antiquities of Canterbury were first surveyed by William Somner in 1640. Thomas Habington had written on Worcester Cathedral, although his work was not to be published until 1717. Dugdale had documented St. Paul's in 1658, and Sir Thomas Browne had begun a history of Norwich (not published until 1712). John Caius and Anthony à Wood had investigated the histories of Cambridge (1574) and Oxford (1674), and numerous works were written in order to defend the supposed antiquity of the University of Oxford. Richard Izacke wrote *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter* in 1681 and Simon Gunton wrote on the antiquities of Peterborough Cathedral in 1686, while Henry, Earl of Clarendon began the history of Winchester that would be published by Samuel Gale in 1715 (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* 1907–21, IX, 61–2).

One reason for the paucity of town studies was the popularity of county histories, a trend begun by Dugdale with his history of Warwickshire. White Kennett, the Bishop of Peterborough, pioneered parochial history with his history of Ambrosden, published in 1695. In the same year, monastic history took a step forward with the publication of Thomas Tanner's gazetteer *Notitia Monastica*, containing information about the monasteries at the time of their dissolution taken from the records of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners, as well as a strident defence of the study of monastic history from the charge of 'Popery.'

Thomas Tanner was pessimistic about the fate of his book, written almost contemporaneously with Battely's: 'The reflections of the witty, and the censures of the prejudiced, are the best entertainment it must expect' (Tanner 1695, i). Whether Battely shared his pessimism we cannot know. That he ceased writing in the 1690s and never published his work may be an indication that he did. In hindsight, however, the grim future the book would have faced had it been published at once makes it all the more unusual. Even in 1745, Oliver Battely may have considered the book's appeal insufficient to merit publication as a monograph, and therefore appended it to the larger work.

With the growing popularity of the Grand Tour, local Roman antiquities began to excite considerable interest in the eighteenth century, and there was a ready market for *Antiquitates Rutupinae*. Yet in his introduction to the double edition of John Battely's works, the author's nephew is apologetic for *Antiquitates*, a work that unfolds 'the horrid and stilted registers of the monks' and the 'dirt' (*sordes*) of the past (Battely 1745[1], iii). In order to justify the book's publication at all, Oliver Battely felt it

necessary to portray the work as religious polemic: 'In its course the morals of the Abbots were censured, and the ambition and avarice of the Roman See noted, even if this did not seem to require testimony.' The world into which *Antiquitates* was launched in 1745 was perhaps still more prejudiced than the world in which it was written.

Battely's *Antiquitates* was, like many similar antiquarian works of the late seventeenth century, a work before its time. The authors of such works generally had neither the time nor the business sense to get them into print. *Antiquitates* was less fortunate than others in having to wait fifty years for publication; for that we may blame Oliver Battely. However, once Oliver had made the decision to edit his uncle's work, he received the assistance of Burrough, Martin and Vertue. John Battely's was a name that commanded respect among antiquaries, and the editing of Antiquitates was a work they undertook with diligence and dedication. However belatedly, Bury St. Edmunds thus found itself the object of substantial antiquarian attention for the first time, and John Battely stands at the head of all historians of Bury.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Ashby, G., 1769. *A Description of the Ancient and Present State of the Town and Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's, in the County of Suffolk*. Bury St. Edmunds.

Battelle, L. C., 1985. *A History of the Battelle Family in England*. Columbus OH.

Battely, J., 1694. *The Original Institution of the Sabbath, and Observations due to it considered, being a sermon preach'd before the queen in Christ-Church, Canterbury, May iv. 1694*. London.

Battely, J., 1711. *Antiquitates Rutupinae*. London.

Battely, J., 1745. *Antiquitates Rutupinae*. Oxford.

Battely, J., 1745. *Antiquitates S. Edmundi Burgi ad Annum MCCLXXII Perductae*. Oxford.

Battely, J., 1774 (trans. J. Dunscombe). *The Antiquities of Richborough and Reculver abridged from the Latin of Mr Archdeacon Battley*. London.

Clark, G., 1955. *The Later Stuarts: 1660–1714*. Oxford.

D'Oyly, G., 1821. *The Life of William Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury*. London.

Elliott, R. W., 1963. *The Story of King Edward the Sixth School Bury St. Edmunds*. Bury St. Edmunds.

Gage, J., 1838. *History and Antiquities of Suffolk. Thingoe Hundred*. Bury St. Edmunds.

Gillingwater, E., 1804. *An Historical and Descriptive Account of St. Edmund's Bury, in the County of Suffolk*. Bury St. Edmunds.

Gregory, J., 2000. *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660–1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese*. Oxford.

Handley, S., 2004. 'John Mill' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. XXXVIII. Oxford.

James, M. R., 1895. *On the Abbey of St. Edmund at Bury*. Cambridge.

Knighton, C. S., 2004. 'Batteley, John' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. IV. Oxford.

Knighton, C. S., 2004. 'Batteley, Nicholas' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. IV. Oxford.

Knighton, C. S., 2004. 'Batteley, Oliver' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. IV. Oxford.

Mackinlay, J. B., 1893. *Saint Edmund King and Martyr*. London.

Myrone, M., 2004. 'Vertue, George' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. LVI. Oxford.

Nichols, J., 1822. 'Memoirs of the Battely Family' in *Illustrations of the Literary History of the eighteenth century*. IV. London.

Randall, J., 1719. *Quorundam e primariis olim Regiae Grammaticalis Scholae Buriae Sti Edmundi*. London.

Robertson. S., 1882. 'Forty Rectors of Adisham', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XIV, 162–168.

Somner, W., 1693 (ed. White Kennett). *A treatise of the Roman ports and forts in Kent*. Oxford.

Sweet, R., 2004. *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. London.

Wanley, H., circa 1710. *Notes concerning Bury St. Edmund In Com. Suffolk. Extracted out of the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford's Library by Mr. Wanley*. Place of publication unknown.

Watkins, D., 2004. 'Burrough, Sir James' in *The New Dictionary of National Biography*. VIII. Oxford.