**The Henrician Reformation**

**AQA HIS1C**

The story of the break with Rome is almost one of fable: that Henry VIII was so besotted with Anne Boleyn that he cast aside the Catholic Church so that he could marry her. Unsurprisingly, this isn’t entirely accurate. Whilst he certainly was infatuated with Anne Boleyn, he did not break with Rome on a whim but gradually and only after every other option had been exhausted. Once the break was complete, England did not become a protestant country overnight and, even by the end of Henry’s reign, could be more properly considered Catholic without the Pope. This was in spite of the best efforts of reformers such as Cromwell and Cranmer who hoped to move England in a more reformist direction. It was also in spite of the international religious climate of reform, which had provided the context, the methodology and the justification for schism.

In order to understand the religious context, and the significance of schism, it is necessary to step back in time 1500 years. The relationship between church and state started in 312AD, when the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. He didn’t do this as much from conviction as from a desire to control the growing threat of ‘subversive’ Christianity. He was essentially thinking: if you can’t beat them, join and then lead them. Thus, the twin organisations of church and state began a symbiotic[[1]](#footnote-1) relationship: from the pulpit, the church preached loyalty to the state, in return from protectionby the state. This happy partnership continued for many years. On balance, the church had the upper hand: Kings controlled what happened to men’s bodies but the church controlled what happened to man’s (including the King’s) eternal soul. Moreover, the church had enormous wealth and independence: it collected tithes[[2]](#footnote-2) and benefitted from gifts from wealthy nobles eager for the church to say prayers for their immortal soul; it answered only to the pope in Rome and therefore was an international organisation not subject to the laws of any single King.

However, from about the 14th century, internal politics meant that the church began to lose some of its moral authority. In 1305, the –predominantly French- cardinals elected a French Pope, Clement V. Under pressure from the French King, the papacy moved from Rome to Avignon for the next 70 years. The Avignon Papacy was unsurprisingly perceived as a puppet of the French King, suggesting that the church was subservient to the state. Moreover, renaissance popes (for example the Borgia, Alexander VI and the Medici, Leo X) lived lives of greed, corruption and sensuality. In some ways it is no surprise that high ranking clerics lived extravagantly and exploited opportunities for financial gain. The traditional pattern of noble families was for the first son to inherit the lands and the second son to enter the church. The financial and political power was similar: both Bishops and nobles controlled land and therefore made money as landlords; both Bishops and nobles sat in the House of Lords thus wielding political power. Cardinals were, in fact, considered princes of the Church, of equivalent rank to princes of the realm. Noblemen entering the church as a career rather than a vocation would not expect to live lives of poverty and service. Moreover, the appointment of Archbishops and Bishops was ‘within the King’s gift’. That means that the King had the right to appoint Bishops as part of his patronage. So it really was a political appointment. Even though the Church had to approve the appointments, this was something of a formality. Because it was often a career rather than a vocation, and because the office was awarded by the King, it was not uncommon for bishops to acquire several *benefices*[[3]](#footnote-3), leading to charges of pluralism[[4]](#footnote-4) and, inevitably, non-residence, because no one can live in two places at once. This last meant that some parishes and dioceses had no resident clerics to guide their spiritual well-being. The enormous wealth that the church was attracting, through tithes, annates[[5]](#footnote-5), pluralism, gifts in return for intercessionary prayer and through the purchase of indulgences[[6]](#footnote-6), all facilitated an extravagant lifestyle and increased a perception of corruption. In 1376 Pope Gregory XI finally secured the return of the papacy to Rome. Unfortunately, Gregory died in 1378 and the French cardinals naturally wanted a French pope. The people of Rome objected, fearing a return to the Avignon papacy. So the cardinals elected an Italian, Urban VI, and then promptly fled Rome for France, where they elected a *second* (anti)pope: Clement VII[[7]](#footnote-7) and installed a *second* papacy at Avignon. This schism (split) in the church undermined its authority somewhat: if the church claimed that following its doctrine was the only way to salvation, how were people supposed to know which half of the church to follow?; if the church was so divided over internal politics, how much attention could it be paying to the spiritual well-being of its flock? Allegations of corruption were exacerbated by the fact that the church did not condemn the violent excesses of the 100 Years' War, and failed to meet its responsibility of providing sacraments to all the dead and dying during the Black Death. Matters really weren’t helped by the election of a *third* pope in 1409. Finally, in 1417, the matter was resolved through the intervention of the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund. All 3 popes were dismissed and the committee to elect a new Pope was broadened from 23 Cardinals to include *30 secular electors.* With only 3 days deliberation, Martin V was elected as the only Pope, thus ending the Great Schism. You don’t need to know all this background for the exam (though this is not the only reason to know things!), but there are two significant outcomes of the period known as the ‘great schism’: firstly, scholars, at least, began to question the church’s moral authority and highlighted a need for reform. These are the seeds of **humanism** and, later, **Lutheranism**; both ideas which would challenge the church’s hegemony in the coming years. Moreover, the way in which political rulers were beginning to assert their authority over the church during the 14th and early 15th century seeded the notion of **erastianism**[[8]](#footnote-8), which would be so vital to Henry VIII’s campaign.

Growing criticism within Europe was matched by criticism within England. **John Wycliff (**1324-1384) started criticizing corrupt clerics as early as the mid-1370s. Wycliff, himself a clergyman, believed that clergy were not princes but servants of God and therefore should not live extravagantly wealthy lives. He even argued that corrupt clergy should have their property taken from them - by the *King*, not the church. This is an example of growing **erastian** sentiment.

Wycliff also believed that religious authority sprang from the Bible, and he therefore translated the **Bible into English**. This was a radical act: the bible was traditionally in Latin, and therefore it was impossible for ordinary people without a classical education to read it for themselves and interpret the word of God. This had long been a means by which the message of the church could be controlled and unified. Luther, and other reformers who collectively became known as ‘protestants’ (for protesting) would also argue for a bible in the vernacular[[9]](#footnote-9). Moreover, he denied **transubstantiation**, the Catholic doctrine that during the mass the bread and wine actually is transformed by a miracle into the actual body and blood of Christ. He was regularly hounded by the authorities but died of natural causes in 1384 in his own church.

English followers of Wycliffe[[10]](#footnote-10) were known as **Lollards**. Initially, John of Gaunt and other important nobles were Lollards but, from about 1410, Lollardy became largely restricted to the artisans (skilled tradesmen) of south-east England. There is some evidence that Lollardy grew after 1500, but increasing evidence of Lollardy may just have resulted from the ecclesiastical authorities searching harder for heresy, as church and state tried to clamp down on ‘subversion’.  The existence of radical ideas in south-east England in the 15th century certainly made it easier for Lutheran ideas to take root in England later. Lutheranism undoubtedly provided Henry with both the means to attack the church and the personnel willing to do so.

Between 1517 and 1521 the words and deeds of Martin Luther rocked the Catholic Church to the core. That’s not me being dramatic, it’s actually true. The traditional starting date for The (Continental) Reformation is 31 October 1517, on which day Martin Luther nailed his 95 thesesto the door of the castle church of Wittenberg. (This was a traditional method of inviting debate and discussion amongst scholars).

1. The most important doctrines put forward by Luther were:
   1. God, not the Pope, was the ultimate religious authority. Therefore the bible needed to be written in English, so ordinary people had access to the word of God. Luther translated the Bible into German in record time, supposedly ten weeks. It was published in 1534, and sold over 100,000 copies over the next forty years.
   2. Intervention by a priest could not save your soul, only your own faith could. This doctrine is called *solafideism -*salvation by faith alone. The Catholic Church said that salvation was only guaranteed if you were ‘sin-free’ at the moment of death. This sin free status could be achieved through prayer, through the priest administering last rites and absolving your sins, by the purchase of ‘indulgences’[[11]](#footnote-11), and so forth – all of which depended on the church acting as an intermediary between you and God. Luther believed this was wrong; that salvation was determined by faith, which would be evident in a godly life, not by buying forgiveness.
   3. Purgatory didn’t exist. Obviously, if you are saved because of faith you don’t need to go into limbo whilst people on earth pay for masses to take away your sins!
   4. Clerical celibacy wasn’t necessary. This logically follows from the first two ideas: if your salvation is between you and God, and you don’t need priests to do it for you, then there is nothing special about the clergy so they can behave like ordinary men. Luther put his ideas into practice and, abandoning the monastic rule, married an ex-nun, Katharina von Bora, who had been placed in a convent when only ten years old. She and Luther had six children.
   5. Monasteries should be abolished (again, because there was nothing special about the clergy and clergy should, instead, be out in the community helping to guide the people).
   6. Communion should be available in both kinds (bread and wine) for laity[[12]](#footnote-12) rather than the wine being only for the priest. Again, this follows logically from the idea that there is nothing special about the clergy.
   7. Transubstantiation didn’t exist (consubstantiation instead).
   8. That there were only 2 sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist), not seven as in the Catholic tradition (so no Penance, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Last Rites)

Luther's ideas soon spread throughout and beyond Germany. In Scandinavia they were accepted wholesale by all sections of society; - the princes and nobility benefiting financially as well as spiritually by seizing church lands: a useful precedent for Henry VIII’ dissolution of the monasteries in England 1536-1539. Lutheran books were soon brought to England by merchants and travellers, and a Lutheran group began to meet in Cambridge at the White Horse Tavern. William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale (who, in 1535, produced first complete English bible, rather than just New Testament), and Hugh Latimer (martyred by Mary I) were early *English* converts to Lutheran views[[13]](#footnote-13). However, England was isolated from Europe and ideas only really spread along trade routes. Grass-roots support for protestant ideas was therefore limited to towns/southern England, though none the less influential for that, given that the centre of political power was also in south-east England.

There were other continental reformers too: Zwingli, Calvin, Bucer. These men all had slightly different ideas, which why you shouldn’t talk about ‘protestants’ but ‘reformists’; a nice general term that gets over the problem of defining exactly what we mean by ‘protestant’ in this period! If you do have to define Protestantism, for example if you are asked ‘how far was England protestant by 1547?’, you should use Lutheranism as the comparative and use that term.

Criticism of the church didn’t only spring from radical reformers, but also from Catholic scholars. Beginning in Florence towards the end of the 14th century, humanism was an intellectual movement amongst scholars which promoted the rediscovery and translation of classical Latin and Greek texts. *Christian* humanists, Desiderius Erasmus, John Colet, and Thomas More – all contemporaries of Henry VIII - applied these ideas to Scripture, and strove to understand the Bible's real message as a basis for leading truly Christian lives. Christian Humanists exposed the failings of the medieval church. One of their principal concerns was clerical ignorance. After the Black Death had devastated the English population in the 14th century, there was a lack of trained priests. The clergy had, of course, been exposed in large numbers to the disease. As a result of this shortage, ordinary parish priests tended to be ill-educated and even illiterate; they hadn’t had the extensive education of their predecessors. As a result, they preached only from set texts provided by church authorities, and delivered sermons from a prepared book. For some religious, who believed the role of the priest was to *interpret* the word of God, this decline in the quality of preaching was unacceptable. Christian humanists therefore promoted educational reform for clergy. A further concern was clerical corruption, criticised in both Erasmus’ 1509 work *In Praise of Folly* and More’s *Utopia (1516)*.

Overall, **Christian humanists** weren’t much of a threat to the Catholic Church. Their influence was limited to the small literate intellectual elite, in contrast to Luther’s ideas, which were spread far and wide using the new technology of the printing press. Moreover, their work was not designed to destroy the church, or to criticize, but simply to prompt **reform** **from within**, an entirely different emphasis to that of Luther. In fact, both writers openly spoke out against Luther’s challenge: More wrote *Assertio Septem Sacramantorum* (Assertion of the Seven Sacraments) and Erasmus, though he initially supported Luther, wrote *On the Freedom of the Will* (1524) condemning his work.

Nevertheless, anti-clerical publications grew in number in England in the late 14th and early 15th century. The work of **Christopher St Germain** (1518) and **Tyndale’s** *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) both reflected anti-clerical and erastian sentiments. The most famous anti-clerical tract of the period is probably **Simon Fish’s** *Supplication for the Beggars* (1528/9). Under a (probable) pseudonym, “Simon Fish”[[14]](#footnote-14) published a pamphlet entitled “A Supplication for the Beggars”, which accused the clergy of making vast fortunes from tithes whilst living indolent lives and asking the King to intervene. You can see echoes of Wycliff here of course, and it is no accident that the works of all of these men were later cited in the 1530 Collectanea as historical texts justifying Henry VIII’s assertion of authority over the church. Fish’s tract was a very popular text, which may suggest increasing anti-clericalism amongst the populace. Protestant historians, who maintain that the English reformation was motivated by widespread hatred for the corruption of the Catholic Church, have somewhat exaggerated the extent of popular anti-clericalism. **A.G** **DICKENS** (1965): “*Anticlericalism…had reached a new virulence by the early years of the sixteenth century,…monasticism was lukewarm and insular, commanding little veneration outside the cloister*”. **ELTON** mirrors this view (1977): “*the clergy themselves attracted more dislike than love…popular anticlericalism thrived on tales of gluttonous monks, lecherous friars, ignorant and dishonest parish priests”*

However, despite the growth of anti-clerical literature, the new printing presses in England produced more Catholic than reformist or anti-clerical literature – The Primer, a collection of Latin and English devotional tracts for home/church use sold 37 editions between 1501 and 1527.

More recently, historians have suggested that there very little anti-clericalism amongst ordinary people. Monasteries and friaries provided alms / hospitals for the poor, and thus were seen to have a positive impact on the immediate community. Many people do seem to have accepted the wealth and splendour of the church as befitting the glory of God: there was a small decline in financial support for new abbeys, priories and friaries, but donations for parish churches and chapels remained high, for example, the steeple at Louth took 15 yrs to fund and cost £305 (this example will arise again when we look at the Pilgrimage of Grace). **JJ SCARISBRICK’S** study of Wills has shown that the majority of people left money in their wills to the church. Of course, it is difficult to know what ordinary people thought. Before 1971, historians did tend to think that the 14th and 15th centuries were an ‘age of faith’, when the quality of clergy would have been very important to ordinary people. However, in 1971 a seminal book was published: “Religion and the Decline of Magic” by **KEITH THOMAS**. Thomas’s research showed how many people failed to attend church, despite fines, and how popular witches, astrologers and ‘wise men’ were seen as alternative founts of wisdom to the Catholic Church. Thus, when reviewing evidence such as wills, we should remember that many wills were written down by clerics rather than the (often illiterate) individual, so people may have felt obliged to leave money to the church in payment for this service. In addition, most of the people writing wills would have been dying and anxious to avoid damnation, even if this was a deathbed fear rather than a lifelong conviction, so leaving money to the church as a means of salvation was not necessarily typical of the general every day attitude of ordinary people. Recruitment to the priesthood was still popular, although we can’t be sure whether there was a religious motive, or whether the education offered by the church was seen as a route for social advancement for the lower classes, with the economic bonus of a regular income. Moreover, official records such as diocesan records of church attendance, baptisms, are often incomplete and any documentary evidence, written as it was by the educated elites, tends to reflect official views rather than the views of the people. No *definitive* judgments can be made, therefore, about the level of support of ordinary people for the Catholic church.

Moreover, we have to be careful when making generalizations about ‘the English people’. This was a period when local identities and allegiances were fundamental, where people did as their local Lord did, where news travelled slowly and where old traditions were slow to change. There is a huge difference then, between the people of the north and south of England in this period. As the south was exposed to new, Lutheran ideas from the continent, brought by continental merchants, the south tended to be more ‘reformist’ whilst the more isolated north remained traditional/conservative.

There is some evidence of anti-clericalism in the ruling class, but this may have had political rather than purely religious motives. The House of Commons itself, by the beginning of the 16th century, was increasingly anti-clerical and the **Hunne case** is often cited as an example of this. In March 1511 there began an argument between a priest called Dryfield and a merchant (and MP) called Richard Hunne. Hunne’s 5 week old son had died and Dryfield demanded, as a fee for burial, the robe in which the child was wrapped (heartless, eh!). The law on mortuary fees said that the priest was entitled to claim the most valuable possession of the deceased. Hunne used civil law to challenge the church, arguing that, as his son was only 5 weeks old, his gown belonged not to the child but to the father. Hunne brought the case to Parliament, creating what was clearly a conflict between state and church authority. However, Hunne was arrested for heresy and, rather conveniently, died in custody[[15]](#footnote-15). However, this is quite an isolated incident and cannot reliably be seen as a *religious* protest. Moreover, the anti-clericalism of the House of Commons itself could be considered more political than religious. This was because the Commons resented the independent existence of Convocation, as the existence of a separate institution to make canon (church) law limited the power of Parliament: an example of growing erastian sentiment within Parliament. Moreover, many of those in the House of Commons hated Wolsey, the King’s chief advisor, for his low-born status and supreme authority in England. Wolsey was also a Cardinal, and was well known for his luxurious and ‘corrupt’ lifestyle (much more of the amazing Wolsey later). So attacking the church was a way of attacking Wolsey. Finally, lawyers in the commons had a business interest at state. The church enjoyed *benefit of clergy*: if a cleric was charged with an offence, he had the benefit of being tried in a clerical court, by church officials, rather than a state court. As many of the MPs in the House of Commons were lawyers, they had a vested interest in maximizing the role of secular courts!

It seems most likely, therefore, that any anti-clericalism was localized rather than popular, depending on the behaviour of local clergy. As **HAIGH** confirms: “*relations between priests and parishioners were usually harmonious, and the laity complained astonishingly infrequently against their priests…we must not construct a false polarization between church and people…the English people had not turned against their church and there was no widespread yearning for reform”*

It was against this background of struggle for supremacy between church and state, and of burgeoning criticism of the Catholic Church as a moral authority that Henry VIII became King.

Henry VIII inherited the throne in **1509**, at the age of 18. His father, Henry Tudor, had defeated Richard III at Bosworth in 1485, ending over 3 decades of sporadic civil war [1453-1485]; [a period invariably given the unjustifiably romantic name “The Wars of the Roses[[16]](#footnote-16)” after the red and white emblems of the two houses.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_of_Gaunt) Henry VII was young, unmarried and had no experience of government, having spent most of his teenage years as an exile in Brittany. However, he quickly became a skillful manipulator of propaganda and a careful, efficient, somewhat miserly King. His principle concerns were to limit the power of the nobility, to enrich the Crown and to secure his dynasty. He preferred peace to war, denying English nobles the profit and glory of their traditional pastime. As a result, he wasn’t popular with the nobility. He was also financial grasping, collecting taxes and ‘loans’ to the penny, partly for the monetary gain and partly as a way of keeping his nobles under control; poor nobles couldn’t pay retainers to fight for them and restart a civil war. Henry Tudor’s own claim to the throne was somewhat tenuous – his father was half-brother to King [Henry VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VI_of_England). His mother was [Margaret Beaufort](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Beaufort), a descendant of [King Edward III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_III_of_England) through [John of Gaunt of the House of Lancaster, and it was through his mother that he inherited his claim to the throne.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_of_Gaunt) He believed that a secure dynasty would bring peace and stability to the country. To this end, he married Elizabeth of York, uniting the houses of York and Lancaster, and fathered two sons and two daughters. Therefore, Henry VIII never expected to be King, as he had an elder brother, Arthur. However, **Arthur died** in 1502, when Henry was only 11. As a mark of his miserliness, Henry VII kept Katherine of Aragon in England after the death of Arthur, because he didn’t want to return her dowry to Spain. Had Henry VII died soon after Arthur, Henry VIII would have been too young to inherit and there could easily have been a return to civil war. Fortunately, Henry VII lived just long enough for his son to reach 18. I think it is worth remembering this dynastic insecurity when later considering Henry VIII’s apparently irrational obsession with having a son. Having a son of an age to inherit wasn’t just a whim or an excuse for Henry VIII, but a sacred duty and the only way of ensuring the survival of the Tudors and avoiding a return to conflict.

Immediately on becoming King in 1509, Henry VIII made it clear that he was not his father. He executed his father’s hated tax collectors, Empson and Dudley, **married Katherine of Aragon** and almost immediately embarked upon war with France.

Henry married Katherine in unusual circumstances. For five months, Katherine had been married to Henry’s older brother, Arthur. Then Arthur died[[17]](#footnote-17). Under normal circumstances Henry and Katherine could not marry. There were two conventional grounds for dis-allowing a marriage: if the marriage were against ‘**public honesty’** (i.e. if it would be scandalous) or if there existed an ‘**affinity’** (family relationship) between the two parties. Firstly, Katherine and Henry were in-laws, and therefore the marriage would be against public honesty, in the eyes of the church. Secondly, consummation of the marriage between Katherine and Arthur would have created an affinity (brother and sister) between Henry and Katherine which should have prevented their own later marriage. Katherine absolutely denied that her marriage had ever been consummated and, later, Henry was heard to remark often that Katherine had been a virgin when he married her. Nevertheless, it was taken for granted that this affinity would have existed after 5 months of marriage and therefore a match between Henry and Katherine would be disallowed. Yet all was not lost. The established power of the Pope meant that he could formally excuse both of these issues and issue a dispensation to marry. Pope Julius II granted a **dispensation** for affinity in 1504, on the wishes of both Henry VII and Katherine’s mother, Isabella of Castile[[18]](#footnote-18). Katherine and Henry were married in 1509, soon after Henry VIII became King. The first 16 years seemed happy enough. Katherine bore many children, although only Mary lived past infancy.

**GLENN RICHARDSON** argues that Henry’s role models in this early period were the chivalric King Arthur of legend and the historic military hero, Henry V. Certainly, Henry’s gallant marriage to Katherine suggests Arthurian inspiration. Furthermore, from coronation through the 1520s, Henry did indeed occupy himself with glorious, expensive (though ultimately futile) wars against France.

War, especially war with France, was the historic expectation of an English King, owing to the English ‘claim’ to the French throne[[19]](#footnote-19). However, the dynamics had changed since Henry V’s reign. France had invested heavily in infantry and artillery since the 100 Years War, and had revolutionized tax collection to fund a standing (permanent) army. England had neither a standing army nor the financial infrastructure to support lengthy wars.

The task of masterminding an impossible campaign in France fell to the man who was in so many ways Henry’s *alter rex* (second King) between 1509 and 1529: **Thomas Wolsey**. Wolsey was low born. His contemporary enemy, John Skelton, spread a rumour that he was the son of a butcher, but this was just an insult. He was, in fact, the son of a grazier (farmer). Still lowly, but less bloody! In a period where the ‘Great Chain of Being[[20]](#footnote-20)’ was the dominant idea, his rise to pre-eminence was unlikely –most people were stuck at the social status they were born with and were expected to accept it. But Wolsey was both talented and ambitious. He achieved his first degree at 15 and, in 1497, was voted a full fellow (roughly equivalent to a modern professor) at Magdalen College. Whilst in charge of Magdalen College’s finances, he allegedly took a unilateral decision to engage in extensive building works, almost bankrupting the college in the process but making the building remarkable.

Wolsey entered the church in 1498. **PETER MARSHALL**[[21]](#footnote-21) suggests that Wolsey entered the Church not out of any sense of deep religious vocation but because it offered the only real route for the social advancement for talented but low-born youth. His first post was as **Chaplain** to the Marquess of Dorset and Henry Deane, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Sir Richard Nanfan, treasurer of Calais, brought him to the attention of Henry VII, who appointed him Chaplain in 1507. Henry VII then began to use Wolsey for **diplomatic missions**, at which he excelled. In a now legendary episode, Wolsey was despatched to the Emperor Maxmillian, in Flanders. He was back in Richmond just three days after leaving. Henry VII, on seeing him, demanded to know why he had not started out on his journey, to which Wolsey replied that he had been and returned, and placed letters from Maxmillian in Henry’s hand.

In 1509 he became **Royal Almoner** to the new King, Henry VIII. The Royal Almoner was responsible for distributing alms (charity) to the poor and this post gave Wolsey a seat on the **King’s Council**. From then on, Wolsey’s rise was meteoric, in both church and state. Where Henry VII had been controlling and exercised personal control of finance and policy, Henry VIII was young, charismatic and happy to have an able advisor to deal with the day to day grind of kingship.

Thus, Wolsey was the obvious candidate to plan the campaign of the first **French war**. Initially opposed to war against France, he rapidly became enthusiastic when it was clear it was what Henry wanted. His servant and biographer/hagiographer, Cavendish, suggested Wolsey was “most earnest and readiest among all the council to advance the King’s only will and pleasure without any respect to the case”(i.e. he would do whatever the King wanted, regardless of his own opinions). In terms of war, Wolsey knew that Henry VIII had ambitions of great medieval magnificence in war. But he also knew that the King couldn’t finance war on the scale he wanted, and so he tried to redesign domestic finance to make war possible. **HUTTON** argues that Wolsey’s role here was “visionary but insufficient”[[22]](#footnote-22) and this seems like a fair assessment. England was not taxing efficiently (unlike France). Taxation in England was still based on fifteenths and tenths (one tenth of the value of town and crown lands, one fifteenth for the remainder). Wolsey introduced a subsidy, based on more accurate land valuations, which was charged four times in 1513-15 and 1523 and brought in over £300,000. This innovative **Subsidy Act** became the mainstay of wartime tax for the next 100 years. Wolsey not only worked out how to pay for Henry’s war, but also organized all the logistics (movement of men and supplies).

The **First French war** ran from 1511-1514. In November 1511, Ferdinand and Henry signed the **Treaty of Westminster**, pledging mutual aid against France. Henry duly sent an army to France in June 1512. However, Ferdinand used the fact that the French King was distracted by Henry’s invasion to conquer the southern half of Navarre[[23]](#footnote-23), an area of disputed ownership between Ferdinand and the French King. Ferdinand then withdrew and made peace with France. Henry VIII was forced to do the same as he wasn’t powerful enough to fight alone. In 1513 Henry VIII *again* invaded France, (the second campaign of the first French War) in a joint campaign with Ferdinand. After a surprising victory at the **Battle of the Spurs**, Henry went on to capture **Therouanne** and **Tournai**.

However, Henry was still a long way from glorious military victory. Whilst Henry was absent from England, the **Scots had invaded England** with 20-30,000 men. The Scots and the French had a long-standing association (known as the ‘auld’ alliance). Thus, this invasion was partly in support of France and partly opportunistic on the part of the Scottish King, James IV. Unusually for women of the period, even queens, Katherine of Aragon raised an army, led by the Earl of Surrey (who was awarded the title Duke of Norfolk as a reward[[24]](#footnote-24)). Although the English were outnumbered, the Scots were completely defeated at the [**Battle of Flodden**](http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/123/123%20211%20Henry%20VIII.htm#Flodden) on 9th September 1513. James IV was killed; his 1 year old son, James V, inherited. That **Katherine led the English army** to victory made her enduringly popular with the English people and the victory itself was a cause of great national celebration.

Yet in a disappointing follow up to Katherine’s glorious victory in Scotland, Ferdinand and Maximillian (the Holy Roman Emperor) made peace with Louis XII of France in 1514. As in 1512, Henry VIII was forced to do the same, which was a great disappointment. However, this peacemaking was what Henry needed, even if it wasn’t what he wanted; he didn’t have the money to sustain a campaign and the Battle of the Spurs had been just about successful enough to make England look like a credible military power. Any further fighting might reveal the extent of English military weakness. Moreover, **Wolsey’s masterful peace treaty** of 7 August 1514[[25]](#footnote-25) was far more beneficial to England than was actually deserved in the circumstances: Henry kept Therouanne and Tournai; his claim to the French throne was recognized; he received a **pension** from France; his sister, **Mary, married Louis XII** (and Wolsey was made Bishop of Tournai[[26]](#footnote-26)☺). **GLENN RICHARDSON** claims that Wolsey’s treaty ending the first French war, along with the later 1527 Treaty of Westminster (aka Perpetual Peace), is evidence of Wolsey using peace as a weapon of diplomacy: Henry VIII wanted to be magnificent but he couldn’t be magnificent in war, as he didn’t have the money or the strength, and so Wolsey’s job was to make sure that peace was not just the absence of war, but was magnificent and glorious in its own right.

However, attempts at a glorious peace were undermined when, in 1515, **Louis XII died,** childless. This ended the alliance between England and France which had been secured through the marriage of Mary to Louis. It also changed the dynamics of international politics as **Francis I became King**. Francis was a young, adventurous King just like Henry VIII, (think stags fighting for supremacy!) but Francis also had the money to finance his desire for glorious conquest, which Henry VIII did not.

By 1515, Francis’ warmongering in Italy had caused the Pope some alarm. Leo X had resisted Henry VIII’s request for Wolsey to be made Cardinal since August 1514[[27]](#footnote-27). In April 1515, he had again refused, claiming that he would then have to create cardinals for Francis and Maximillian[[28]](#footnote-28). However, Francis’ invasion of northern Italy in August 1515 prompted Leo to make **Wolsey Cardinal** on 10 September 1515[[29]](#footnote-29).

Wolsey’s rise in the church was paralleled by his rise in state office. William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chancellor of England, resigned on 22 Dec 1515[[30]](#footnote-30) and **Wolsey was appointed Chancellor** on 24th December. He was thereafter the *de facto* Chief Minister of Henry VIII. By 1519, the Venetian ambassador, Giustinian, was summing up the situation well when he told Francis I of France 'that King Henry devoted himself to pleasure and ease and left the cares of the State to the Cardinal'.[[31]](#footnote-31).

That Wolsey was Henry's chief minister for so long testifies to his abilities as a servant of the state. Polydore Vergil[[32]](#footnote-32), the Tudor historian, gives us a glimpse into Wolsey’s tactics when he tells us that whenever the Cardinal wanted something from Henry, he 'brought out some small present or other … and while the King was admiring it intently, Wolsey would adroitly bring forward the project on which his mind was fixed'. He was, in modern day terms, a 'schmoozer'.[[33]](#footnote-33) But Wolsey’s talent was much greater than just being able to schmooze Henry and nowhere was his talent greater than in foreign policy.

Francis’ successes in Italy also upset Ferdinand. For a third time, Henry VIII prepared for war against France in support of his father-in-law. But, in 1516, Ferdinand died. His grandson, **Charles I, thus became King of a united Spain[[34]](#footnote-34)**. This meant there was a third young, testosterone-fuelled monarch in Europe! It is quite clear, from these first years of Henry’s reign, that the European balance of power was changing. Europe was no longer dominated by England and France, but by France and Spain. Spain’s rising power was in part due to the fact that Spain was now united, and that the King of Spain (Charles) was grandson of the mighty Holy Roman Emperor. As both Francis and Charles had the youthful vigour and the money to wage war with abandon, England was increasingly falling into third place as a major power.

Henry became even more isolated, as Charles made peace with Francis in the **Treaty of Noyon**, and Maximilian (Holy Roman Emperor) made peace with Francis in the **Peace of Cambrai**, 1517. The three main powers of Europe were, then effectively in alliance without Henry. Francis then supported the Duke of Albany’s successful bid to become regent for James V in Scotland, giving France a dangerous back-door into England, should Francis ever decide to invade. At this point, Henry’s foreign policy could be considered a failure: it had resulted in no significant gains of territory, despite the fact it had cost Henry virtually all of the inheritance from his careful father; England was politically eclipsed by the emerging dual powers of France and Spain, and was diplomatically isolated by the treaties of Noyon and Cambrai.

Luckily for Henry, Wolsey was on hand to manage both domestic and international politics. In domestic politics, Wolsey was as ruthless in removing his enemies as he was adept at schmoozing those he wanted to influence. The Gentlemen of the Bedchamber (the King's private quarters) were close friends of Henry and were given official status in 1518. Wolsey didn’t want these young men to become an alternative source of influence over the King, so he frequently sent them on diplomatic missions abroad and even secured their formal expulsion from court in 1519 (usually referred to as the **expulsion of the minions).**

Wolsey also managed to seize victory from the jaws of defeat in foreign policy. By the end of 1517/ early 1518, Pope Leo X was becoming worried about rise of the Islamic Ottoman Empire (Turks). He wanted a **Christian league** of European Kings and sent **Campeggio** as legate[[35]](#footnote-35) to mastermind the construction of such a league. [This was when Campeggio and Wolsey first worked together, to great success, leading to Wolsey’s mis-placed confidence when it was Campeggio who arrived in England to hold the decretal commission for the annulment in 1528 – more of that later.] Although Leo X had, for four years, refused to make Wolsey legate[[36]](#footnote-36), Henry VIII and Wolsey refused admit Campeggio to England unless Wolsey were made co-legate. Leo agreed and Wolsey was made **legate** on 17 May 1518[[37]](#footnote-37). Wolsey then basically took over negotiations, and the result was the **Treaty of London** (also called the Treaty of Universal Peace): a treaty signed by over 20 rulers of Europe promising not to fight each other and to come to the aid of any member who was attacked (by the Ottomans). Wolsey’s domination of proceedings created the impression that England, rather than the Pope, had brokered the Treaty of London and was a diplomatic triumph for Henry VIII (and Wolsey!).

Historians, as ever, have disagreed about Wolsey’s motives in this treaty. **POLLARD** (1929) argued that Wolsey was acting in the interests of the Pope, as Wolsey himself wanted to be Pope one day. More recently, **DAVID POTTER** (1995) has suggested that Wolsey’s priority was to “survive the exceptionally changeable and unpredictable waters of European diplomacy in the age of the Hapsburg-Valois conflict” – Wolsey the surfer! More pragmatically, you could argue that Wolsey was simply trying to serve his King: peace was necessary to avoid unwelcome taxation; peace had to be glorious to satisfy Henry’s desire for European power status.

Two days later, an **Anglo-French agreement** was signed that agreed:

1. Tournai would be returned to France
2. Henry VIII (and Wolsey!) would receive a pension as compensation for the loss of the town/bishopric. The issue of the French pension is a feature of all Henry’s dealings with the French. Over the course of his reign Henry collected £730,379 in pension, although sadly the wars against France cost far more; some £3.5million!
3. Henry VIII’s daughter Mary would marry the Dauphin of France, thus renewing the marriage connection between the French and English royal families.
4. The Duke of Albany was to be kept out of Scotland

The scene was set for Henry VIII and Wolsey to once again become peace makers of Europe. Then, in Jan 1519, **Maximilian I died**. You can see how important luck (good and bad) was in Henry’s foreign policy. As Maximilian was a major signatory to the Treaty of London, his death undermined the treaty almost as soon as it was made! Just as **RB WERNHAM** stated: *“Maximilian’s death undid the achievement of 1518 just as that of Louis XII had ruined the work of 1514.”*

Elections for the role of the Holy Roman Emperor (HRE) then took place. Charles of Spain and Francis of France both stood for election. Trying to avoid taking sides, Henry VIII also stood. He hoped that Pope Leo would back him, though this was possibly unlikely after England’s takeover of the Treaty of London negotiations! The German electors chose Charles I of Spain who was crowned **Charles V, HRE**, 28th June 1519. Charles was now phenomenally powerful, ruling over German lands, Spain, Netherlands and Naples. His lands encircled those of Francis I and a Hapsburg-Valois[[38]](#footnote-38) conflict began to brew, threatening to destroy the Treaty of London entirely.

In the opening stages of the **Hapsburg-Valois conflict**, Francis and Charles both sought Henry as an ally, so his prestige was temporarily enhanced. In 1520, Charles visited Henry in England and Henry visited Francis in France. This latter meeting, 7-24th June, is known as the **Field of the Cloth of Gold**, named after the lavish tents, feasts and entertainments provided for this meeting of European monarchs. It was, as ever, masterminded by Wolsey and cost the equivalent of a year’s revenue: nothing was achieved at the meeting although the propaganda value was high, suggesting superficially that England was still a major power to be consulted in matters of war and peace.

Meanwhile, at home, Henry felt insecure. In 1520 Henry authorized an investigation into the activities of the **Duke of Buckingham**. Buckingham had allegedly threatened that he would kill Henry VIII just as Henry’s father had been willing to kill Richard III. This was reported to Henry; Buckingham was put on trial and **executed in May 1521**. Some historians have seen the execution of Buckingham as another of Wolsey’s attempts to control the nobility and maintain his influence over the King. Buckingham was old nobility and hated Wolsey, who he viewed as a low-born upstart. Did Wolsey deliberately fuel Henry’s paranoia and exaggerate Buckingham’s treason to be rid of an old enemy? That’s for you to decide!

By April 1521, Charles and Francis were openly at war, over the French invasion of Luxembourg. A **peace conference in Calais**, organised by Wolsey in August, achieved nothing. With England’s desired role as glorious peacemaker in tatters, Henry had to decide whether to take the side of Francis or Charles in the Hapsburg-Valois conflict, or risk becoming irrelevant in European power politics.

Therefore, two days after the French arrived at Calais, Wolsey visited Charles V in Bruges, returning with the **Treaty of Bruges**, which pledged that:

- Henry VIII would help Charles invade France if Francis refused make peace with Charles.

-Charles would compensate Henry VIII (and Wolsey) if they lost their 1518 French pension as a result of supporting Charles against Francis.

-Charles would become engaged to Mary, Henry’s daughter.

It was treaties such as this, brokered by Wolsey, which were referred to in the Parliamentary bill of attainder of 1529 which charged Wolsey with treason: “He without the king's assent, carried the king's great seal with him into Flanders when he was sent [as] ambassador to the Emperor.” Clearly, Wolsey *did* have the King’s permission: no minister, however powerful, would dare to promise war, or arrange the marriage of Mary without Henry’s permission! However, it was a useful accusation in 1529, once Henry had turned against his faithful servant.

The conflict between Spain and France also compromised the election of a new Pope. Having bestowed upon Henry VIII, in October 1521[[39]](#footnote-39), the title of **fideidefensor** (defender of the faith) for his defence of the 7 sacraments against Luther’s attack, **Pope Leo X died** on 1 December. Leo’s cousin, Giulio de Medici, was the leading contended, but Spanish and French cardinals in the conclave couldn’t agree. Henry VIII proposed Wolsey, but Adrian VI was elected as a compromise, being Dutch and absent from the conclave. **Adrian VI** took up his appointed on 9 January 1522. Charles V was initially delighted, as Adrian was Charles’ former tutor. However, Adrian was determined to rule impartially, though neither his neutrality nor England’s political endeavours could bring Francis and Charles to peace.

Charles and Francis were in an almost constant state of war during Henry’s reign, but the battleground for this power struggle was not France or Spain itself, but Italian city states such as Florence, Venice, Naples and Milan. Thus Francis didn’t make the peace with Charles anticipated in the Treaty of Bruges. In 1521, **Charles and Francis were at war over Milan**. In accordance with the Treaty of Bruges, England declared war on France in May 1522, starting the **second French War**. At first it seemed likely that English troops, fighting in Picardy, would be left isolated, as had happened in the First French War! However, in 1523, the Duke of Bourbon, one of the most powerful French nobles, rebelled against Francis. All of a sudden, it seemed as though Francis could be defeated (and Henry could realize his dream of being King of France!). The Duke of Suffolk was ordered to march on Paris, with 11,000 troops, in anticipation of meeting the forces of the Duke of Burgundy, and forces which Charles would surely send. However, Bourbon failed to raise enough support for a revolt and had to flee France, Charles didn’t have money to pay his troops and the English army, led by the Duke of Suffolk, was defeated by French. The venture had cost Henry VIII £400,000 for an expensive disaster. In a re-run of 1511 and 1514, Henry was abandoned by his allies and forced to sue for peace. Wolsey began secret[[40]](#footnote-40) peace negotiations with France and resisted pressure from Charles to send another force to France. Again, you can see Wolsey trying to maintain international presence for England without embroiling her in more costly campaigns.

When **Pope Adrian VI died** in September, 1523, Henry VIII again suggested Wolsey stand as Pope. However, Giulio de Medici – having narrowly missed out in 1521 - was elected and became **Pope Clement VII** in November 1523. Wolsey wasn’t entirely neglected, however. His **legateship**, originally granted temporarily in 1518, had been continually renewed in the intervening years and was in fact **made permanent in January 1524**, probably as a result of the papacy’s continuing desire for English support in the face of the Franco-Spanish threat[[41]](#footnote-41).

In October 1524[[42]](#footnote-42), Francis I of France invaded Italy, aiming for Milan, Pavia and Naples. At the **battle of Pavia** (February 1525) Charles V routed the French, conquered Milan and captured Francis. Spanish dominance in Italy looked complete. This battle marked a turning point in England’s traditional anti-French policy(and, incidentally, saw off the last Yorkist pretender to the English throne, Richard de la Pole, who was killed in battle[[43]](#footnote-43)). Wolsey and Henry VIII tried to persuade Charles to join forces to take advantage of Francis’ capture and attack France: Henry would become King of France and Charles would marry Mary. However, Charles already had Milan, which was his main interest. Henry had not helped Charles to achieve this, so Charles felt no obligation to help Henry achieve his own desires. As a result, Charles had neither the desire, nor any obligation, to assist Henry in his attempts to claim the French throne and even annulled plans to marry Mary. It may have been this snub which prompted Henry to make his illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond on 16 June 1525, in an attempt to shore up the Tudor dynasty in England.

So, poor old Wolsey was left with the problem of trying to raise enough money to finance an English war against France without support from Charles. His 1521 subsidy act wouldn’t cover it, so he was forced into insisting on **forced loans** from the landed classes, called an ‘**amicable grant’**. Both the laity and clergy were asked to contribute. There was near rebellion across large parts of England and **Wolsey was forced to abandon the Grant** and also to reduce the payments for the 1523 [subsidy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidy)[[44]](#footnote-44): very humiliating. Such taxation was undoubtedly a contributory factor in rousing Parliamentary anger against Wolsey, and his clerical ‘corruption’ may simply have been the opportunity for the 1529 attack.

Thus, without the finances to attack France, and in the absence of any meaningful alliance with Charles, Henry and Wolsey were forced to **change from anti-French to a pro-French foreign policy,** cemented by the three treaties of the More, Westminster and Amiens. Wolsey opened negotiations with France in the summer of 1525, resulting in **Treaty of the More** in August. Under this treaty, Henry VIII gave up his claim to France in return for a pension, which would be useful given the failure of the Amicable Grant and the parlous state of crown finances. This treaty formally **concluded the second French War.** England and France were not at war again until 1543.

Francis was released by Charles in 1526, after Charles forced him to sign the **Treaty of Madrid**. Under this treaty, Francis surrendered his claim to Italy, Flanders and Burgundy and had to surrender the Dauphin and his second son as hostages to Charles. Francis broke this treaty as soon as he was released, of course, and turned to England for an anti-Hapsburg alliance. This resulted in Henry joining the **League of Cognac** in September 1526: This League consisted of France, Italy, Florence, Venice and the Pope (Clement VII) against Charles V. England joined as a ‘protector’ not a full member, claiming that she wanted to be the broker for the peace once Charles had been ‘forced to submit’. You can see here, again, Wolsey’s attempts to keep England’s profile high, without committing to any expense! The Anglo-French alliance was then reaffirmed in the **Treaty of Westminster** of April 1527, which cemented “perpetual peace” between France and England and also arranged for either Francis or the Dauphin to marry Mary.

So, how successful was Henry’s foreign policy by the end of the 1520s? Success can only really be measured against aims and I would suggest that Henry’s aim in the 1520s was to maximise England’s status and reputation in European politics, ideally through military success though also including marriage alliances. Wolsey’s aim of course mirrored his King’s, but also included the pragmatic need to avoid the crippling expense of war. On one hand, it could be argued that Henry was manipulated and out-manoeuvred by both Charles and Francis on a number of occasions, resulting in England becoming a third rate power in Europe. On other hand, you could argue that Wolsey recognized the importance of appearance in maintaining the illusion of importance (for example, the Field of the Cloth of Gold 1520) and, with limited resources, managed to achieve a lot with a little.

Wolsey was as adept at maintaining his own status at court as he was at maintaining England’s status in international affairs. Despite the expulsion of the minions in 1519, these young men were soon back in favour with Henry, as they were his companions on hunts and other kingly pursuits. Remember the King was still a young man, interested in feasting, jousting and hunting (but not as much interested in womanising as other Kings of the period, surprisingly). Thus, in 1526, Wolsey’s **Eltham Ordinances** reduced the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber from 12 to six. But however successful Wolsey was in manipulating foreign affairs and managing domestic competition, his downfall came with the advent of the **King’s Great Matter**.

In May 1527, Henry VIII made public his desire for an **annulment** of his marriage to Katherine of Aragon. Katherine was 42 years of age and was unlikely to bear any more children. Concerns about Katherine's fertility and the lack of a male heir had been voiced from about 1520 and, by 1524, Henry had probably stopped having a sexual relationship with his wife. The issue of a male heir was serious. Henry VIII had absorbed his father’s obsession with dynastic stability and considered it his obligation to provide an heir. There was, of course, his daughter Mary. In England, unlike the rest of Europe, women *could* inherit the throne. However, a woman had not attempted ruling in her own right since Mathilda in the 12th century, and a civil war between Mathilda and Stephen had then ensued. This was not a reassuring precedent, particularly given that the Wars of the Roses was still a recent memory, and that Richard de la Pole was a surviving (until 1525) Yorkist contender for the throne, who had French backing and might well make a claim if the Tudor dynasty looked unstable. Moreover, there were concerns about what would happen when Mary married. If she bore a son, then that son would inherit England and the throne would remain within the Tudor dynasty. But if she died childless, or bore only daughters, would England pass into foreign hands? However, whilst dynastic security was paramount for Henry, it is nevertheless a matter of rational and calculated politics. It does not, by itself, explain the suddenness of Henry’s decision to leave his wife of many (mostly happy) years. Neither does cold politics explain the passion /obsession with which he pursued the divorce, even to schism from Rome. Schism was an extraordinarily costly solution, one which brought down on Henry’s head the wrath of Catholic Europe, brought with it the risk of Crusade, and which ensured that the legitimacy of any second marriage, and any children of that marriage, would always be questioned. It made no rational sense.

However, **Anne Boleyn** had arrived at Court. Despite the King’s best efforts, Anne maintained her position that the only man she slept with would be her husband. The King was bewitched, as **JJ SCARISBRICK** has argued, *“the more she resisted, the more, apparently, did Henry prize her”.* This interpretation of Anne’s refusal to sleep with Henry has long been the traditional understanding of their relationship. However, **GW BERNARD** suggests that, actually, Henry himself avoided a sexual relationship. Having decided to set Katherine aside in favour of Anne, Henry had to be seen to be seeking a divorce for reasons of conscience; an illegitimate pregnancy would clearly make it obvious that it was more a matter of the heart, which would largely render Henry’s request ridiculous. It is also likely that Henry had convinced himself that he was acting solely out of political considerations; he was adept at convincing himself that his *preferred* course of action was, in fact, the morally *right* one!

In all probability, at the start, Henry did not expect an annulment to be a difficult process. Annulment of royal marriages wasn’t unheard of: the marriage of Louis XII to Jeanne de France was annulled in 1498; the marriage of Anne of Brittany and Maximillian I was annulled in 1491. Moreover, Henry and the Pope were on good terms: In October 1521, Henry VIII had been awarded the title of *fidei defensor*; Wolsey had been a papal legate since 1518 and, in 1524, Clement VII had taken the unprecedented step of making him legate *a latere* (for life)[[45]](#footnote-45). Therefore, the Pope should have been willing to cooperate with Henry and also well placed to delegate the decision to Wolsey. Admittedly, a decision made by Wolsey, even though he was a papal legate, would not be *absolutely* binding: should Katherine choose to appeal to Rome, a Papal commission would be established to investigate and decide. Nevertheless, Katherine had always been appropriately cooperative and Henry could see no reason why she would resist a comfortable ‘retirement’ from public life.

Inevitably, it was Wolsey who was tasked with negotiating Henry’s annulment. Wolsey’s strategy was what **ALEC RYRIE** calls the ‘**low road’**: a technical argument about the **terms** of the dispensation, which the Pope could easily accept. If it could be proved that the original dispensation had been granted for the non-existent issue of affinity (as Katherine and Arthur had not consummated their marriage) rather than for the genuine problem of public honesty, the Pope could offer an annulment without any real problem. It would simply appear that the Pope had been acting on the best information at the time and had been wrong *through no fault of his own*. In such circumstances, the Pope could easily grant an annulment without losing face.

However, in the same month as Henry announced his intention to divorce, **Charles V sacked Rome** and captured the Pope. Wolsey almost immediately departed for France, to negotiate the Treaty of Amiens in August, where Henry agreed to fight with Francis against Charles. Wolsey was probably looking for a way to secure the Pope’s independence, in the hope of a favourable outcome to the annulment proceedings. Wolsey had hatched a plan to set up a papal court in exile at Avignon and act as Pope-by-Proxy. However, the College of Cardinals vetoed it. Wolsey also suspended trade with the Netherlands as pressure on Charles, although protests from English cloth merchants saw a rapid reinstatement of trade. Charles’ control of the Pope created three difficulties for Wolsey’s campaign: Charles V was Katherine’s nephew and would pressure the Pope to withhold an annulment. In fact, Katherine had wasted no time and had already contacted Charles V, to advise him of Henry's intentions to have Wolsey rule on the matter, and seek Charles’ support. Charles’ control of the Pope meant he had access to the original dispensation and he obliged his aunt by providing a copy, which neutralised all Wolsey's criticisms of the original wording. This would have forced Wolsey to re-consider the ‘low-road’ strategy, but such a talented diplomat probably could have found another avenue. However, whilst Wolsey was away negotiating the Treaty of Amiens, **Henry VIII took control** of his own divorce strategy.

Henry’s strategy was a much more direct challenge to papal authority than Wolsey’s; what **ALEC RYRIE** nicknames the ‘**high road’**. Henry suggested that Pope Julius had granted the dispensation for the wrong **motive**; to ensure peace between England and Spain. No Pope could really accept this accusation, as it would add fuel to the fire of reformers such as Luther, who claimed that the church had become worldly and corrupt. The second, and even more direct attack, was Henry’s claim that the marriage to Katherine was illegal in the eyes of God. Henry’s claim was based on a biblical extract from **Leviticus**: ‘if a man shall take his brother’s wife: he hath uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless’. Citing Leviticus, Henry claimed that the **pope lacked the authority** to over-rule the problem of affinity . This was an extraordinary challenge, suggesting that Henry was more able to interpret scripture than the Pope and thereby directly attacking the Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility (the idea that the Pope speaks for God and cannot be wrong). No Pope could sanction such a total attack on the Pope’s authority. Furthermore, to counter Henry's citation of Leviticus there was a significant and contradictory text in **Deuteronomy**: *“When brethren dwell together, and one of them dieth without children, the wife of the deceased shall not marry to another, but is brother shall take her, and raise up seed for his brother”.*  To make matters even more complicated, Henry was related to Anne Boleyn in exactly the same degree of affinity as he was to Katherine. Henry had had an affair with Mary Carey, sister of Anne, which created the same affinity as Arthur's consummation of his marriage with Katherine. How could the Pope set aside one and allow the other? **RYRIE** uses Henry’s insistence on this challenge to papal authority as evidence that the break was ultimately motivated by Henry’s “*demented, relentless determination to have his will*”. For **RYRIE**, Henry was a tyrant who would dominate his kingdom. **RYRIE** explores the possibility that Henry could have murdered Katherine and so neatly solved his problem. Admittedly, **murder** would have risked short-term horror from other European powers, but would have allowed Henry to repent. Once he showed he was properly sorry he would be able to remarry perfectly legitimately and both Mary, and any children of the new marriage, would be unquestionably legitimate. After all, there was historical precedent for repentant murderous Kings in Henry II, who killed Thomas a Becket and then, after a clerical flogging on Becket’s tomb by several monks by way of penance, carried on as before. In contrast, breaking with Rome was almost a guarantee of excommunication, would be difficult to repent without surrendering monarchical authority, and would undoubtedly result in questions about the legitimacy of his new marriage and of future children. For this reason, **ALEC RYRIE** claims that Henry was fixated on a break, on asserting his authority, rather than simply trying to find a way to end to his marriage with Katherine. He argues that once Henry had an idea in his head he wouldn’t let it go, and would convince himself that he was both morally right and had God’s support. **NEWCOMBE** agrees that Henry was blessed with “*an uncanny ability to convince himself of his own righteousness in most circumstances*”: once the idea that his marriage was illegal had occurred to Henry, it is entirely probable that Henry came whole-heartedly to believe it, even if his original starting point had in fact been something less spiritual (such as Anne!). Wolsey himself confirmed this on his death bed, advising his attendant “*be mete advised and assured what matter ye put in his [Henry’s] head, for be sure ye will never pull it out again*”. Following this argument to its logical conclusion, schism was the only way Henry could salve his conscience. Murder would have made Henry doubt that his course was right, but schism was a legitimate, judicious solution. GW Bernard also argued that Henry’s insistence that the Leviticus extract was higher authority than the Pope’s decision was such a radical and fundamental a challenge to Papal authority that “the logic that would produce the break with Rome was already there in 1527”; the Pope could not allow such a challenge to papal authority and Henry could not obtain an annulment without it. BERNARD isn’t really suggesting that the break was inevitable, although RYRIE clearly is. As historians, however, you should beware any sense of inevitability about the break, but do look for moments or opportunities when the situation could have been resolved without schism.

Of course, RYRIE and NEWCOMBE may not have taken into consideration that Henry VIII was, in fact, a **genuinely religious** man. He had denounced the work of Martin Luther, joining the ranks of the noted humanist scholars More and Erasmus. He was a learned scholar, and his awareness of, and conviction in, biblical teaching was genuine. For Henry, it is entirely possible that the childlessness from which he and Katherine had suffered proved that he had been living in **sin** for many years. Historians can’t be sure of Henry’s motives, because we cannot know whether Henry really believed his wife had slept with Arthur. Katherine certainly disputed it. When Henry visited Katherine in June 1527 to advise her that they must separate as they had been living in sin, Katherine made it quite plain she would resist any attempt by Henry to set her aside[[46]](#footnote-46).

Katherine’s cause was championed and Henry’s plans challenged by an unlikely opponent at home. **Elizabeth Barton**, often referred to as the ‘**maid of Kent’**, had been famous (in 16th century terms) from before the annulment crisis arose. She was born in 1506 and, in 1525, became ill and developed religious mania. She fell into ecstatic trances that lasted for days at a time, during which she raved with "*marvelous holiness in rebuke of sin and vice*." On recovering from her illness Barton continued to have trances during which she prophesied and made political statements. Richard Masters, the local parish priest, heard of the visions and reported them to Archbishop Warham, who sanctioned her activity. She entered St. Sepulchre's convent in Canterbury as a nun, under the tutelage of the monk Edward Bocking[[47]](#footnote-47). She became an attraction for the city's numerous pilgrims, who believed her to be in direct communication with the Virgin Mary (as, in fact, she herself claimed). She corresponded with a number of important ecclesiastical figures of the time, including Sir Thomas More. She was widely considered to be a ‘holy maid’. Thus, when she began to have visions relating to Henry’s quest for an annulment, she posed a considerable threat. She prophesied that, if Henry continued to seek an annulment, he "should no longer be king of this realm...and should die a villain's death."

By December, the **Pope was free**, though conflict between Charles and the papacy continued. Afraid that French control in the north of Italy was temporary and that the Emperor would soon be back in control of Rome, Clement hedged his bets. In June 1528, Campeggio was sent to England to hold a **decretal commission** with Wolsey. A decretal commission would have the power to rule definitively on the divorce, without allowing a future appeal to Rome. Wolsey was delighted and probably thought the end in sight. Campeggio was absentee Bishop of Salisbury plus Campeggio and Wolsey had worked together successfully before. You could argue that the fact that the Pope authorized Campeggio to hold a *decretal* commission suggests that the Pope was willing to accept Henry’s demand for an annulment, even if he couldn’t be seen to grant this himself. However, However, Campeggio was ill and made faltering progress to England, possibly so Clement could wait and see what happened with Charles. He reached England only at the end of September, by which point Charles had pressured Clement to withdraw the decretal commission. The case was delayed for a further 8 months, during which time Campeggio suggested that Katherine enter a **nunnery**. With hindsight, it seems hard to understand Katherine’s refusal to do so. Admission to holy orders of any individual automatically annulled the marriage vows and freed the 'abandoned' party to remarry. It wouldn’t imply that the marriage to that point had been a sham, so wouldn’t create the risk of Mary being declared illegitimate, as a papal annulment would do. Moreover, Henry would undoubtedly be so grateful he would have maintained Katherine’s lifestyle (as he later did that of Anne of Cleves). Instead, Katherine refused, resulting in years of comparative poverty and Henry’s spiteful refusal to let her and Mary see each other. Of course, Katherine was popular, partly as a result of her valiant leadership of the Scottish campaign in Henry’s absence, way back in 1513, which had captured the public imagination. She may have thought that Henry would back down if she stood firm. She may also have objected simply on a matter of principle: she knew was a virgin when she married Henry, her conscience was therefore clear that the marriage was not sinful, and she would not simply be swept aside on a whim.

Following Katherine’s refusal to enter a nunnery, Campeggio played for time, referring every tiny detail to Rome. Therefore, it wasn’t until 31 May 1529 that the case was heard at **Blackfriars** (lasting until 16 July 1529). By this point, it was an **ordinary legatine court** rather than a decretal commission, so any appeal to Rome would have to be honoured. Katherine's sole appearance at the court on 18 June made clear her opposition to proceedings. She openly and very embarrassingly made it clear *on oath* that her marriage to Arthur had not been consummated and formally requested that the case be referred to Rome. Then the political situation in Italy once again changed: in June, Charles V was once again victorious in Italy. The Pope made peace with Charles in the **Treaty of Barcelona** (29 June 1529), spelling the end of the Blackfriars court and the **recall of the case to Rome** (16 July 1529). He then **summoned Henry to Rome** in August, the same month that Francis made peace with Charles in the **Peace of Cambrai** (3 August 1529). In October, the Pope offered Henry a **fresh dispensation** for his marriage to Katherine, which would satisfy the ‘matters of conscience’ which had allegedly given rise to the annulment request. This did not satisfy Henry.

Thus, by autumn 1529 the domestic crisis of the annulment had reached stalemate. As I’ve hopefully made clear above, as legate a latere, Wolsey *could* have made the decision had Katherine agreed. Likewise, had the Pope allowed Campeggio to hold the decretal commission as planned then Katherine’s objections would have been over-ruled. However, because of Katherine’s appeal against Wolsey’s legatine court, and the Pope’s decision to cooperate with the Emperor, the case was recalled to Rome, where the Pope himself wouldn’t and/or couldn’t grant the annulment. The alliance between the two major Catholic powers of Europe, France and Spain also left England diplomatically isolated. Therefore, it is no surprise that Henry was pursuing alliances elsewhere for England’s security, principally with the German princes of the **Schmalkaldic League.** A letter from Bishop Stephen Gardiner from 1529 suggests that Henry had used approaches to the Lutheran German princes as a means to pressure the Pope to grant the divorce; he hoped the Pope would be worried about the possible spread of reformist thought from Germany to England and would grant the divorce to keep Henry on side. Henry was probably also hoping to encourage the German princes to cause trouble for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V; Henry’s aim being to distract Charles from supporting his aunt’s cause. In fact, there was little chance of Charles V intervening on behalf of his aunt, as he was preoccupied with fighting the Ottomans in Vienna. He had even had to agree to tolerate the Lutheranism of German Protestant Princes in 1532, so he could prioritise his own foreign policy concerns. However, in 1529, Henry was suffering from Charles’s influence over the Pope and may have feared military action if he continued to seek an annulment.

Henry blamed Wolsey and was furious. However, fortuitously for Henry, a young cleric of reformist leanings named **Thomas Cranmer** suggested that the marriage should be ‘tried’ by the doctors of divinity in universities *rather than the Pope (*radical*!).* If the scholars found in favour of the annulment then all it would take, according to Cranmer, would be the Archbishop of Canterbury to pronounce it. Is it a coincidence that, shortly after this meeting with Cranmer, Wolsey fell from grace? Had Cranmer provided an alternative route to the annulment so Wolsey could be dispensed with? On 9 October 1529 Wolsey was charged with **praemunire**[[48]](#footnote-48) then, on the 19th, he was forced to surrender the Great Seal (of the Lord Chancellor). On the 22 October 1529 Wolsey pleaded guilty to the charge of praemunire (always a pragmatic politician!), threw himself on the King’s mercy and was ‘**exiled’ to York**.

With Wolsey a defeated (though not yet destroyed) force, three major factions came to dominate politics at the Henrician Court[[49]](#footnote-49); the nobles of the Privy Council who had been united in bringing down Wolsey, but had no idea how to achieve the annulment; the conservative (Aragonese) faction around Katherine who were clearly exerting all influence to prevent the annulment, and the Boleyn faction, who were growing in influence but whose major players, Cromwell and Cranmer, did not yet hold significant political influence (not until 1532). NEWCOMBE sees this factional competition as creating a 'paralysis of policy': stalemate. It was into this climate of uncertainty and confusion that Henry called a Parliament in 1529.

Firstly, Henry may have intended, even as early as 1529, to use Parliament to make him the Head of the English church so he could finalise his annulment without the Pope. If he did intend a break, it would make sense to do it through Parliament. It would need to seem legal and legitimate, and having Parliamentary statute (law) to frame make Henry supreme head of the church would be the best way of doing this. Moreover, if Henry was to avoid any kind of rebellion by the ruling classes of the country, he would need to get the Lords and the Commons to publicly support his supremacy, and the best way to do this was to make them all sign legislation! Moreover, Henry could reasonably have expected Parliament to support any action against the church. Although the Bishops in the House of Lords would have objected, they could always be threatened with praemunire, which would limit their opposition. The rest of Parliament was anti-clerical for a number of reasons political, economic and religious. Politically, the existence of Convocation undermined Parliament’s claim to be the supreme law making institution in the land, which both MPs and noble Lords found frustrating. Economically, members of the Commons were lawyers, merchants or minor gentry (small landowners). They objected to benefit of clergy (as this robbed secular lawyers of business!), to the fact that the church had a monopoly on legal procedures such as mortuary fees and probate, and to the excessive wealth and land that clergy were accumulating through practices such as pluralism and absenteeism. Religiously, some lay members of the Commons had reformist views; remember that Parliament is in London and is therefore the centre of English trade. New ideas from the continent travelled via trade routes and many of the gentry MPs were merchants, who would have encountered this ‘new learning’. It could even be argued that the idea of an erastian church in England wasn’t entirely radical: the English church historically had seen little interference from Rome: in many ways it had been an erastian church even during the reign of Henry VII, so the *idea* of the King being in charge was not impossible to imagine. Henry himself had read William Tyndale[[50]](#footnote-50)’s ‘*Obedience of the Christian Man’* which claimed that Kings had overall authority in their countries. All the King’s subjects, argued Tyndale, should owe their allegiance to the king and not to any foreign authorities. Equally, Simon Fish’s ‘*A Supplication of the Beggars’* (1529 or just before), was addressed to the King and fiercely criticized greedy and over fed clerics (such as Wolsey!) as ungodly, implying that the King should exercise some control over the church in the interests of standards! However, these strengths in Henry’s hand do not mean that a total break with 1500 years of traditional loyalty to Rome would really have been easy, or in fact conceivable, in 1529. In my view, the argument that Henry called Parliament to provide a break is based on hindsight. It would have been strange if Henry had planned for, or been expecting, Parliament to do something as radical as legislate for a break with Rome, given that Parliament traditionally was just used for raising taxes rather than for radical changes to the government of the country (which taking over the church would have been!). Moreover, even the staunchest advocate of erastianism would have hesitated at the radical idea of the King as official Head of the Church in England. For a monarch seeking stability (which we know Henry did), such a move was potentially suicidal: Henry’s personal belief that the annulment was a domestic matter probably wouldn’t have translated to a belief that Papal authority was second to that of the King over the whole English church.

Instead, therefore, it may simply be that the calling of Parliament was the only constructive move Henry could think of to break the stalemate having tried everything else he could think of: the aborted decretal commission, the failed legatine court and a futile attempt to persuade Katherine to enter a nunnery. Alternatively, Henry may have called Parliament to destroy Wolsey, as revenge for his failure and because he had another avenue to explore offered by Cranmer.

Parliament was all too willing to destroy Wolsey. Wolsey’s taxation[[51]](#footnote-51) was undoubtedly an important factor in arousing the anger of the nobles in the House of Lords against Wolsey. Ronald Hutton further argues that noble anti-Wolsey hatred was due not just to taxation but to class resentment; the nobility couldn’t stand the fact that such a lowly born man should become so powerful, and sustain this pre-eminent power for so long. The example of Cardinal Beaufort, chief minister for Henry VI, is a case in point. He was just as flamboyant and clerically ‘corrupt’ as Wolsey. However, Beaufort was royal and therefore courtiers expected him to lead others, and to be magnificent. In contrast, Wolsey was low born and supposed to stay that way.[[52]](#footnote-52) In sum, for Hutton, that which brought Wolsey down was not his vices but the English class system.

However, whilst taxation and noble disdain for the meteoric rise of such a lowly servant may have provided the *motive* for Parliamentary attacks on Wolsey, it was Wolsey’s apparent clerical corruption which provided the *justification* and the *grounds* for attack. Wolsey was a notorious pluralist and, therefore, an absentee cleric. Having awarded himself the bishopric of Tournai in1514, he went on to acquire the bishoprics of Lincoln (1514), Bath and Wells (1518), Durham (1524), and Winchester (1529). These last three he held alongside the archbishopric of York, to which he was promoted in 1514.[[53]](#footnote-53) He never set foot in his bishoprics of Lincoln, Bath and Wells or Durham, and visited York only after his 1529 fall from royal favour. He was also absentee abbot, of England’s richest abbey; St Albans. Such pluralism was profitable. Keith Randell estimates that, at the at height of his powers, Wolsey was probably about ten times richer than his nearest rival (apart from the King) - and in terms of disposable income (c. £50,000 p.a.) he was probably richer than the King himself!

As well as his pluralism/absenteeism, Wolsey also used his powers as legate for financial reward: Wolsey could issue dispensations and licenses usually only issued by the Pope, could take over the bishops’ church courts and could take control of bishops’ right to register probate for wills – and he did. By 1522, Wolsey had established his own legatine court, staffed by efficient and aggressive church lawyers, and was claiming ultimate authority over inheritance matters. Because of the fees paid, this was a highly profitable business! Unsurprisingly, this led to clashes and resentments, particularly with Archbishop Warham. This tension was only partially resolved when, in 1524, Wolsey re-negotiated with the bishops, effectively allowing them to buy back from him the ordinary episcopal powers which his legateship had overridden. Nevertheless, the Bishops in the House of Lords remained hostile to Wolsey for this seizure of probate and visitation rights. The lawyers in the House of Commons were also resentful of the existence and independence of clerical courts, as this undermined their own earning power!

Wolsey never attempted to play down his power and wealth. As George Cavendish records, it was Wolsey’s habit to go in procession daily to Westminster Hall, and on Sundays to the court, mounted on a mule and clad in scarlet satin robes, accompanied by an imposing retinue of gentlemen and nobles. Before him was carried the Chancellor’s great seal, his cardinal’s hat, two great crosses[[54]](#footnote-54) and two great pillars of silver, along with a gilded mace. The showiness of the display had a serious political point to make: as the pope’s representative, and also the chief minister of the king, Wolsey was under an obligation to reflect the glory of his masters[[55]](#footnote-55). But even by the standards of the time, which expected bishops to be wealthy and worldly, Wolsey came across as unusually proud and domineering, and his ostentation was mocked by critics like the poet John Skelton. The extravagance of his lifestyle led to accusations that he saw himself as an *alter rex*; or alternative King. Such flamboyance *magnified* perceptions of his greed and corruption and provided fuel to those who sought to destroy him.

However, Hutton claims that whilst Wolsey’s “robes were scarlet, his writs were red.”[[56]](#footnote-56) The Chancellorship brought with it a huge workload in the courts. This extra workload brought no extra benefit, so the time Wolsey dedicated to it suggests he viewed it as a duty. Not even his enemies at the time suggested that he used his role as a judge corruptly for his own interests and so Wolsey also had a “lasting and tremendous impact”[[57]](#footnote-57) in terms of justice. A good example of his sense of social duty is the response to enclosures. Rising population had resulted in increased enclosure; the attempt by the gentry to protect their land and increase their yield by ending the open-field system and ‘enclosing’ their land. This then resulted in rural depopulation, as displaced farmers moved around looking for work, often in towns. In 1517 Wolsey established an **Enclosures Commission**, the like of which had not been attempted by any government before. Over 1000 documents were collated by his commissioners and 400 prosecutions resulted. 300 were successful, including prosecutions against 12 nobles, 3 bishops and 5 abbots who were all ordered to return land illegally enclosed. Prosecutions peaked between 1524-9 and fuelled the hatred of the English ruling classes for Wolsey.

It is possible to argue that Wolsey did take his spiritual responsibilities seriously[[58]](#footnote-58). Ronald Hutton[[59]](#footnote-59) claims that Wolsey was personally pious. Wolsey’s contemporary, Cavendish, tells us that he ‘heard commonly every day two masses in his privy closet’. Hutton also argues that Wolsey held no more benefices than some of his continental contemporaries and he had no more illegitimate children than other bishops/some Popes. Moreover, as early as 1515, he stood up for the principle of ‘benefit of clergy’ (the right of churchmen not to be answerable to secular courts) in the aftermath of the notorious Hunne case, But Henry on this occasion slapped Wolsey down, and he was made to kneel before the king and apologise for any intrusion the Church had made on Henry’s royal authority (possibly evidence of Henry’s erastian conviction?). Later, in 1519, he acted to protect the rights of sanctuary (a safe haven for those wanted by the law) for Westminster Abbey and its environs, against pressure from common lawyers to abolish the practice. In 1518-19 he summoned a convocation (assembly of the upper clergy) of the province of York, which issued decrees against clerical absenteeism and (ironically) against the keeping of mistresses, though admittedly both of these practices were *already* technically illegal. They also seemed a bit hypocritical, given that Wolsey was well known as a pluralist (and therefore an absentee cleric). Moreover, Wolsey kept a mistress (whose name was probably Joan Lark) and showered church patronage on his illegitimate son, Thomas Wynter, whose annual income was said to be £2,700 by 1529.

Wolsey also tried to reform monasticism in England. According to Polydore Vergil, who hated Wolsey, as soon as he became legate, all religious orders were summonsed and Wolsey outlined their defects and his plans for their reform[[60]](#footnote-60). In 1519 Wolsey also employed his new legatine powers to order visitations[[61]](#footnote-61) (inspections to check on the spiritual wellbeing) of more than 60 religious houses and cathedral chapters, including the powerful and privileged Benedictine monks of Westminster Abbey. In the course of his legateship he was responsible for removing from office eight unsuitable heads of houses (though this was probably rather fewer than deserved to be sacked). He also, somewhat courageously, opposed the election of Eleanor Carey as abbess of Wilton in Wiltshire in 1528, even though her brother was married to Anne Boleyn’s sister. Henry, by this time enamoured of Anne, was thoroughly annoyed, but he withdrew his support for Eleanor after learning that she had had illegitimate children by two different priests. Wolsey acquired papal permission to close no fewer than 29 small and struggling religious houses and to use their wealth for educational reforms (see below). In November 1528 (not long before his final fall from office) he secured another two bulls from the pope to allow him to suppress all religious houses with fewer than six inmates, and to force houses with fewer than 12 inmates to join with larger monasteries. Had these plans been implemented, it would have involved a major redrawing of the monastic map, with the closure of well over 100 houses. This could be seen to be Wolsey’s attempt to maximise revenue for himself, to strengthen the monastic system through prioritising the major houses, or to finance education to strengthen the church. Some of the money was indeed used to improve the education of the clergy, in response to humanist criticisms. He established a grammar school in his native Ipswich in approx. 1528. Most spectacularly, he began (sometime around) 1525 the building of a magnificent new college, designed to be a showcase for the teaching of Latin and Greek authors. However, he may have been as interested in self-promotion as education: rather than naming the college conventionally after a saint, Wolsey decided that it was to be known as ‘Cardinal College’! (now Christ Church).

Wolsey also defended the Catholic Church against the Lutheran threat. The English campaign against Luther began with a public burning of his books at St Paul’s in London in May 1521, over which the cardinal presided, holding in his hand the book Henry VIII was writing against Luther, which would earn Henry the title ‘defender of the faith’. Wolsey also began to organise Oxford and Cambridge scholars to attack Luther’s theology, and the confutation of heresy was a stated aim of the new Cardinal College…. In 1526 he authorised a raid on the Steelyard, the headquarters of German merchants in London, which led to the confiscation of forbidden books and the public recantation of several of the Germans, along with an English friar (and critic of Wolsey’s), Robert Barnes. Wolsey also negotiated, unsuccessfully, for the handover from the Netherlands of William Tyndale, whose printed translation of the New Testament was starting to flood into England in these years. Wolsey was deeply embarrassed when a clutch of Lutheran sympathisers were discovered in Cardinal College in 1528, and he ordered a crackdown in the universities that led to several arrests and detentions. Wolsey, argues Peter Gwyn, deserves to be recognised as ‘a committed champion of Catholicism’. This, of course, angered reformist members of the House of Commons!

A striking fact about Wolsey’s campaign against Lutheranism in the 1520s is that not a single heretic was executed as a consequence of it. (By contrast, five Protestants were burned during Thomas More’s short tenure of the Chancellorship in 1530-2). This may have been a deliberate strategy to avoid creating martyrs which would strengthen the Lutheran cause. Men like Robert Barnes, Hugh Latimer and Thomas Bilney were not formally charged with heresy, but summoned to private interviews with Wolsey. During the crackdown in Oxford in 1528, it was only the man discovered importing heretical books, Thomas Garrard, who was formally charged with heresy (the pusher, as it were, rather than the users). Wolsey arguably under-estimated the radicalism of the early Protestant converts, for example, he ordered the release from imprisonment of the young scholar John Frith in 1528, on condition he remained within ten miles of Oxford. But Frith fled to the continent, and there published books attacking Catholic doctrine.

Nevertheless, corrupt or virtuous, loved or hated, Wolsey’s power was entirely due to Henry’s support and he could not survive the withdrawal of this favour and Parliament was all too happy to help Henry bring him down. As NEWCOMBE argues: “There was sufficient animosity in all quarters to suggest that much of the action taken against the Church in the first session of the Reformation Parliament, [was not designed to challenge the Pope but to prevent] Wolsey from making any kind of political comeback”.

In parliament, a number of charges were levelled at Wolsey, in preparation for a bill of attainder (political charge of treason). The notes of Edward Hall, MP for Wenlock, provide a concise summary[[62]](#footnote-62):

* First that he without the king's assent had [schemed] to be a legate, [whereby] he took away the right of all bishops and spiritual persons. *(a reference to his 1522 Legatine court)*
* In all writings which he wrote to Rome or any other foreign Prince, he wrote *Ego et Rex meus*, 'I and my King', as [if to] say that the king was his servant. *(which would have been a stylistic reference only – he was requesting but with the King’s backing – perfectly legitimate within his role as Chancellor)*
* That he hath slandered the church of England in the court of Rome, for his [argument to persuade the Pope to make him a] legate was to reform the church of England, which as he wrote was 'fallen into an reprobate state'. *(This is very unfair; as you know it wasn’t slander, there was corruption within the Church and Wolsey use his legatine powers to address this, through visitations of the monasteries. He also defended, rather than slandered, the church against Luther by publicly burning Luther’s books.)*
* He without the king's assent, carried the king's great seal with him into Flanders when he was sent [as] ambassador to the Emperor. *(this is probably a reference to the 1521 peace mission, which resulted in the Treaty of Bruges with Charles V; he was acting on the King’s behalf without a shadow of a doubt so to suggest this was ‘without the King’s assent’ is unjust – would Wolsey really have arranged a marriage between Charles and Henry’s daughter without Henry’s consent?!)*
* That [although he had] the French pox presumed to come and breath[e] on the king.
* That he caused the cardinal's hat to be put on the king's coin. *(Another frivolous charge – subsequent Archbishops Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lee, Archbishop of York and Tunstal, bishop of Durham, all did the same; it was perfectly legal as a mark of their mint and was understood by everyone to still be the King’s coin[[63]](#footnote-63))*
* That he had sent innumerable [monies] to Rome, for the obtaining of his dignities, to the great impoverishment of the realm. *(As Archbishop, Cardinal and Legate, Wolsey was responsible for collecting papal taxes so monies to Rome need not (necessarily) have been to purchase offices.)*

As you can tell from the terms listed above, this act of Attainder was not particularly valid. Neither was it strictly necessary, given the charge of praemunire to which he had already pleaded guilty. Henry may have hoped that the public humiliation of a papal legate by the institutions of state would pressure the Pope to grant the annulment. Alternatively, Wolsey may have been Henry’s sacrificial lamb: knowing that the nobles in the Lords hated him for being low-born, and the reformist sympathisers in the commons hated him for being corrupt, Henry may have thrown Wolsey to the Parliamentary wolves to gain Parliamentary support for his royal plans to legislate against the church. Your interpretation of this really depends on whether you think Henry was, at this point, really considering schism.

Once Parliament met, the Mercer's Company of London (merchants) presented a list of grievances that were primarily economic, but had an anti-clerical tone. For example, one complaint was that the privileges Wolsey had granted Oxford University (e.g. being able to collect land rents in the area etc) were disadvantaging local people (i.e. gentry and merchants). As you can see, the main motive was economic, but nevertheless, anti-clerical members of the House of Commons seized on this opportunity to draw up legislation to deal with abuses of clerical privilege. Thus the legislation of this early period was prepared by anti-clerical MPs and nobles, (notably Lord Darcy, who we will meet again later) and covered three main areas of clerical ‘abuse’:

The first area was **mortuary fees**. There was no standard fee and the clergy were free to charge what they deemed appropriate. The church did often waive fees all together for the poorest, but nevertheless, the Commons insisted on regulation of these charges. There was little objection in the Lords, even from the Bishops, as they probably didn’t want to raise the ghost of the Hunne case with their parliamentary colleagues!

The second area was **probate fees.** Probate is the legal process for administering a deceased person's account in the absence of a will (i.e. sorting out who gets what). The Commons alleged that the Church courts charged excessive fees and prolonged the process to increase the fees further. The Commons wanted to regulate these fees and the Lords Temporal (i.e. nobles) agreed. However, the Lords Spiritual (i.e. bishops) were unhappy, accusing the authors of lack of faith and hinting at heresy. The agreement of the House of Lords was necessary for legislation to pass. The refusal of the bishops to budge created increased sympathy for the Commons from the Lords Temporal. So, to ‘persuade’ the Bishops to pass the bills, Henry had to issue a non-too subtle threat. Probate and mortuary fees were not the only issues facing Parliament. Also before Parliament was a bill which relieved the King of a debt of £350,000(approx!). In return for the passage of *this* bill the King offered a general pardon, *except for* clerical crimes of praemunire. Remember that Wolsey had been accused of praemunire. The fact that the clergy of England had cooperated with Wolsey, in his role as Archbishop of York and Legate*,* made them complicit in his crime. The hint was broad: if the King chose, he could quite easily extend the charge of praemunire to all the clergy of England! The clergy took the hint, and cooperated over probate and mortuary fees!

Limiting the clerical abuses of **pluralism** and **non-residence** was the focus of the third anti-clerical bill before Parliament this session, as was limiting clerical control of what Parliament thought should be just **lay[[64]](#footnote-64) businesses** (usually farming). The Bishops resented lay interference in the governance of the Church and dug in their heels. Remember that all canon (church) law was supposed to be made in Convocation, not Parliament.

Clerical resistance in the Lords did result in some moderation of the bill. That Henry allowed such modifications could suggest, as **PENDRILL** has claimed, that this was a period of stalemate, where neither Henry nor Parliament had any clear direction. However, it is worth noting that, despite the modifications permitted to this bill, one significant clause remained unchanged: *the clergy would be forbidden from applying for papal dispensations for non-residence.* As you know, non-residence had been a common feature of the church in England, which both allowed clerics to grow rich and also caused complaints from the people. Convocation's failure reform the church from within had presented the opportunity for Parliament to step in to curb abuses. This act set a precedent: the reformation of the Church was now a matter for Parliament. As a turning point in the process of the break this can’t be over-stated. However, the fact it was a turning point when viewed with hindsight, does not mean Henry’s intended at this early stage to reform of the church, or to break with Rome. If he had intended to do so, it would seem odd that he halted here, *after* the precedent for Parliamentary interference in the church had been set, but *before* anything more useful to Henry than reform of obvious abuses had been dealt with. Does this suggest that Henry was simply trying to frighten the clergy with the power of Parliament, and thereby indirectly intimidate the Pope into granting the divorce? Was he fully intending to push Parliament towards the Supremacy but simply taking it slowly to minimize opposition to such a radical idea? Either way, Parliament was prorogued[[65]](#footnote-65), officially until Easter 1530 but, in fact, it did not meet again until January 1531.

The whole period 1529 – 1536 is often referred to as “the Reformation Parliament” (GR ELTON’S phrase). However, as you can see, the “Reformation Parliament” was not a permanent fixture, and in fact sat for fewer than 500 days over the 6 years of its term. This first period (Autumn to Christmas 1529) had been concerned with clerical abuses and could be characterized as a preliminary attack on the church. The second period (Jan 1531 – March 1531) would prove to be a more formal attack and a hesitant assertion of supremacy. In between these two sittings, much happened!

On 7 March 1530, Clement VII had issued a papal bull forbidding Henry to marry again[[66]](#footnote-66). In April 1530 (handpicked) doctors of divinity at Oxford and Cambridge decided in favour of the annulment. In the same month, Wolsey was rumoured to be in correspondence with the Pope and Katherine of Aragon- whether this was true and, even if true, whether this was treasonable or simply an on-going attempt to resolve the crisis and thus rehabilitate his fortunes, no-one knows. However, his enemies ensured that such news reached the King. In June, scholars across Europe were offered ‘gifts’ to support the Leviticus extract as grounds for divorce and find other grounds in historical texts. (June). According to Cranmer, remember, if these scholars also accepted that Pope Julius had exceeded his powers by over-ruling the word of God, as recorded in Leviticus, then all that would be necessary would be for the Archbishop of Canterbury to pronounce the King a free man.

Of course, he would still have to find an Archbishop of Canterbury willing to make this pronouncement (Warham was very conservative), and also ensure that the rest of the clergy and the nobles that an erastian church was acceptable.

So evidence justifying an erastian church was also collected. Foxe (a reformist historian/scholar) and Thomas Cranmer (a reformist cleric) presented Henry with a collection of texts (the bible, traditional Catholic texts and English histories) called the **Collectanea**. These texts appeared to show that the English church had *always* been a separate province of Christendom, subject only to royal jurisdiction. **GUY** argues that the examples cited in the Collectanea were suficient to convince Henry that recent papal jurisdiction in England was *‘only by negligence or usurpation, as we take it and esteem’* (p133) and that an erastian church had historical precedent. This was a useful collection of scholarly work: if Henry’s authority over the church was total (save for the forgiveness of sins, which was a matter for ordained clergy only), he could summon church councils at will, to pronounce on any matter he chose: convenient!

However**,** rather than acting on the claims of supremacy immediately, Henry hesitated. This suggests that at this point he was not really contemplating a total break with Rome, merely trying to pressurise Clement into granting the annulment. As **NEWCOMBE** argues “*The opinions of the European Universities and the Collectanea were seen as tools with which the Pope might be persuaded to grant the divorce, not as the theoretical foundation for schism”.*

If persuasive pressure were necessary, pressure was what Henry would apply: 15 clerics (mainly Katherine's supporters) were charged with Praemunire for their historic support of Wolsey. This was rapidly broadened to an accusation against all clergy. Then, on 4 November 1530, Wolsey was arrested by Duke of Northumberland and died in Leicester, on 29 November 1530, on his way to his trial. Was this arrest the response to ‘treasonable’ correspondence, an attempt to threaten the Pope by showing what could happened to clerics in England if the King were not granted the annulment, or even a calculating move by the King to get the nobility on his side for an intended ‘annulment by decree’? Your decision!

So, by the time that **Parliament reconvened in January 1531,** Henry had acquired more fuel for his argument *and* had stepped up the pressure on the Pope to cooperate. It is unsurprising that Convocation was becoming increasingly nervous of Henry’s intentions. The second sitting of ‘the reformation parliament’ could be categorised as **more formal attacks on the church.**

On 5th January 1531, the Pope delayed a final pronouncement for a further year. In the meantime, he ordered Henry to separate from Anne, instructed that Henry was not free to re-marry and that any children born outside of his marriage to Katherine would be illegitimate.

Henry asked Convocation for a grant or subsidy of £118,000 subsidy to 'protect the realm' (basically, Henry had spent all his money fighting France in the 1520s and needed cash). In return, he offered the clergy a general pardon for the ‘crime’ of praemunire with which they had been charged. When it was pointed out that the crime of praemunire meant that all clerical property could be forfeit to the crown, the clergy agreed to pay up! The clergy did manage to negotiate the payment of this subsidy over 5 years, rather than immediately as Henry originally demanded. However, the significant element was not really the money but the **prologue to the Subsidy Bill,** which stated that the clergy must submit to Henry as the *“sole protector and Supreme Head of the English Church and clergy”.* Eventually, the clergy, led by Bishop Fisher, forced through a compromise by inserting the words “*in so far as the law of Christ allows*”. This negated Henry's claims to supremacy, but Henry’s claim was still clear. It could be argued that the lesson that Henry learned from the clergy's submission to this act was that there would be little resistance if further demands were made. However, that Henry agreed to clerical amendments to the bill may suggest he was hesitant at this point to force his hand, either for fear of opposition, or because he still didn’t anticipate total schism.

Parliament signed a bill ratifying the clerical subsidy and pardon, interestingly extending the pardon to clergymen *denying* papal supremacy! Some historians have seen this as evidence that Parliament was supportive of schism, even if Henry wasn’t yet entertaining the idea seriously. **Parliament was again prorogued on 31 March 1531, reconvening in January 1532.**

1532 was a turning point. By 1532 Henry and Anne were living openly together at Greenwich in defiance of the Pope’s order. Cromwell, appointed to the Privy Council in 1530[[67]](#footnote-67), had developed as an excellent parliamentary manager and was rapidly filling the void left by Wolsey as Henry’s chief minister. Under Cromwell, the legislation of this third sitting of Parliament is the legislation which actually created and consolidated the break with Rome.

On March 18th, under Cromwell’s guidance[[68]](#footnote-68), the House of Commons presented the King with the **Supplication against the Ordinaries** (bishops); a strongly worded attack on many aspects of the Church, Canon Law and the independence of Convocation. Henry presented this to the clergy and demanded a formal apology for their ‘abuses’. Henry’s anger at the clergy wasn’t without foundation. On 24 February 1532 Archbishop Warham had issued a formal protest against all parliamentary attempts to erode the authority of the Pope and was charged with praemunire[[69]](#footnote-69). The Franciscan Friar, William Peto, then preached a sermon to Henry on Easter Sunday (31 March) 1532 warning that if Henry continued on his current path, the dogs would lick his blood as they had licked the blood of Ahab![[70]](#footnote-70) Nevertheless, such clerical opposition was very limited. The [May 1532] **Submission of the Clergy**, a formal apology for all abuses, was signed by all Bishops[[71]](#footnote-71) including Warham and those sitting in the House of Lords. By signing this apology, the clergy were accepting that this list of abuses was valid. John Guy argues that the orchestration of this complaint and its apology reflects Cromwell's brilliance as a manipulator of Parliament: *“Cromwell resurrected the Commons' anticlerical grievances of 1529… He brilliantly exploited the emotions of MPs to engineer, on 15 May 1532, the formal submission of the clergy to Henry VIII..[the submission stated that] Convocation was not to assemble without the king's permission; no new canons were to be enacted without royal assent; existing ones were to be vetted by a royal commission; and those prejudicial to royal prerogative were to be annulled....Cromwell had brought off a coup.”*

**RYRIE** argues that the 1532 submission of the clergy is the key legislation of this year, as it marks a turning point from the issue of annulment to the issue of supremacy, because it establishes clerical acceptance of parliamentary authority over religion. You may well consider that it marks the turning point from annulment to supremacy, but I wouldn’t be so sure that it establishes the principle of *parliamentary* authority over the church. Henry, assisted by his apologists (including Bishop Gardiner), argued that if royal supremacy existed by divine law its authority *preceded* and *superceded* that of Parliament. Henry was no revolutionary, and had no intention of devolving his power to the 'masses' in this way. Moreover, Henry was no Lutheran and, whilst he was prepared to take advantage of reformist anti-clerical sentiment in Parliament, he in no way intended to allow Lutheran sentiment to spread within England: papal authority would only ever be replaced by monarchical authority over the church; there would be no wider input into church policy.

**GW BERNARD** argues instead that the 1532 **Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates** was the ‘*the most important measure Henry put before Parliament in 1532’.* Annates (sometimes called St.Peter's Pence) were payments made to Rome of the first year's income from newly appointed bishops. This is an example of the kind of tax Wolsey may well have been sending to Rome. The Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates withheld annates from Rome but gave King the option of allowing them to continue *as a gift*. The act also stated that the Pope could not delay consecration of bishops or excommunicate Englishmen for withholding annates. Bernard claims that this was intended to pressure the Pope to grant the divorce. Henry was fully involved in this plan to blackmail the Pope, even attending parliament 3 times in person to exert enough pressure to ensure the bill passed. Bernard further argues that the only reason the bill became “conditional” was because this was the only way Henry could get the agreement of the bishops in the Lords and a ‘large minority’ in the Commons. The bill was thus seen, in **BERNARD’S** analysis, as a tool deliberately chosen by Henry to exert pressure on the Pope, and would have been more pressure yet if he hadn’t been forced to make it conditional. However, it could also be viewed that Henry was rather more unsure than Bernard suggests; he did back down in the face of clerical opposition, suggesting he was hesitantly testing the water rather than implementing a dynamic plan. Certainly, the annulment was not seen as an inevitable outcome at this juncture. In the summer of 1532, when Henry and Anne passed through Canterbury, **Elizabeth Barton** forced herself into his presence and said that Henry was ‘abominable in the sight of God’[[72]](#footnote-72). Neither open opposition, nor the risk of God’s wrath, was a matter Henry would have taken lightly. Domestic opposition was somewhat reduced by the death of Archbishop Warham on 22 August. Unsurprisingly, **Thomas Cranmer** received a letter dated 1 October 1532 advising him that he had been appointed the next **Archbishop of Canterbury**. Maybe this appointment was, in fact, the most significant development of 1532.

In October 1532, Henry and Anne visited France and **Francis received Anne** as if she were already Queen, which was something of a coup for Henry. This might seem odd, given Francis’ Catholicism, but Francis was more interested in politics than religion. His main concern was drawing England into alliance against the Emperor (Charles V). However, Henry’s priorities were more delicately balanced; he wanted an alliance with France, to split the Habsburg-Valois risk, but didn’t want to be so friendly with France that it would provoke war with Charles V. Therefore, clearly hoping for a Franco-Papal-English alliance against Charles, Francis even went so far as to broker a deal with the Pope to agree to the divorce; the meeting was planned for October 1533.

However, by early 1533, Francis’ intervention was irrelevant. Anne Boleyn told Henry that she was **pregnant** and she and Henry were married in a secret ceremony on 25 January. The resolution of 'the King's Great Matter' became critical, as Henry was convinced that the unborn child was the male heir he so desperately wanted and so he had to be born in wedlock.

Things had to move quickly. The **1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals** forbade people appealing to outside authorities (i.e the Pope) in matters originating in England.[[73]](#footnote-73). The King was reaffirming his supreme authority in all legal matters in England, including church matters. Surprisingly, opposition to this bill came from the Commons not the Lords. Many bishops had supported Henry to a degree thus far, possibly believing that supporting Henry’s increased *personal* authority would limit an increase in *Parliamentary* authority over the church. Many Lords supported the crown out of a concern for social stability, thus the House of Lords was fairly cooperative. Opposition in the Commons came mainly from Katherine's circle: Sir George Throckmorton, Sir William Essex and Sir John Gifford. Opposition came, too, from Thomas More's family circle: William Roper and William Daunce. This latter was particularly significant as Thomas More had been Lord Chancellor from the fall of Wolsey to his resignation in response to the Submission of the Clergy.

In the same year, the **Act in Restraint of Annates** made the 1532 conditional act no longer conditional. It could be argued that, even at this point, Henry was still hoping to pressurise the Pope into granting his annulment, validating his marriage to Anne after the fact. Indeed, he said this to Eustace Chapuys, the imperial ambassador. Maybe, Henry still wanted to avoid an actual break with Rome if possible.

In May 1533 Thomas Cranmer declared Henry's marriage to Katherine null and void on the basis that it was contrary to divine law. Later that same month he declared Henry's marriage to Anne legal, as Henry had been a bachelor at the time he married her. On 11 July 1533, Pope Clement VII drew up a bill for excommunicating Henry[[74]](#footnote-74), though it was never issued as Clement continued to hope for a resolution.

In September 1533 Anne gave birth to a daughter: Elizabeth. Imagine Henry’s disappointment that she wasn’t a boy! In December, Mary was told she would no longer be referred to as Princess and her household was disbanded[[75]](#footnote-75). In the same month, an order was passed ordering that the Pope must only be referred to as the ‘Bishop of Rome’, implying that the Pope had no more authority than any other Bishop within England. Little by little, the church in England was being separated from the Papal authority.

The break was cemented, in 1534, by the **Acts of Succession and Supremacy** and protected by the **Treason Act**, in force from January 1535. In the **Act of Succession** (1534), Mary was excluded from the succession, in favour of the offspring of Anne and Henry. Cromwell arranged for all nobles and bishops to swear an oath confirming their agreement to the succession. This was an extremely clever move. Most nobles would have considered the succession entirely a matter for the King. But the implications are enormous: by accepting that Anne’s children were the legitimate successors (inheritors of the throne), the nobles and bishops were basically accepting that the marriage to Anne *was* legitimate (as you had to be legitimate to inherit); by extension this was an agreement that the marriage to Katherine had been invalid; by accepting that marriage to Katherine was void and marriage to Anne legal – which the Pope still refused to accept – the nobles were basically agreeing to Henry’s right to over-rule papal authority.

It is probably this subtle implication that prompted Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher to refuse to take the oath. Fisher declared his willingness to swear to the succession but openly stated that other elements of the oath were against his conscience. More, too, declared on the 17th April his willingness to agree that Parliament could settle the succession. However, More was more evasive than Fisher. He wouldn’t explain *why* he wouldn’t swear the oath. More was a lawyer and was wary. He knew that, in law, silence has to be construed as *consent* not opposition. More was a particular thorn in Henry’s side, as he had been Chancellor of England until his resignation on 16 May 1532, so his loyalty to the King should have been absolute. There was a very real risk that More and Fisher could become a focal point for rallying opposition. Therefore, More and Fisher, along with Dr Nicholas Wilson (Henry’s former confessor), were arrested. Wilson surrendered and got his pardon but the other two remained in the Tower. Despite their high profile, More and Fisher were very much the exceptions and the oath encountered very little opposition and not even much reluctance. So through a subtly played sleight of hand, Cromwell had neatly secured the acceptance of the ruling elites to the supremacy itself.

Opposition was further discouraged by the hanging of the Maid of Kent and her ‘accomplices’ on 21st April 1534. She had been arrested in September 1533, notably after Henry had disproved her prophecies by surviving as King despite having married Anne Boleyn. She was interrogated (tortured) and confessed that she had feigned her trances and invented the religious visions. Barton hadn’t actually done anything more than *speak* against the King, so a standard trial for treason wouldn’t have held water. Henry couldn’t or wouldn’t risk an acquittal in a jury trial. Thus she was tried in private in Star Chamber. An act of attainder against Barton, Masters, Bocking and others was passed in January. Barton et al were ordered to read a public confession at St. Paul's Cross; an outdoor pulpit on the grounds of St. Paul's Cathedral which was frequently used for public announcements of various kinds, not unlike today's television news. This public confession was essential for proving her ‘guilt’ before the populace given that this hadn’t been proven in a standard trial by jury.

Thus it was only *after* making the consequences of opposition clear, and after also securing the tacit agreement of the ruling classes, through the oath to the act of succession, that the formal **Act of Supremacy** was proposed to Parliament. The Act of Supremacy made official Henry's status as Head of the Church in England. The purpose of actually writing the supremacy into law, rather than just allowing it to be accepted via the oath to the Act of Succession, was to make it *enforceable* by a **Treason Act,** which came into force January 1535. This new Treason act widened the definition of treason to include any denial of the King's supremacy *by words* as well as deeds –you can see how the case of Barton made this necessary.

You might be thinking at this point that Thomas More had been a sensible fellow to avoid explaining his opposition to the oath to the act of succession. Nevertheless, after a trial during which Richard Rich allegedly perjured himself[[76]](#footnote-76) to implicate More, More did at last openly declared his loyalty to Papal authority and duly went to the scaffold on 6th of July 1535. Fisher had already been executed on the 22nd of June. **Guy** argues that *“few people realised the significance of the distinction between royal and papal supremacy before the martyrdoms of More, Fisher and the London Carthusians”.* He is suggesting that the transfer of power created by the Act of Supremacy had gone largely unnoticed by most people and this is probably true; it would have had no impact at all on daily life and manner of worship, especially in areas remote from London. However, if Guy is correct in arguing that More’s case had raised the profile of this issue, then the lack of opposition must imply that most people supported Henry’s supremacy or, at least, didn’t think it was an issue worth dying for.

However, it is also important to recognize the significance of Parliamentary involvement in the break with Rome. Henry could, of course, have handled the whole break without Parliament, declaring his supremacy by royal decree. However, **GW BERNARD** argues that the reason for the Reformation statutes was six fold:

1 – to give the King the annulment he wanted and needed

2 – to prevent effective opposition (appeals to Rome)

3 – propaganda (for example, the prologue to the Act in Restraint of Appeals stated that “*Several old and true histories [the Collectanea] declare that this realm of England is an independent Empire governed by one supreme head and king.”* Writing laws was a way of setting new policy within a historic context, as a way of justifying it, and was also a way of making the process seem appropriately legal and legitimate)

4 – to flush out potential opposition (the requirement to take an oath to the Act of Succession would reveal those who did not support the King)

5 – (following on from 4) – to then punish those who would not conform (via the Treason act)

6 – to allow the King to claim that his policies had been freely supported by the political nation (by passing statute Parliament was essentially giving consent).

This last certainly may help explain why such high profile martyrdoms as More and Fisher failed to rouse the population in opposition.

Once the supremacy was established, Henry put it to work. As Head of the Church, Henry didn’t have control of spiritual matters, as he wasn’t a cleric (so he couldn’t forgive sins, for example). But he did have control of all ‘physical’ or ‘administrative’ aspects of the church: clerical appointments, collection of church taxes, land. He immediately turned this to his advantage. In 1534, the **Act for the Submission of the Clergy** put into law the surrender of 1532; the **Dispensations Act** stopped all remaining payments to Rome, and ensured that all licenses and dispensations from canon law were to be granted by English authority (Archbishop of Canterbury) rather than by Rome; the **Act of First Fruits and Tenths** transferred the payment of old papal tithes to the Crown.

It was probably fortuitous for Henry that, on 25 Sept 1534, Clement VII died without excommunicating Henry VIII, and Paul III replaced him as Pope. Nevertheless, the threat was there and papal excommunication could very easily result in a Catholic crusade. As a result, the 1530s are a period where foreign policy was necessarily defensive. The fact that Henry wasn’t *actually* excommunicated until 1538 and that the crusade never *actually* materialised doesn’t mean it wasn’t a real fear in 1534. Fortunately, Charles V and Francis I continued to be occupied with war between them. Nevertheless, Henry was still tentatively trying to court the League of Schmalkalden as a safety net. These negotiations had to proceed carefully: the price of military support from the **Schmalkaldic league** was English adoption of Lutheran doctrine. Any such moves towards Lutheranism would be distasteful to Henry who, as early as May 1531, had said that he rejoiced at the Lutheran princes’ zeal for reform, but warned them against looking for change in religion in England. Moreover, moves in a Lutheran direction would also run the risk of pushing the Pope into actually calling for the international Catholic crusade that Henry feared. So, Henry had to be cautious.

Underlying concern about Catholic opposition may have been at the root of the dissolution of the monasteries. In general political terms, anyone accused of a crime and in fear for their life could seek **sanctuary** in a monastery. The person could stay for up to 40 days, then they had either to obtain the King’s pardon, stand trial, or admit their guilt, forfeiting everything they owned and leaving the country forever - or until the king said they could come back. Alternatively, they could repent their sins and join the monastic order, which gave them protection provided they didn’t leave. People given sanctuary had to stay in the church - they were not allowed more than 50 paces away from the door. In reality, sanctuary was rarely sought. Nevertheless, the fact that the church could offer refuge from civil law was evidence of its continuing independence from the government of England. More significantly still, monks and nuns, although ultimately under papal authority, were more immediately obedient to the head of their order; in either case, not Henry. This, Guy believes, was too dangerous after the Act of Supremacy: at best, monasteries were a reminder of an external clerical authority in England; at worst, monasteries loyal to heads of order in Spain and France were a **focal point for dissent** or even rebellion. This was particularly dangerous given that both France and Spain remained loyal to the Pope, had mighty armies, and were ruled by Kings who now considered Henry a heretic. Should Henry be excommunicated, there was a serious risk that these Catholic powers could unite against him and use the monasteries to stir up domestic support for an invasion. The ordinary clergy didn’t pose such a threat, of course. Cranmer was already in place of course as Archbishop of Canterbury, the leading cleric of England. In 1535 Cromwell had Hugh Latimer, Edward Foxe and Nicholas Shaxton appointed bishops. With such reformist leadership of the clergy there was unlikely to be opposition to Henry’s supremacy or to the reforms of the 1530s. Not so for the monastic orders. The very committed and truly ascetic Carthusians, the Bridgettine nuns at Syon (near Richmond) and the Observant Franciscans had provided the most stubborn resistance to the supremacy, preaching against the annulment and Boleyn marriage. There was always a danger that they would continue to instigate opposition to the supremacy. In an attempt to neutralise this threat, all monks were required to swear a number of oaths: the statutory oath to the Act of Succession in 1534, a non-statutory oath denying papal jurisdiction and an oath accepting the Royal Supremacy in 1535. By the end of 1535, most monks had taken these oaths, thereby explicitly denying papal authority and accepting the supremacy of the King.[[77]](#footnote-77) These oaths did much to reduce opposition to dissolution, as the monks had already accepted Henry’s right to govern the church as he saw fit. The Treason Act provided the means to deal with those who refused, further reducing the number of those willing to defy Henry. In April 1535 the government arrested three Carthusian priors: John Houghton, Augustine Webster and Robert Laurence. On the scaffold, each was given the opportunity to acknowledge Henry’s supremacy but all refused. Along with them died Richard Reynolds, the father of Syon. Three Charterhouse monks met the same fate in May and three more Carthusians were tried and executed in June. They were hanged, drawn and quartered, as was usual for traitors. These actions cowed all the Carthusian houses except the main house in London which continued to withhold full obedience to Henry. In 1537 the King demanded that those who had sworn to the Supremacy in May 1537 surrender the house to the King; the others who continued to stand out in opposition were taken to Newgate prison and left to starve to death. This brutal treatment of the Carthusians was a blot on the record of Henry and Cromwell. The Carthusians were the most uncorrupt and angelic of monks. They believed that as ascetics[[78]](#footnote-78) they had fully left the world and so expected to be left alone. And indeed, these monks were so secluded from the world that they were hardly going to influence anyone else by their objections to the Supremacy; they would have remained personal views. Nevertheless there was always a danger that executed monks would become martyrs – far better if they didn’t exist!

The over-riding motive, as traditional, Catholic (top-down) historians have argued, was financial gain. There is a broad agreement amongst historians that this was probably the case, but I would suggest that this financial grasp was based on *need* rather than *greed*. A King who had spent his inheritance on war with France in the 1520s and who potentially needed to defend his country against Catholic powers hostile to the supremacy needed a ready source of revenue and the wealthy English monastic system provided just that. In 1509, when Henry became King, the Catholic Church possessed a third of the country’s land, and most of this was owned by monasteries. There was clearly an advantage for the King in accessing this land, given the expectation that a King of this period would ‘live of his own’[[79]](#footnote-79) and also would be generous with patronage[[80]](#footnote-80) (often in the form of land). There were somewhere between 10000 and 15000 monks and nuns and some 850 religious houses in England and Wales, although these numbers had been falling steadily. These houses fell into 2 broad categories: ‘open’ and ‘closed’ monasteries. The open monasteries tended to be small institutions in ‘urban’ (by Tudor standards) areas. Clerics from open monasteries worked with the local community, offering board and lodging to pilgrims and often tending the sick, as the only ‘hospital’ facilities in the area. They were not wealthy institutions; they didn’t own much land and they rarely had wealthy patrons[[81]](#footnote-81), because they were surrounded more by gentry and labourers than wealthy nobility. Education was yet another duty of these monasteries. Some orders, such as the Benedictine monks, continue with this traditional calling today. The main role of open monasteries was dispensing alms (charity) to the poor. Henry VIII’s Poor Law of 1535 made charity for the poor the responsibility of local Justices of the Peace, so theoretically such responsibility then shifted to the state. You *could* argue that, as a result of the Poor Law, Henry believed these open monasteries were outdated and closing them was streamlining the system. You might also consider Elton’s claim that Cromwell was a ‘commonwealth man’ and sought to implement legislation that would positively affect the lives of the King’s subjects: in addition to the Poor Law, Cromwell proposed a further ambitious scheme for poor relief in 1536. It was based on the idea that the able-bodied should be employed on public projects (such as road and bridge building), while the infirm were supported from charitable contributions. This was very innovative. Unfortunately, Cromwell wanted to finance the scheme with an income tax, so Parliament rejected it[[82]](#footnote-82). It is most likely that the 1535 Poor Law was initiated simply because Henry (or Cromwell) intended to destroy the monasteries and so needed an alternative to monastic alms for the poor urban populations supported by these open monasteries. In contrast, closed monasteries tended to be huge abbeys in rural areas. Monks in closed monasteries rarely interacted with the local community. They carried out such tasks as copying manuscripts for the nobility/intelligentsia, a task which was becoming less necessary given the introduction of the printing press in the 15th century. The production of vestments and other ceremonial garb was often the responsibility of nuns. But the principle role for monks in closed monasteries was contemplation and prayer for souls in purgatory, sometimes in silence. As you know, reformists had begun to challenge this role of monasteries: because most (Lutheran) reformers believed that an individual’s salvation depended on his/her *personal* relationship with God, there was no need for intercessionary prayer by a third party to ‘help’ your soul get to heaven. Some reformers also doubted the very existence of purgatory, as it isn’t mentioned in the bible, which again precluded the need for intercessionary prayer.[[83]](#footnote-83) Even humanists such as Erasmus had attacked the *otium* (the idea of removing yourself from the world) and advocated *negotium* (involving oneself actively in the world to make it better). Though, of course, humanist scholars were not denying the validity of prayer and actively supported the (negotium) work of open monasteries. The closed monasteries were fundamental to the Catholic tradition and to Catholic theology. As a result, local nobility gave generously to these institutions: in life, paying for the foundation or maintenance of monastic buildings in return for forgiveness for sins (indulgences); in death, bequests for masses for their soul in purgatory. These monasteries became very wealthy. Such ‘payment’ for the forgiveness of sins was another reason for Luther’s animosity to monasteries: salvation should not be a financial transaction! A further (principle) source of income of closed monasteries was monastic lands. The church acted like any other landlord of the period. They rented most of their land out to tenant farmers, who had to pay rent and work on the monastery’s demesne[[84]](#footnote-84) land in return. This feudal arrangement was not only financially beneficial, but also bound those living on the land to their landlord. Moreover, the monasteries made money from tithes (known as spiritualities) from parishes appropriated[[85]](#footnote-85) to the monastery. Butley Priory in Suffolk, for instance, was an average-sized house, with an income of £210 from rents, £32 from the demesne and £108 from spiritualities (tithes). At the dissolution, Butley had 84 lay officials and servants to help farm the demesne land and look after the 12 canons (monks). You can see why **Lockyer and O'Sullivan** argue that “o*n the whole the monks were well off, and led a comfortable and pampered existence, cocooned by lay administrators and domestic servants”.* Heads of monasteries (called abbots or priors) were particularly well off, and usually maintained a separate household, and a standard of life considerably above the rest.

This did, of course, lead to allegations of corruption. Indeed, Wolsey had found evidence of such in 1518. For example, at the Cistercian Abbey of Hailes, the commissioners discovered that a vial allegedly containing the blood of Christ was actually honey and saffron, though the pilgrims paying money for access to the relic wouldn’t know that. Moreover, a report on a Monastery in Peterborough (1518) found that: *“The prior is frequently drunk... The brothers of the monastery, especially the older ones, play dice and other games for money. The lord abbot does not choose studious brothers but looks for lazy ones.. He sells wood and has kept the money for himself... He had in his chamber a certain maiden named Joan Turner... The monastery has no beds and other things for receiving guests.”* Similarly, a report by Richard Layton (1518): *The Bishop “... persuaded one of his lay brethren, a smith, to have made a key for the door, to have in the night-time received in wenches for him and his fellow and especially a wife of Uxbridge... he was desirous to have had her conveyed in to him. The said Bishop also persuaded a nun, to whom he was confessor, to submit her body to his pleasure, and thus he persuaded her in confession, making her believe that whensoever and as oft as they should meddle together, if she were immediately after confessed by him, and took of him absolution, she should be clear forgiven of God...”*

Such corruption was the target of criticism by reformers such as Tyndale and Fish, not just Lutherans. Traditional Protestant (bottom-up) historians have argued that corruption was so widespread that the monastic system was unpopular and therefore deserving of dissolution. In Germany there had actually been a wave of public anti-monastic violence and Luther had called for monasteries to be dissolved and the money spent on education (though much of the money found its way into the pockets of the German princes). However, Dickens argues that there was no such animosity towards the monasteries in England, only antipathy (lack of interest). Remember, of course, that lots of abbots (and abbesses) were actually members of the nobility, so wealthy lifestyles weren’t necessarily surprising or even corrupt, by the standards of the time. Moreover, given that the greatest wealth was concentrated in the closed monasteries, most people wouldn’t have been aware of any corruption which may have existed there. Nevertheless, any King would wish to avoid the kind of random unrest of anti-monastic riots; especially a King wishing to maintain stability after an unprecedented schism from Rome.

Whatever the motives, the process of dissolution[[86]](#footnote-86) began as soon as Cromwell was appointed **vicegerent in spirituals** in January 1535, with the *specific* task of conducting visitations into the monasteries. Royal Commissioners were appointed in January 1535 to carry out an assessment of religious income. This record is known as the **Valor Ecclesiasticus**[[87]](#footnote-87). The men dispatched were Cromwell’s men, who took only six months to submit for Cromwell's scrutiny an accurate and detailed tax-book, suggesting that the church’s income was x10 that of the King.

It is interesting that the Valor Ecclesiasticus was the first step in the process. Admittedly, the Valor Ecclesiasticus was Henry’s right: the Act of First Fruit and Tenths 1534) granted the crown the right to tax the church to the sum of 10% (one tenth!) of its annual income, so an accurate valuation was necessary. However, the Act of Supremacy gave Henry the power, and arguably the obligation, to carry out visitations (inspections) of any religious establishment at any time, to make sure they were carrying out their duties properly. Historically, this right belonged to the heads of religious orders. As a result, visitations were infrequent, as most heads of orders lived abroad. This may explain why Wolsey took responsibility in this area during his legateship. Yet if Henry’s intent was religious reform, it would be reasonable to expect that the visitations would be conducted before an audit of wealth.

Interestingly, in the summer of 1535, **preachers** and **railers** were sent out to deliver sermons from the pulpits of the churches on three themes:

* The [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monk) and [nuns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nun) in the monasteries were called sinful "[hypocrites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypocrite)", "[sorcerers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magician_(paranormal))" and "idle drones", who were living lives of luxury and engaging in every kind of sin;
* Those monks and nuns were living off the working people and giving nothing back, being a serious drain on England's economy.
* If the King received all the property of the monasteries, he would never again need taxes from the people. (what a great incentive for the people!)

The use of railers and preachers suggests that Henry/Cromwell actually had a long-term, strategic plan for closing the monasteries and were ‘softening’ the public to accept it by promising that the proceeds would benefit the populace. Wolsey had set a precedent, in 1529, when he dissolved 29 smaller religious houses to pay for grammar schools and a new college at Oxford[[88]](#footnote-88). The lack of opposition to the complete destruction of England’s monastic system suggests that such incentives may have found their mark, or that Dickens’ claim of English antipathy towards monasticism is valid.

To coincide with the preachers and the railers, **visitations** also began in the summer of 1535. Cromwell’s appointed commissioners included; **Thomas Leigh** and **John ap Rice,** doctors of the University of Cambridge, along with the priests **John London and Richard Layton**, who had conducted visitations for Wolsey**.** They conducted a whistle-stop tour of religious houses, carrying with them two documents: a long **questionnaire** for each monk or nun, to find out their opinion of the succession and a set of **injunctions** (instructions) to be issued at the end of the visitations.

The **Injunctions** were as follows:

* Monks should not leave the monasteries.
* Women should be forbidden from entering the monasteries, except by permission of the King or the King’s representative.
* The abbot should send one or two monks to university, so they could return home and teach their brothers about the word of God.
* Monasteries should not show any relics for money
* Monks must swear to the Act of Succession.

The result of the visitations was a detailed report listing evidence of **corruption** and scandalous immorality in England's monasteries. For example, Richard Layton wrote to [Cromwell](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/ThomasCromwell(1EEssex).htm) from Monk Farleign, Wiltshire: *'I send you the Vincula of S. Petrus [fetters or girdle of S. Peter] which women put about them at the time of their delivery.  Ye shall also receive a great comb called Mary Magdalen's comb, S. Dorothy's comb, S. Margaret’s comb. They [the monks] cannot tell how they came by them, nor have anything to show in writing [that] they be relics”.* [Cromwell](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/ThomasCromwell(1EEssex).htm)'s agent, John Bartelot "*found the prior of the Crossed Friars in London at that time being in bed with his whore, both naked..."*

If Henry had any queries over the validity of these findings, he was prepared to let Cromwell take the lead. This may have been for political or financial gain, or because he had other pressing domestic concerns. The death of Katherine of Aragon in January 1536 meant that, as a widower, Henry could now be legitimately married to whoever he wanted. However, Henry appears to have become increasingly intolerant of Anne, whether because she was manipulative (depending on how influenced you think Henry was by other individuals /factions) or because she, too, had failed to provide him with a son. In the same month as Katherine died, Anne miscarried a deformed foetus. Cromwell, a reformer long allied with the Boleyn faction, now moved into opposition to Anne, accusing her of adultery with several courtiers and of incest with her brother, Lord Rochford. It didn't take much to persuade Henry that the deformed foetus was not his. The love affair that had preoccupied Henry since 1525 was over.

The full report on the monasteries was passed to Parliament when it met on 4 Feb **1536**. Very swiftly, Parliament passed the **Act for the Dissolution of the Smaller Monasteries**. All religious **houses with less than £200pa income** were closed, about 285. As Eltonpoints out, this doesn’t really seem to be a decision based on corruption. Could it really be the case that the smallest, poorest, most socially aware monasteries were the most corrupt? Or, perish the cynical thought; did Cromwell simply start with those who were likely to offer least resistance?

Cromwell himself did quite well out of dissolution. Not only did he accept 'gifts' from various monasteries in return for their appeals to be exempt from the 1536 closures, he also persuaded at least 30 religious houses to grant him an annual payment. This is a letter from an Abbot (Abbey unknown) to Cromwell, in response to his favourable response to their appeal for exemption from the 1536 Act that Closed the Smaller Monasteries: *“Know that we, the aforesaid Abbot, hath given to Thomas Cromwell esquire, for his good and gratuitous counsel and aid, and for his goodwill already shown to us and to be shown, an annual rent or annuity of 26 shillings and 8 pence sterling…the abovementioned Thomas Cromwell to have, hold and receive the aforesaid annual rent…during his lifetime….”* You will note that this annual payment would continue even after any dissolution. The act of suppression helpfully included the clause “T*he King will pay the debts of the suppressed monasteries...”* So, whilst temporarily saved, the abbey paid Cromwell and, when later closed, the king took on the debt. Moreover, when Reading abbey was dissolved, the town of Reading reverted to the Crown after over four centuries of monastic rule and Cromwell was appointed steward of the borough. What a happy coincidence when serving the King and serving oneself coincided!

Despite the fact that the smaller, open monasteries were not particularly wealthy, a new financial body, the **Court[[89]](#footnote-89) of Augmentations**, was established under Richard Rich in 1536. The court had its own chancellor, treasurer, lawyers, receivers and auditors to handle the property and income from the dissolved monasteries. Elton has suggested that this is evidence of Cromwell’s revolutionary establishment of **bureaucratic control of finance.** Before Cromwell, the King’s finances were administered within his household, within the (bed)Chamber. This was ad hoc and relied on the King’s personal management. Yet, by 1542, there were six distinct financial departments:

Four new institutions:

1. 1536 Court of Augmentations (handling the proceeds of dissolution)
2. 1540 Court of First Fruit and Tenths (redirection of clerical tax)
3. 1540 Court of Wards (wardships)
4. 1542 Court of General Surveyors (this dealt with established crown lands –other than the Lancaster estates).

In addition to the two which already existed, the roles of which were clarified by Cromwell:

1. The Exchequer Court - administered customs, fines and taxes.
2. The Court of the Duchy of Lancaster – which administered Henry’s Lancaster estates.

Each court was independent and had its own *formal* systems of revenue collection: income was from specific sources and expenditure was audited. **ELTON** suggests this bureaucratization is modern, and down to Cromwell. However, the Exchequer had existed outside household control since the 12th century and so arguably simply grew in importance during the 1530s as sources and quantities of income (temporarily) increased as a result of the Reformation. Moreover, Henry *VII* had already made the transition from personal auditing to the establishment of the General Surveyors led by Robert Southwell. This was the direct pre-cursor of Henry VIII’s *Court* of General Surveyors. Furthermore, Cromwell built up his own roles as Keeper of the Jewels, Clerk of the Hanaper and Chancellor of the Exchequer to build up a spending department in the jewel house *under his own control* (i.e. not audited formally as part of this new bureaucracy). Thus you could argue that his reform of *other* areas was a way of minimizing the competition: control everyone else whilst maintaining independence himself! This is hardly revolutionary or modern administrative strategy!

This is not to argue that Cromwell failed to innovate as regards *sources* of income. As **GUY** acknowledges, the ability to tax efficiently is a valid benchmark of the strength of a modern political regime. The Subsidy Acts of 1534 and 1540, **ELTON** argues, introduced a revolutionary idea in taxation, *“that taxation could be demanded to support the government in general, not only the extraordinary expenses incurred through war”.* However, Cromwell was simply developing *Wolsey’s* idea of a subsidy.

Equally, if we define revolution as *permanent* change, Cromwell’s financial changes were not revolutionary: in 1547 the Court of Augmentations absorbed the Court of General Surveyors and the Court of First Fruit and Tenths; in 1554 (Mary) the Court of Augmentations was dissolved and control of finance returned to the Lord Treasurer in the Exchequer, although the Court of Wards and the Duchy of Lancaster retained their independence. This is further evidence that Cromwell's reforms were not the establishment of revolutionary new administrative procedures, but just one stage in a process of continuous change throughout the Tudor period. Thus it is possible to see the changes in financial administration in the 1530s as simply the temporary consequences of the Reformation and, in that case, one could argue that it wasn’t Cromwell but the Reformation that was revolutionary.

Whatever your stance on **ELTON’S** argument, the establishment of a Court of Augmentations at the point at which only the smaller monasteries had been dissolved could suggest there were bigger plans already in mind. However, the 1536 act offered the religious in the smaller houses the alternative of quitting the monastic life or of moving to one of the great monasteries. Indeed, the preamble to the act actually argued that it was an attempt to strengthen the greater monasteries, whose work was praised. Dissolution *could* therefore be seen simply as a continuation of Wolsey's early work. This argument could also be supported by the fact that Henry founded new Cathedral grammar schools at Canterbury, Carlisle, Ely, Bristol and Chester, and established Christ Church (Oxford) and Trinity College (Cambridge) with the money from dissolution –but a lot more went into his own pocket, as it did Wolsey’s. Moreover, no sooner had the king obtained possession of these houses under the money value of 200 pounds a year, than he commenced to *re-found* some "in perpetuity" (permanently). In this way no fewer than *fifty-two* religious houses in various parts of England were re-established. This might suggest that Henry was genuinely supportive of the monastic life and was attempting nothing more than reform. However, the cost of re-founding was considerable, not just to the religious themselves, but to their friends - nobles or gentry who loaned money to pay for the re-founding. The sums paid to the King for being re-founded "in perpetuity" (permanently), varied considerably. As a rule they represented about three times the annual revenue of the house. St. Mary's, Winchester was charged 333 pounds 6s. 8d. for leave to continue and, even then, was re-established with the loss of some of its richest possessions. Thus re-founding was even more profitable to the King than dissolution! This may actually lend weight to the argument that there was a long-term plan to harvest as much money as possible from the monastic system. Especially as, within a few years, these monasteries were again dissolved, often before they had been able to repay the sums borrowed.

**Anne Boleyn was executed** on 19 May, along with George Boleyn (Lord Rochford, her brother), the musician Mark Smeaton, and three gentlemen of the privy chamber: Francis Weston, Henry Norris (Henry VIII’s groom of the stool) and William Brereton[[90]](#footnote-90). Cranmer wept, but managed to find it in his Henry-serving soul to declare Anne’s marriage to Henry invalid….on the grounds of Henry’s previous relationship with Anne’s sister. What a nerve: truth is stranger than fiction eh! Henry **married Jane Seymour** 11 days later on 30 May and it is unsurprising that a further **Act of Succession** was passed in July, giving rights of succession to children of Henry's marriage to Jane Seymour.  Elizabeth was demoted to the same status as Mary. Neither daughter was to be called princess but “the King's daughter, Lady Mary” and “the King's daughter, Lady Elizabeth”. The loose ends of the supremacy were then finally tied up in the **Act Extinguishing the Authority of the Bishop of Rome[[91]](#footnote-91)**.

The fact that Cromwell survived the fall of Anne, as he had survived the fall of her earlier patron, Wolsey, is testament to his political abilities. The Aragonese faction who sought to destroy Anne also wanted to destroy Cromwell. But Cromwell sidestepped the crisis enveloping the Boleyns by offering the Aragonese faction his support. Once the crisis was over, with his head still on his shoulders, he maximized Henry’s general paranoia about conspiracies at court by correctly accusing the Aragonese faction of seeking to restore Mary to the succession. Starkey argues “they were saved from the block only by Mary doing what she had hitherto steadfastly refused to do and recognizing her own bastardy. But the salvation was only temporary and Cromwell picked them off at leisure in 1538-9.”[[92]](#footnote-92)

Cromwell was rewarded by Henry by being appointed Lord Privy Seal[[93]](#footnote-93). His rapid action had outmanoeuvred all his enemies and certainly consolidated his position as Henry’s primary advisor. The fall of the reformist Boleyn faction could have signaled the end of reformist policy in England. However, in July (busy month!), the **Ten Articles** were published.

The Ten Articles were a vague doctrinal statement, loosely based on the Lutheran Wittenberg articles, adopted by the German princes as their official statement of belief. However, where the Wittenberg Articles were clear and explicit, the Ten Articles were fairly vague, and did not in fact establish a protestant theology along Lutheran lines in England. The articles referred to just three sacraments - baptism, penance and the Eucharist - rather than the usual seven of Catholic belief. This was radical, but also confusing: what had happened to the 'missing' four sacraments of confirmation, ordination, marriage and last rites? The Ten Articles didn’t clearly deny that these four rites had any sacramental status, it just missed them out without comment, leaving their status uncertain.[[94]](#footnote-94) You could consider this vagueness a deliberate attempt to promote unity. Both traditional Catholics and the reformists Henry needed to court in order to protect the supremacy could feel their beliefs were accommodated.

Alternatively, it could be, as **RORY MCENTEGART** suggests, purely Cromwell’s vision for the English church. However, the extent to which Cromwell was instrumental in the creation of the Ten Articles is uncertain: they were published by Convocation, but may have been motivated by Cromwell as vicegerent. And/or they may have been shepherded through Convocation by Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury since 1533 and a genuine reformist. Whether initiated or simply rubber stamped by Convocation, you can see clearly how Henry’s appointment of reformists to senior positions in order to secure his supremacy had an impact on the direction of the church post break.

The Ten Articles were not backed by Parliament, which could again be seen as evidence that they were just Cromwell’s policy, but I would argue Cromwell wouldn’t risk angering the King. Rather, ‘neglecting’ to make the Ten Articles statute was Henry hedging his bets. If he were trying to court the alliance of the Lutheran princes of Germany, the Ten Articles might suggest to the **Schmalkaldic League** that England was not entirely averse to Lutheran ideas. On the other hand, because they weren’t backed by Parliament, they could always be denied or amended if the Pope, France or Spain became too hostile. Laws made in Parliament can only be amended by Parliament. Because the Ten Articles were a statement published outside Parliament it was possible, later, for Henry to claim they were just the work of Cromwell and also to amend them without having to go back to (somewhat reformist) Parliament for approval.

In the absence of Parliamentary backing, the Ten Articles were enforced by Cromwell's **Injunctions**. These took a *moderate* stand against images in churches and against pilgrimages, and also banned some holy days and saints' days. The issue of transubstantiation[[95]](#footnote-95) was not specifically denied, and so the official religion of England did not directly attack the central tenets of Catholic faith. However, emphasis *was* laid upon the value of education, of the study of the bible in English, and on the merits of the simple Christian life, which was a watered down version of Luther’s ‘justification by faith[[96]](#footnote-96)’. It was a *tentative* move in an evangelical direction. Pendrill argues that Cromwell's injunctions did much more than either the Ten Articles or the later Bishop's book to affect the way people actually worshipped, by insisting on access to a bible in English. However, the injunctions were only a qualified success; many parishes continued traditional practices, and also continued to use their existing bibles, owing to considerations of cost and limited availability of an English bible.

Nevertheless, however vaguely the Ten Articles and the Injunctions had been phrased, and however carefully the railers had preached against the monasteries, even tentative moves in a Lutheran direction were too much for the conservative north of England. As a result, the north of England revolted[[97]](#footnote-97) in three risings between October 1536 and February 1537.

1. Lincolnshire (1-18 Oct 1536)
2. Yorkshire (Oct-Dec 1536)
3. Cumberland (Jan/Feb 1537)

It is the Yorkshire rising which is the **Pilgrimage of Grace** – the only rising where the rebels styled themselves as pilgrims – but the three are inextricably linked: the Yorkshire rising was born out of the failure of the Lincolnshire rising, and the Cumberland rising was born out of frustration with Henry’s failure to keep the promises made to the Yorkshire rebels.

In **Lincolnshire**, food prices had been rising as a result of **poor harvests**, so there was a general mood of unrest and dissatisfaction. Within this context, the smaller monasteries were closed in 1536. **Rumours** then circulated that parish churches would be the next target for closure. The laity (ordinary people) traditionally invested heavily in their parish churches: the villagers of Louth had helped to pay for the spire on the church only 20 years before. Government seizure of the church would be confiscating the commoners’ own, hard-earned investment, not just the accumulated wealth of monasteries and abbeys. Villagers had also had heard about the **royal injunctions**, which abolished all holy days (holidays) falling in harvest time.

On 1 October 1536 Cromwell’s commissioner, **Heneage**, arrived to ‘visit’ the parish church and take an inventory of church property. (These inventories were a continuation of Henry’s investigation into the wealth of the church under the Act of First Fruit and Tenths.) A shoemaker named **Nicholas Melton** had the keys to the church and refused Heneage entry. A force of **10,000 men** began to congregate.

Leadership of the rebellion soon passed to the **gentry, priests and even armed monks** who joined the rebels. You could argue that gentry involvement was an attempt to control the rebels. Most gentry were JPs, charged with keeping the peace: an unruly mob could not be allowed to muster unchecked. **SJ GUNN** suggests this need to maintain a semblance of order was what happened in Lincolnshire and also later in Yorkshire. You could alternatively argue that the gentry were taking advantage of popular unrest to pursue their own agenda, as it is unlikely that ordinary peasants would have cared about some of **grievances** the rebels listed and sent to the King:

1. Criticism of Cromwell’s peacetime taxation[[98]](#footnote-98)
2. Criticism of the dissolution of monasteries
3. Demand for dismissal of Cromwell/Cranmer
4. Demand for the repeal of the Statute of Uses[[99]](#footnote-99)
5. Demand for the reinstatement of Lady Mary.

For the rebels to have any chance of success, they needed someone at court to try to influence the King in favour of the rebels’ demands. It was hoped that **Lord Hussey** would fulfill this role. Hussey had been Mary’s Chamberlain[[100]](#footnote-100) and was a member of the **Aragonese ‘faction’** at court. It might have seemed like the perfect moment to have Mary reinstated, given that Elizabeth had been demoted in the second Act of Succession. However, Hussey received specific orders from Henry’s general, the Earl of Shrewsbury, to join him at Nottingham to help lead the King’s forces against the rebels. Refusal would have been treason, so Hussey did as was told. This was either good luck or good judgment on the part of the King, as sending Hussey from court to lead the army against the rebels meant he couldn’t be at court representing the rebels’ demands to the King. This undermined the rebellion’s chance of success.

The King repudiated (rejected) all grievances and **Henry refused to negotiate** with the rebels. By 10 October, the Duke of Suffolk’s army was only 40 miles away and Henry offered a **royal pardon** for those who surrendered. Unsurprisingly, the gentry panicked and took the royal pardon. Suffolk told the rest of the rebels that he wouldn’t negotiate whilst they bore arms (carried weapons). The crowds refused to disperse, but the gentry promised that, if the royal pardon failed, they would re-muster. The crowds then gave up their arms and left. This suggests that ordinary people were unlikely to rebel without leadership from someone higher in society, which makes the Cumberland rising in January 1537 all the more surprising.

Despite appearances of being appeased, many of the gentry involved in the Lincolnshire rising later became involved in the **Yorkshire** rising. The rising took place **only a week after the Lincolnshire** rising, and was arguably[[101]](#footnote-101) the result of **9 separate revolts**, which quickly united. Monks expelled from Clementhorpe Nunnery and Holy Trinity Priory, closed by the 1536 Act, were causing unrest. 9000 men quickly gathered for a march on York. By 10 October **Robert Aske** had emerged as the leader of the rebels. Aske was a lawyer and a member of the old gentry, who had been one of the captains in the Lincolnshire rising. Aske ensured that it was a peaceful rising. He insisted that all goods were paid for (i.e. no looting) and that no murders were committed. Under Aske’s leadership, the rebels restored dissolved religious houses, e.g. Cartmel, Conishead and Sawley; maybe as many as 16 of the 55 dissolved under the March 1536 act of suppression (dissolution). The rebels marched under a **Banner of the Five Wounds of Christ** and called themselves ‘pilgrims’. All the ‘pilgrims’ swore an **oath of allegiance** to the cause. The taking of an oath is significant because it has a religious dimension; an oath is a promise before God and so implies that the rebels/pilgrims are acting out of conscience.

From the **Oath** of the Honourable men of the Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536:“*Ye shall not enter into this our Pilgrimage of Grace for the Commonwealth but only for the love that ye do bear into Almighty God, his faith, and the Holy Church militant and the maintenance thereof, to the preservation of the King’s person and his issue[[102]](#footnote-102), to the purifying of the nobility, and to expulse all villein[[103]](#footnote-103) blood and evil councillors against the commonwealth from his Grace and his Privy Council of the same. And that ye shall not enter our said Pilgrimage for no particular profit to yourself, nor to do any displeasure to any private person, but by counsel of the commonwealth, nor slay nor murder for no envy, but in your hearts put away fear and dread, and take afore you the Cross of Christ, and in your hearts His faith, the Restitution[[104]](#footnote-104) of the Church, the suppression of these Heretics and their opinions, by all the holy contents of this book.”*

Religion may have been a way of disguising treason by appearing to be motivated by conscience, or it may have been a simply a reaction to the rumours that parish property would be seized; supporting the monasteries would have been a way of protecting this investment also. Whether genuine or strategic, religion was the unifying factor in the rebellions of 1536-7, drawing together the disparate political and economic motives of nobles and commoners.

Soon there were **30,000 rebels**. This was a major force to subdue, particularly in a period when the King had no standing (permanently ready) army. Had it come to fighting, the rebels would have had advantage. Defeat of the King’s forces in north would then have opened the way for a march on London. However, Aske did not want to overthrow the King and sought to avoid marching further south. If you look at the oath and the Articles (list of grievances), there is a clear focus on removing ‘evil advisors’ but no clear desire to remove Henry. Of course, this phrasing could be simply an attempt to avoid treason: blaming ‘evil councillors’ was quite standard justification for rebellion in this period. The rebels made their headquarters in York and, on 15 October 1536, sent the mayor of York a list of **grievances**:

1. The suppression of so many religious houses…whereby the service of God is not well [maintained] but also the [commons] of your realm be unrelieved, the which we think is a great hurt to the common wealth and many sisters be [put] from their levyings and left at large
2. we humbly beseech your Grace that the act of uses may be suppressed because we think by the said act we your true subjects be clearly restrained of our liberties in the declaration of our wills concerning our lands, as well as for payment of our debts
3. an end to [a tax on sheep and cattle]which would be an importunate charge to them considering the poverty that they be in all ready and loss which they have sustained these two years past[[105]](#footnote-105)
4. your grace takes of your counsel and being about you such persons as be of low birth and small reputation which hath procured the profits most especially for their own advantage, the which we suspect to be the Lord Cromwell and Sir Richard Riche…
5. [we are] grieved that there be diverse bishops of England of your Grace’s late promotion that have [not] the faith of Christ, as we think, which are the bishops of Canterbury (Cranmer), Rochester, Worcester, Salisbury, St David’s, Dublin and Lincoln.

The rebels then made their way down to Pontefract, where Lord Darcy handed over **Pontefract Castle**, the most important fortress in the north, on 24 October, without a shot fired. Darcy argued he couldn’t have withstood a siege. Once the rebels had Pontefract castle, the rebels besieged the Earl of Cumberland at Skipton Castle. If Darcy’s claim about the inability of such northern strongholds to withstand a siege is true, then the rebels could soon have had control of the north, which would suggest that the PoG was a huge threat to the stability of the realm. However, it is more likely that Darcy exaggerated the threat of the siege for his own ends. Darcy was anti-clerical: he had initiated some of the early legislation against mortuary fees in the 1529 Parliament. So his motives for cooperating with the pilgrims are unlikely to be a religious desire to protect Catholic monasteries! However, Cromwell had recently initiated two laws which did affect the nobility: the 1534 Subsidy Act, which was an innovative peacetime taxation, and the Statute of Uses, a law which regulated how land could be bequeathed (left) in wills and how much inheritance tax would have to be paid on that land. It is likely that the nobles who became involved in the PoG were more concerned about these issues than religion.

This rising did have **more noble support than Lincolnshire**. In addition to Lord Darcy there was support from all members of the King’s Council of the North and Lord Dacre, the most senior nobleman in the north. Dacre himself didn’t become *directly* involved, but his 2 sons were both involved on the rebels’ side. There was support from powerful Percy family, dissatisfied at the fact that the childless Earl of Northumberland had been ‘persuaded’ to make the King his heir, which didn’t please the rest of his family! Many of the gentry captains of the rebels were Percy tenants, and there is also evidence that commoners received payment for joining rebels, which shows the impact that noble leadership could have on a rebellion.

However, most of this noble support (apart from Lord Darcy) was from lesser nobility. The powerful Earls of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Northumberland did not stand with rebels, which undermined the rebels’ eventual possibilities of success. Even if they had sided with the rebels, the earls of Cumberland and Northumberland hated each other, so there would have been no coordinated noble leadership.

The Duke of Norfolk[[106]](#footnote-106), a religious conservative, was sent by Henry VIII to disband the rebels. However, he was not given enough money by Henry VIII to raise an army. Remember, this was in 1536 after the dissolution only of the smaller monasteries, so Henry VIII didn’t have a huge amount of ready cash. Norfolk had 8000 men against 30,000 rebels, so fighting was not a viable option.

The rebel army met Norfolk at **Doncaster**. The ‘pilgrims’ handed over a **petition** which was basically the same as the York Articles. Whilst representatives of the rebels took the petition to the King in London a temporary truce was signed on 27 October. Following this uneasy truce, the King asked for clarification of the rebels’ demands.

The Pilgrim council at Pontefract issued detailed articles in response to Henry’s request. This clarified statement is known, unsurprisingly, as the **Pontefract Articles** (Dec 1536).

1. to have the heresies…within this realm….annulled and destroyed (a reference to the Ten Articles and Injunctions)
2. to have the supreme head of the church….restored unto the See of Rome
3. that the Lady Mary be made legitimate
4. to have the abbeys suppressed to be restored
5. to have the tenth and first fruits and tenths clearly discharged
6. to have the Observant Friars restored to their houses again
7. to have the heretics [receive] punishment by fire
8. to have the Lord Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor and Sir Richard Riche [receive] punishment
9. that the lands…may be tenant right, and the lord to have at every change two years gressom [entry fine] and no more
10. the statutes of handguns and crossbows to be repealed
11. that doctor Leigh and doctor Layton…[receive] punishment for their extortions in their time of visitations
12. reformation for the election of knights of shire and burgesses
13. Statute [to regulate] enclosures … to be put into execution. [Cromwell had attempted to address enclosures: an Act of 1534 limited the number of sheep that anyone could own to 2,400; a 1536 Act was directed against enclosure. However, Cromwell's legislation was watered down by both the Commons and the Lords, e.g.: sensitive areas such as East Anglia were taken out of the Act!]
14. to be discharged of the quindine (a form of tax) and taxes now granted
15. to have the parliament in a convenient place at Nottingham or York
16. that all the recognisances, statutes, penalties new forfeited during this time of commotion may be pardoned
17. the privileges and rights of the church to be confirmed
18. the liberties of the church to have their old customs
19. to have the statute that no man shall will his lands to be repealed (i.e. repeal of statute of uses)
20. that the statutes of treasons by words [be] repealed
21. that the common laws may have place as was used in the beginning of your grace’s reign
22. that no man upon subpoena (court order) is from Trent north appear but at York
23. a remedy against escheators (officers who collect land that reverts to the Crown) for finding of false offices and extortions fees

These articles were presented to the Duke of Norfolk at Doncaster, who had been given authority by Henry to grant a general pardon and a promise of a parliament in the north, at which the issues concerning the abbeys could be discussed. Aske insisted that the monasteries must not be dissolved before the parliament could discuss the matter[[107]](#footnote-107) and, upon receiving assurance, persuaded the pilgrims to accept the terms. On 8 December the crowds began to disperse after the Lancaster Herald read the **King’s pardon**.

The pardon read:

1. That a general pardon should be granted, without any exceptions;
2. That a parliament should be held at York or Nottingham, or some other convenient place;
3. That no man residing north of the Trent should be compelled, by subpœna, to attend any court except York, unless in matters of allegiance;
4. That some Acts of the late Parliament, which were too grievous to the people, should be repealed;
5. That the [Princess Mary](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/aboutMary.htm) should be declared legitimate;
6. That the suppressed monasteries should be restored to their former state;
7. That the Papal Authority should be re-established;
8. That heretical books should be suppressed, and heretics punished according to law;
9. That [Lord Cromwell](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/ThomasCromwell(1EEssex).htm), the vicar-general, [Lord Audley](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/ThomasAudley(1BAudley).htm), the chancellor, and [Rich](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/RichardRich(1BLeez).htm), the attorney-general, should be removed from the Council; and
10. That Leigh and Layton, visitors of the northern monasteries, should be prosecuted for their briberies and extortions.

It seems that Henry had granted all the rebel demands and that this should have been an end to the rising. However, on 16 January 1537, **Sir Francis Bigod** led a rising in **Cumberland**. This was very different to previous risings as Bigod definitely was a protestant evangelical, so this was clearly a politically motivated rebellion rather than a religious protest – and was arguably all the more dangerous for that. Bigod organised, along with John Hallom, a yeoman Pilgrim, to capture Hull and Scarborough and take the Duke of Norfolk hostage, if necessary.

The rebels claimed that the pardon granted by Henry at Doncaster was simply “feigned policy to subdue the commoners with all." (i.e. an insincere policy designed purely to stop the rebellion). The rebels claimed that:

(1.) The suppressed abbeys were restored by the commoners, not by the agreement at Doncaster (i.e. the Doncaster agreement had little effect – the Commoners still had to do it themselves as Parliament didn’t act)

(2.) We should have had a Parliament at York the 20th day and had none.

(3.) Cromwell and other evil counsellors are in higher favour than ever.

(4.) The pardon is only offered to those who accept the King as head of the Church.

(5.) Captain Aske, at London, had rewards to betray the commoners; and since his return the King’s men have made Hull ready to receive ships to destroy all the North parts.

Bigod was captured but the commons (ordinary people) **rose on their own** in February. Commons activity without authoritative leadership was rare. It seems likely that it was caused by the Earl of Cumberland’s overcharging of his tenants (see earlier reference to rack renting.) Now Henry had the excuse to crush the rebels decisively and did so: the Duke of Norfolk declared **martial law**[[108]](#footnote-108) in the north; 178 people were executed, including Thomas Percy, Lord Hussey, Lord Darcy, Bigod and Aske. The Cumberland rising was then used as reason to renege on the promises made to the Yorkshire rebels, ensuring that the three rebellions had achieved nothing.

Thereafter, crown authority in the north was strengthened. **ELTON** argued that crown authority in the localities was strengthened as part of Cromwell’s ‘revolution in government’. However, changes were partly timely: in July 1537 the Earl of Northumberland died and his lands passed to his heir, Henry VIII. The over-mighty Percy family had been finally neutralised. Henry VIII then promoted loyal gentry interests in the north, to strengthen royal authority, rather than appoint another nobleman to become over-mighty in the Percy mould. Yet this was not so much revolutionary as a continuation of the policies of Henry VII, who had also endeavoured to curb the power of the over mighty magnates (more prevalent in the semi-autonomous north) that had featured so heavily in the Wars of the Roses. Admittedly, in 1537 the Council of the North was thoroughly reorganized to strengthen royal authority. This was largely successful, discovering and crushing the 1537 Wakefield plot to murder the president of the Council of the North, Robert Holgate. [Though, long-term, the north wasn’t neutralized entirely, as is evident in the 1569 Revolt of the Northern Earls (Elizabethan).] But this was more likely to have been a reaction to the Pilgrimage rather than a revolution attempt at centralisation.

Policy in the north was mirrored by policy towards that other semi-autonomous region; Wales. Henry VII had instituted the Council of Wales but had largely left the Marcher lordships[[109]](#footnote-109) alone. At the start of his reign, Henry VIII didn't see any need to address this. However, by the 1530s the autonomy of these Lords seemed more threatening. So, in 1536 *An Act for Laws and Justice to be Ministered in Wales in Like Form as it is in this Realm* extended English law into the Marches and ensured that Wales had representation in the Westminster Parliament. [Between 1536 and the](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) 1543 A*ct for Certain Ordinances in the King's Dominion and Principality of Wales* Welsh local customary law was abolished and replaced by English common law. Over the following years, [Wales](http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville/123/123%20211%20Henry%20VIII.htm#Wales) was organized into shires on the English model. It seems that authority in Wales was centralised more deliberately than was authority in the north. But as this was wasn't completed until 3 years after Cromwell’s fall it is again difficult to substantiate **ELTON’S** argument.

Even if these attempts at strengthening crown authority were limited, they demonstrate a clear concern that domestic unrest in the localities might encourage foreign intervention. Had the Pope, Charles and Francis not been preoccupied, it would have been a good opportunity to attack Henry, gathering support from unhappy Englishmen. Henry would have felt this threat very keenly, particularly in January 1537, when **James V of Scotland married Madeleine**, daughter of Francis I. James’ marriage opened a ‘back door’ into England, should France become hostile. This might very well explain why Henry reacted so quickly to the **Cumberland rising** of January 1537. It might also explain why, in February, Henry ordered Convocation to produce a formal, clear statement of doctrine, which would hopefully satisfy English people that their religion would be respected and dissuade Catholic Europe from any potential hostility. However, getting the bishops to agree on a statement of doctrine would not be easy: conservative bishops would be unlikely to move in a radical direction; reformist bishops such as Latimer and Ridley would not have accepted an entirely Catholic theology.

Nevertheless, the required statement of doctrine was somehow produced. The 1537 **Institution of a Christian Man** (known as **the Bishop's book[[110]](#footnote-110)**) made some attempt to clarify the tricky questions of purgatory, justification by faith and the status of the 4 sacraments omitted from the Ten Articles. The status of the sacraments was addressed by creating greater and lesser sacraments; emphasizing the *sacramental* value of baptism, the Eucharist and penance, which had been instituted by Christ and conferred on the recipient the grace needed to remit sins. Matrimony, confirmation, holy orders and last rites (extreme unction) were *spiritually* important, as ‘visible signs of an invisible grace’. Phew, glad he cleared that up! Even though this is clearer for scholars, the outcome for most ordinary people was that they still had access to these sacraments (whatever their supposedly different values) so they wouldn’t have felt alienated from the church.

The Bishops’ book was published without Henry’s formal approval. JJ Scarisbricksuggested that this was because Henry was too lazy to do more than flip through its pages, or was too preoccupied with Jane Seymour’s pregnancy. Yet Bernard suggests that Henry would not have ignored such an important statement of unity. The lack of endorsement was not a failure but a deliberate choice (as with the Injunctions), leaving Henry free to revise the text at leisure. In October, **Jane Seymour died** after bearing Henry's only son. In November, *after* the Bishops’ book was published, Henry presented Cranmer with an annotated version with over 250 edits, so he’d clearly read it and read it carefully. He and Cranmer then worked together to refine the book. You could argue that Henry had been very strategic; he had forced the Bishops to agree on a single statement of doctrine, which he could afterwards clarify in a manner to suit himself, all with the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury[[111]](#footnote-111) Useful evidence if you wish to argue that Henry was always the driver of policy! For Bernard, the direction, pace and nature of religious change in England was ever Henry’s design, a ‘middle way’, rather like Elizabeth later adopted: *“conservative when measured against Luther’s Germany or reformed Switzerland, radical when measured against the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the Pilgrimage of Grace.”*

Cistercian monks from Furness monastery had been involved in the Pilgrimage of Grace. As a result, in 1537, the Cistercian abbot of Furness monastery was pressured to surrender voluntarily[[112]](#footnote-112). Then followed a wave of ***voluntary* surrenders**. Monks and nuns who cooperated with Henry's policies were granted pensions. Priors and abbots in charge received very large pensions for cooperation, in some cases ensuring them a life among the gentry, so you can understand their willingness to cooperate. For many ordinary monks and nuns, however, these pensions did not allow for the rapid inflation that was taking place in England at that time and most monks and nuns faced extreme poverty within a few years. In December of 1537 the great priory of Lewes (Sussex) was persuaded to ‘surrender’ to the King, and its property passed to Cromwell. Within 16 months, 202 houses had surrendered. The slow pace of attack undoubtedly made it more difficult for opposition to muster; at what point in such a lengthy process do opponents make a stand?

Madeleine had died in July 1537 but **James V married (French) Mary of Guise** in May 1538, renewing the threat of the ‘auld alliance’. This would have been galling to Henry because he spent 1538 offering himself in marriage to various French princesses and to Christina, Duchess of Milan (and niece of Charles V), in the hope of building an alliance with France or Spain, but these negotiations fell through; the women making it clear that they preferred suitors without such a poor track record as a husband. Not only had Henry failed to secure England an alliance through marriage, but then, in June, a ten-year truce was signed between Charles and Francis (**Truce of Nice**). By the summer of 1538, therefore, there was unity between the two major Catholic and military powers in Europe, and an open back door, through Scotland, to England. Furthermore, the pro-French, anti-English and anti-Protestant Archbishop David Beaton was made a Cardinal on 15 August 1538[[113]](#footnote-113) and sent to Scotland.

In September 1538, Cromwell issued a **second set of injunctions** which prohibited veneration (worship) of images and relics. There was also a renewed effort to provide the bible in English to all parishes (an official version having been commissioned in this year), although this was once again a limited success. These measures could certainly be seen as Henry’s reaction to the close ties between Spain, France and Scotland; although it seems slightly foolish to antagonise them further, he was perhaps trying to encourage support from the Lutheran princes. (Of course, this assumes that religious policy was being directed by Henry rather than Cromwell, as some historians may argue).

In November 1538, Henry was faced with a domestic conspiracy, real or imagined. The Catholic [Marquess of Exeter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Courtenay,_1st_Marquess_of_Exeter), cousin of Henry VIII, was accused of conspiring to overthrow Henry. It is likely that this threat was either exaggerated or entirely invented by Cromwell, a rival of Exeter. Nevertheless, only two years after the Pilgrimage of Grace and in addition to the precarious international situation, Henry couldn’t afford to take chances. **Exeter was arrested** on 4 November 1538 and executed on December 9th[[114]](#footnote-114).

On 16 November 1538, possibly to discourage domestic unrest and also to dissuade foreign powers from taking advantage of any English noble rebellion, Henry issued a **proclamation** denouncing the ‘wicked and abominable errors’ of radical reformers. **HAIGH** sees the reformation as ‘stopping dead’ with the November proclamation and certainly Henry may have wished to suggest this to placate the Pope/Francis/Charles/domestic opposition. However, the impact of this proclamation is undermined by Cromwell’s ongoing attack on monasticism. Throughout 1538 religious shrines across England were dismantled. Hundreds of shrines containing holy relics such as the bones of saints or weeping statues of the Blessed Virgin had attracted pilgrims and donations for hundreds of years. People visited shrines to ask saints to pray for them; the very essence of intercessionary prayer and, therefore, anathema to reformists like Cromwell. The most famous of these shrines was that of Thomas Becket, at Canterbury Cathedral. Becket was Henry II’s archbishop of Canterbury. He had defended the independence of the Catholic Church against Henry II’s attempts to try clerics accused of crimes not in church courts (benefit of clergy) but in the King’s courts. His opposition to Henry II had led to four of Henry’s knights murdering Becket on the altar of the cathedral, for which martyrdom the Pope made Becket a saint. Henry II felt compelled to allow himself to be whipped by monks in a public show of penitence, in order to avoid excommunication and keep his crown. Henry VIII did not want to be in a similar position! The history of Becket’s murder was largely re-written; rather than being a Catholic martyr he was presented as a stubborn protector of abuses within the church which Henry II had sought to bring under control, in accordance with the King’s responsibility as protector of his people. On 16th November 1538, Henry VIII ordered that Becket be referred to as Bishop Becket, rather than as a saint[[115]](#footnote-115) and that his shrine be dismantled.

It might seem confusing for the attack on Becket’s shrine to be so rapidly followed by the execution at Smithfield of the reformer **John Lambert** on 22 November 1538. John Lambert was born John Nicholson in [Norwich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwich) and educated at [Queens' College, Cambridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queens'_College%2C_Cambridge). He was made a fellow there on the nomination of [Catherine of Aragon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_of_Aragon). After theological disputes with Catholic scholars (showing his early reformist leanings) he changed his name and went to [Antwerp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antwerp_(city)) where he served as priest. Here he became friends with Frith and [William Tyndale, and his views grew more radical.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Tyndale) Upon his return in [1531](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1531), he came under the scrutiny of Archbishop [William Warham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Warham), but Warham died in [1532](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1532). In [1536](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1536) he was accused of heresy by the (Catholic) [Duke of Norfolk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Howard%2C_3rd_Duke_of_Norfolk), but escaped until [1538](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1538) when he was put on trial for denying the real presence of [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) (transubstantiation) in the bread and wine of the [Eucharist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist). Henry himself watched as Lambert was repeatedly lowered into the flames at the end of a lever. This execution seems to be a very clear statement of Henrician belief in traditional Catholic doctrine and may suggest either that the attack on the shrines was motivated by Cromwell, or that Henry was panicking about papal response to the attack. If Henry was hoping to placate the pope by executing a reformer, he failed. On 17 December 1538, after hearing about the destruction of Becket's shrine, the Pope announced the **excommunication of Henry** that he had been reluctant to declare in 1534[[116]](#footnote-116).

It is unsurprising that, following the excommunication, continued recognition of Becket as a saint was perceived as possible opposition to the supremacy. This is evident in reports of visitations, which continued to take place throughout the long process of dissolution. For example, in this letter to Cromwell recording the **visitation** to Glastonbury Abbey in 1539: *“…proceeded to search [the abbot’s] study for letters and books; and found …a written book or argument against the divorce of the King’s Majesty and the lady dowager (Catherine of Aragon), which we take to be a great matter, as also divers (various) pardons, copies of bulls and the counterfeit life of Thomas Becket in print; but we could not find any letter that was material. And so we proceeded again to his examination[[117]](#footnote-117) (about his attitude regarding the divorce and succession). In the answers shall appear his cankered and traitorous heart against the King’s Majesty and his succession. …we have found a fair chalice of gold, and divers other parcels of plate, which the abbot had hid secretly from all such commissioners as have been there in times past; and as yet he knoweth not that we have found the same.”*. Arguably, this political opposition provided grounds for the impending dissolution of the larger monasteries but, I would argue, it was the need for monastic wealth in the interests of defence which was a greater claim.

The excommunication also considerably heightened the risk of Catholic crusade. In February 1539 the Imperial and French ambassadors were both recalled from England, causing palpitations about imminent invasion. It was in this climate of apprehension that **marriage negotiations with Cleves[[118]](#footnote-118)** began in March 1539.

This wasn’t an entirely new direction for foreign policy. Throughout the 1530s Cromwell had been engaged in negotiations with the protestant princes of the German Schmalkaldic League and you could even see the Ten Articles as part of this negotiation. **RORY MCENTEGART** has seen this as evidence that Cromwell was pursuing his own reformist agenda, in the hope of persuading Henry to follow the German example. However, I would argue that Henry was fully aware and supportive of the negotiations for purely political motives. A letter from Bishop Stephen Gardiner from as early as 1529 suggests that Henry had used approaches to the Lutheran German princes as one of the many strategies to pressure the Pope into granting the divorce. Also in this early period, Henry (along with Francis I for his own reasons to do with the Italian wars) had encouraged the German princes to cause trouble for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V; Henry’s aim being to distract Charles from supporting his aunt’s cause during the tricky divorce negotiations. So the idea of a German alliance pre-dated Cromwell. By 1539, Henry was increasingly worried that the growing closeness of Francis I and Charles V, plus the excommunication, might lead to a united Catholic invasion. Henry needed an ally. Henry therefore allowed Cromwell to suggest to the German princes that Henry was not averse to protestant theology, despite his May 1531 declaration, so that marriage negotiations could begin. A marriage would secure their support in the event of war and equally suggest to Charles and Francis that an Anglo-German alliance was a reality, hopefully discouraging them from invading. The chosen bride was Anne of Cleves. It should be noted that the Dukes of Cleves were not radically Lutheran, but more in the English ‘middle-way’ model, which made the Dukes a useful alliance against a Catholic crusade, without the risk of pushing Henry into a *radically* reformist agenda.

Defending England against invasion would require money as well as allies. As you know, Henry had spent the money he inherited from his father on wars with France in the 1520s. Guy argues that “*it was the Crown's own needs that dictated the scope and timing of the dissolution*”, suggesting that it was the need for money that determined the **closure of the richer, larger monasteries in April 1539**. This act extended the closure to all religious houses except chantries[[119]](#footnote-119) in England, Wales and Ireland. However, by this point 202 houses had voluntarily surrendered, so the 1539 act was really just giving legal recognition to what had already happened rather than being a response to increased risk. In total, Henry closed down over 850 monastic houses between 1536 and 1540. Waltham Abbey was the last monastery to be dissolved in March 1540. The **Chantries Act of 1545** legislated for the dissolution of the Chantries, the last bastion of the monastic system, though Henry died before it was implemented. As Murphy et al state “*A whole era of religious history, which had lasted nearly a thousand years, had come to a quiet end[[120]](#footnote-120)”.* Dav**ID STARKEY** claims the dissolution was “*the greatest act of nationalization in English history between the Norman Conquest of 1066 and the Labour Government of 1945” [1998].*

Despite **STARKEY’S** somewhat overblown, anachronistic statement, it is certainly true that the dissolution should have made the crown very rich indeed. Henry made a total of £1.3 million from land sales, rents, seizure of church ‘plate’ (e.g. golden chalices and other items of value) and the stripping and selling off of church buildings (such as lead for roofs). Gold and silver plate and jewels from churches came to £79 500, land sales brought in £82 000 per year[[121]](#footnote-121). However, Cromwell was forced into spending some of the proceeds of the dissolution on fortifications: in the south-east of England ditches and ramparts were dug, so that ‘every estuary and exposed beach from the Thames to the Scilly Isles was adequately guarded by blockhouses or elaborately designed castles” (**POLLARD**). Beacons were built to warn of approaching invasion and there was extensive ship and castle building. Rental income from seized land did allow Henry to pursue his ambitious foreign policy objectives in the 1540s, particularly the expensive Boulogne campaign of 1544. But the economic impact of the dissolution was short-lived. By 1547 almost two thirds of monastic property had been sold to generate capital. Long-term revenue from land rental was lost and the capital gain from sales spent on war and defence. Thus, whilst the dissolution *could* have made Henry –and any future Kings –financially independent of parliament, this opportunity was lost.

The social impact, in comparison, was limited in the short-term but significant in the long-term. Despite promises to fund schools, colleges, hospitals and poor relief with the funds, little of this sort materialised. Two new colleges were established; Christ Church, Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge and some existing cathedral grammar schools were re-endowed, but very little was spent on founding new schools; the fiscal needs of the crown took priority. Some 7000 monks, nuns and friars were dispossessed and, as little net worth was generated from the dissolution of small monasteries, ordinary friars and nuns received very meagre pensions, compared to the abbots of the lucrative abbeys. This may have contributed to unemployment and the mid-century vagrancy problem. However, many of the monastic servants and labourers would have been needed by the new landowners, so unemployment is unlikely to have been significant. Neither did the loss of the monasteries result in a rise in poverty amongst communities local to the dissolved institutions: the alms dispensed only comprised 3% of monastic income[[122]](#footnote-122), although on an individual level, many people who would have experienced the charity, hospitality or nursing care of local monasteries were undoubtedly the poorer for their absence. The clergy suffered a sharp drop in the numbers of those seeking ordination, thus further reducing the social role that monastic orders played.

In the long-term, dissolution resulted in the material loss of Gothic buildings, medieval metalwork and jewellery from the great monastic houses, and the loss of the great libraries built up over generations. Even Mary Tudor was unable to restore the monastic system as it had been. Dissolution also resulted in the emergence of a new social class. The dissolution made available great tracts of land which had previously been inaccessible. As power and social status was largely denoted by land ownership, this was bound to create a change in social relations. Much of the property was bought by members of the nobility, to *strengthen* their position, or by the lesser gentry, as a way of *establishing* prestige. Thus the rapid and extensive changes in land ownership at this time led to the rise of the gentry as a significant social force. This acquisition of land arguably created a layer of nobility who were prepared to resist any proposed return to Rome, for fear of losing power and prestige if land were returned to monasteries. However, the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk, who benefited enormously from the sale of monastic land, remained focal points of resistance to religious change in the period. The Duke of Norfolk was to play an important part in the downfall of Cromwell – seen as the architect of religious reforms - in 1540. Moreover, any gain in loyalty could have been achieved by granting land through patronage rather than sale, but out of 1593 grants of land in Henry VIII reign, only 68 were gifts. Thus the cost was extraordinarily high, considering the long-term loss of crown assets.

Politically, the disappearance of the abbots in the House of Lords left the laity in control of both Houses of Parliament. Increased numbers of gentry also changed the composition of Parliament and *Whig* historians have argued that the long-term consequences of this were challenges by Parliament to the absolute power of the monarchy during the 17th century. A word of caution: the Whigs were a 19th century political party. In the 19th century, English parliamentary democracy was often felt to be the most progressive democratic system in the world. France was recovering from the revolution 1789 and charting a haltering path towards democracy. Germany as a nation state didn’t exist until 1870 and even then was autocratic. Russia, too, was autocratic. Only Britain seemed to have been sufficiently enlightened to have replaced autocracy with liberal parliamentary democracy. Whig historians therefore began to look at the past for the roots and path of this astonishing progress. This led them to see patterns where there are none, to prove their existing theory. There is no real evidence that Parliament sought to control monarchical actions in the Tudor period. Moreover, the Civil War was caused by a complex interplay of political, religious and economic factors not just the autocratic intentions of Charles I. Historians who try to use history to prove a particular theory often end up disregarding the evidence, deliberately or unintentionally.

The dissolution of the larger monasteries provided the funds for defence, but Henry was still anxious to appease Catholic Europe and avoid conflict if possible. The **Act of the Six Articles** was issued in June 1539 and was unambiguously conservative in tone: transubstantiation was confirmed as doctrine (although the term was not used), the value of confession was affirmed and clerical marriage was condemned. This was clearly an orthodox doctrinal statement designed to appease Francis and Charles. Cunningly, however, Henry presented the AoSA to the Dukes of Cleves as the work of the Bishops. This suggested Henry himself remained receptive to more Lutheran theology, allowing marriage negotiations between Henry and Anne of Cleves to continue. The marriage wouldn’t bring the military support Henry might need, but would unnerve Charles V, as the duchy of Cleves held a very important strategic position astride the Rhine[[123]](#footnote-123).

**ELTON** (as always) sees the AoSA as evidence of factional strife. He suggests that the conservative Norfolk outmanoeuvred Cromwell, and the result was a conservative act through Parliament. However, **ELTON’S** thesis presumes that previous policy had been some kind of progression towards Protestantism, which is not the case. John Lambert had been executed six months previously for denying the real presence in the Eucharist, which confirms Henry’s underlying conservatism. Thus the AoSA was not a revision of, or replacement for, the Bishop’s Book, simply a clarification of specific doctrinal points, in order to discourage reformist interpretations of previous ambiguous statements. Henry’s concern, as ever, was unity and conformity, crucial following the Pilgrimage of Grace and in the face of international hostility. For this reason, **GW BERNARD** claims that “*Henry maintained, rather than changed his course”* in 1538/9: *“not protestant, but not conservative either, rooted in a desire for unity and presented as a middle way”.* HAIGH and PENDRILL might have over-stated the change in policy in 1538/9, but what is clear is that, by 1538, the *potential* for thorough protestant reform was quashed. Following the AoSA heresy laws were enforced and many radical reformers fled to the continent. Bishops Latimer and Shaxton resigned, leaving Cranmer to carry the protestant flame alone. Remember, of course, that heresy laws *could* be enacted against people who broke the AoSA, because the AoSA was parliamentary statute, whereas the Ten Articles and all the other legislation had not been. See how cunning Henry had been: only the most orthodox doctrine became law.

Despite the AoSA, in December 1539 Francis allowed Charles to pass through France on his way to Ghent, reaffirming the unity that existed between them and increasing Henry’s concern. Therefore, although Henry was personally repulsed by Anne of Cleves after meeting her in December, he married her on 6 January, 1540. Henry wasn’t entirely happy, but was certainly not bullied into marriage by Cromwell, as has been suggested. Having met Anne, Henry called together Cranmer and his leading nobles to discuss ways of getting out of the marriage. He even looked for technical excuses in the previous dissolved contracts of marriage between Anne and the Duke of Lorraine’s son, but found none. With no justifiable excuse, the risk of Anne’s brother being outraged enough to seek alliance with Charles and Francis was too great for Henry, and he *chose* to marry Anne. The alliance with the Dukes of Cleves remained intact even after Anne agreed to divorce amicably [9 July 1540], so Henry’s political objectives, if not his marital aims, had been met.

That Henry was happy with Cromwell’s negotiations is proven by the fact that he granted Cromwell the title of Earl of Essex on 18th April 1540. Had Henry been furious about the marriage, or felt bullied into it, he is unlikely to have rewarded the chief negotiator. It might seem incomprehensible that Cromwell fell so rapidly thereafter. However, I would argue this again reveals consistency in Henry’s policy rather than fickleness. He wanted security and, in January, an alliance with Cleves against the united forces of France and Spain provided the best option. By June 1540, the alliance between Francis and Charles was crumbling over Milan. If Henry could use this fracture to build an alliance with Francis, England would be more secure. It would also appeal more to Henry’s Catholicism to move away from alliances with the German princes. Norfolk, dispatched by Henry to negotiate with Francis, brought back word that the price of peace was the removal of Cromwell, identified by Francis as a radical and as the person responsible forHenry’s (reformist) policies to date. This may have been Norfolk’s scheming (if you adopt a factional conflict argument) or may have been Francis’ genuine sentiment. What is indisputable is that Henry himself decided to destroy Cromwell, as he had destroyed Wolsey. It was politically expedient for Henry to present Cromwell as a religious extremist, attached to the German Lutherans and intent on leading the country and the King into an undesirable reformist settlement. Cromwell was thus a sacrificial lamb in Henry’s bid for alliance with Francis. Henry may also have hoped that the destruction of Cromwell would appease Charles V, who saw Cromwell –in his role as chief negotiator with the Spanish ambassador, Chapuys- as responsible for Henry’s divorce from his aunt, Katherine. [[124]](#footnote-124) Therefore, **Cromwell was arrested** in the Privy Council on 10 June 1540 and **executed** for treason at Tower Green 28 July 1540. He was charged with treason, accused of protecting Protestants who had been denounced as heretics and thus of failing to enforce the Act of the Six Articles and of plotting to introduce an Anabaptist-style version of Protestantism, despite the King’s obvious aversion to radical theology. It was certainly the case that Cromwell was a reformer, and that he had encouraged and supported the work of reformers such as Robert Barnes, as well as providing financial backing for major publishing projects such as the publication of the English translation of the Bible known as the Matthew Bible. However, his loyalty to Henry was unquestionable. Even during the interval between his arrest and execution he supplied the evidence which allowed Henry to divorce Anne of Cleves – loyal to the last, as Wolsey had been, but this didn’t save him. Just days after Cromwell’s execution Robert Barnes, Thomas Garret, and William Jerome were executed, on the basis of being involved in this ‘**Lutheran conspiracy’** alleged by Norfolk. None of the men were allowed an open trial because that would allow them public opportunity to dispute the false charges. Instead, they were condemned by Act of Attainder, just as the Nun of Kent had been: speed rather than justice was key.

Henry did not create another chief minister after the fall of Cromwell and, arguably, neither did the conservative faction that dominated court seek to raise one. Arguably, the Cromwellian model of conciliar government (government by council) was fully operational and managed the day to day running of the country, under Henry’s broad direction. Alternatively, you could argue that this was a period when government returned to a traditional medieval model: rather than having a chief minister raised by Henry’s hand, the Privy Council was instead dominated – by noble consent – by the most powerful noble: Norfolk. Norfolk and his allies Thomas Wriothesley, Lord Russell and Bishop Gardiner did indeed dominate the Privy Council and appeared to seek both a rise in personal power and a retrenchment of Catholic doctrine. The dominance of the conservative faction, centred in the Privy Chamber, was assured by the fact that on the same day that Cromwell was executed, **Henry married Norfolk's niece, Catherine Howard**.

On 30 July 1541[[125]](#footnote-125) Henry VIII and Queen Catherine set off on progress around the north of England. This was the furthest north Henry had ever been and had two principle motives. Firstly, the north had been volatile since the 1536 pilgrimage of grace. The economic problems which had plagued Yorkshire in 1536 were still a cause of discontent and the north remained predominantly Catholic. Thus, in March 1541, the so-called **Wakefield Conspiracy** led by Sir John Neville sought to depose Henry VIII’s president of the council of the north and restore the old religion[[126]](#footnote-126). Henry hoped that a personal appearance would quell unrest and re-establish royal authority in the north, which he certainly achieved. Secondly, despite the death of Cromwell, the hoped-for alliance with Francis did not materialise. As always, risk of war with France involved risk of war with Scotland. Henry was already concerned about Scottish intentions; at least 27 rebels had crossed the border after the Pilgrimage of Grace, and more followed after the Wakefield Conspiracy was crushed[[127]](#footnote-127). Henry arranged to **meet with James V** of Scotland at York in September, in an attempt to improve relations with the Scottish King. Unfortunately, James V didn’t turn up to the planned meeting at York and a snubbed Henry began his return home.

It was during this progress that **Catherine’s adultery** became apparent. Catherine was not a virgin when she married Henry; she had had relationships with her music teacher, Henry Manox and Francis Dereham[[128]](#footnote-128). She now began an affair with Thomas Culpepper, gentleman of the Privy Chamber. Aided by Lady Rochford (widow of George Boleyn, executed with Anne Boleyn), Culpepper began sneaking into Catherine’s room at night. After Henry’s return to Windsor on 26 October[[129]](#footnote-129), a service of thanksgiving for Henry and Catherine’s marriage was held in churches across England on 1 November[[130]](#footnote-130). With timing worthy of a French farce, Cranmer approached the King at the end of this service with a letter outlining Catherine’s misbehaviour. Despite a stunned declaration of Catherine’s undoubted innocence, Henry ordered Cranmer to investigate thoroughly and confined Catherine to her room. Dereham confessed[[131]](#footnote-131) and both he and Culpepper were executed. **Catherine Howard executed** 13 Feb 1542, along with Lady Rochford.

From 10 July 1542[[132]](#footnote-132) Charles and Francis were again at war. Henry tried again to build an alliance with France. However, negotiations over the marriage of the son of Francis I and Mary Tudor stalled because Henry VIII would not declare Mary legitimate[[133]](#footnote-133). To compound the issue, after James V’s snub at York, Scottish raids in North continued. Anxious about the threat from a Scotland in the grip of the pro-French party led by Cardinal Beaton and Mary of Guise/Lorraine, James V's wife, Henry prepared for war against Scotland. The campaign was launched on October 1542[[134]](#footnote-134). The English army won a major victory at **Solway Moss** (November). James V died 5 days later (allegedly of grief!) leaving his infant daughter, Mary, on the throne. Many Scottish nobles were captured at Solway Moss and Henry could surely have pushed for conquest of Scotland at this point. Instead, he negotiated with the captured nobles who he hoped would establish a pro-English party in Scotland.

In Feb 1543, Henry made an alliance with Charles to invade France. The alliance was kept secret till end of May[[135]](#footnote-135) when Henry planned to invade France. However, invasion plans had to be put on hold because of the need to conclude the Scottish negotiations[[136]](#footnote-136).

Possibly as a means of building bridges with the Catholic powers of Europe, or possibly as a result of the dominance of the conservative faction at court, or of Henry’s own Catholicism, the **King’s Book** was published in May 1543. This statement clarified that, although the English church did not answer to Rome, it maintained an orthodox (i.e. Catholic) theology. This conservatism was echoed in the **Act for the Advancement of the True Religion** 12 May 1543[[137]](#footnote-137), which restricted use of the English bible to the wealthy.

On 1 July 1543[[138]](#footnote-138) the Scottish nobles signed the **Treaty of Greenwich**. As the price of their release they agreed to the marriage between Henry's son, Edward and the infant, Mary. He sent them back to Scotland with instructions to bring Mary to England. However, in December, the Scottish parliament reneged on the Treaty of Greenwich. Given that Henry did not have custody of Mary, Henry had thus gained nothing from the opportunity presented by victory at Solway Moss. Further campaigns in Scotland ensued, led by Edward Seymour (Earl of Hertford; later Duke of Somerset) with the aim of breaking the power of the "French party", and persuading the Scottish nobles to agree to the planned marriage. Yet this campaign, known as the "**rough wooing**", actually increased hostility, which wouldn’t be resolved until Elizabeth I executed Mary Queen of Scots. In the meantime, Henry was doing some ‘wooing’ of his own, marrying his sixth and final wife, **Katherine Parr, on 12th July 1543.**

Around Katherine Parr orbited a new group of reformers, including Edward Seymour, the Earl of Hertford (Jane Seymour’s brother, thus Edward VI’s uncle and later Duke of Somerset) and John Dudley (Earl of Northumberland under Edward VI). The source of this group’s power was the **Privy *Chamber*,** not the conservative-dominated Privy Council, so you could see the period from 1543-1547 as a power struggle between these two rival factions, if you’re of a **GEOFFREY ELTON** frame of mind. Alternatively, it may be that, in the absence of a chief minister to control factional in-fighting, Henry’s adopted a deliberate policy of ‘divide and rule’ to maintain his own control over factional infighting. If this is the case, whilst it kept a lid on his own councillors, it created a legacy of factional strife which was to bedevil his son’s minority.

The conservative faction attempted to assert their authority with two plots in the 1540s. The first was a **plot against** **Cranmer** in the autumn of 1543. The Privy Council, predominantly Gardiner, had been engaged in hunting out heresy throughout 1543. Five members of the Privy Chamber, and three of their wives, were implicated[[139]](#footnote-139). Gardiner then persuaded the King to charge the Archbishop of Canterbury with heresy. Cranmer was to be arrested at the Council table, as Cromwell had been. However, the night before the planned arrest, Henry summoned Cranmer and warned him. He gave him a ring as a token of affection, advising him to show it to his assailants and demand to see the King. This he did: the conservatives realised they had been outwitted and apologised to Henry.

In comparison, the reformers were growing in strength. Hertford and Dudley found favour with Henry’s as a result of the Scottish campaigns. Hertford captured Edinburgh (1544), in an attempt to knock Scotland out of the anticipated Anglo-French war.

Henry VIII then enacted the 1543 treaty with Charles, **invading France** in June 1544. Henry’s crossing to France caused some concern about what would happen if he didn’t return. As a result, Henry passed a **third Act of Succession**. Though Edward would inherit first, naturally, Mary and Elizabeth were restored to the succession (thereby tacitly acknowledging their legitimacy)[[140]](#footnote-140) .

Henry was carried in a litter at the head of an army of 40,000. The only achievement of this French war was the **capture of** **Boulogne** on 14 September, which was prestigious, and a useful propaganda victory. But this was a costly conquest to maintain and couldn’t be extended because, on 18 September, Charles made his peace with Francis in the **Peace of Crepy**, basically leaving Henry high and dry (again- doesn’t this feel like the 1520s?!).

Henry had lost his imperial ally, France was an enemy and Scotland still wasn’t subdued. In the spring of 1545, it seemed France was readying 200 ships to launch an invasion of England via Scotland. On 20th July the French fleet landed at the Isle of Wight[[141]](#footnote-141). However, following several very minor naval skirmishes the French withdrew. Francis may only ever have intended to cut English supply lines to Boulogne, as England was undoubtedly vulnerable and yet Francis did not pursue his advantage. Alternatively, it may have been that Francis, no more than Henry, could afford a full-scale war. After a long period of stalemate from September 1454 to June 1546, during which Cardinal Beaton was murdered (29 May 1546), Henry and Francis also agreed to terms, in the **Peace of Ardres**.

After the truce with France, Henry’s **French pension** (from the Treaty of the More) was re-instated, but the cost of war outweighed this gain. Henry’s wars against France and Scotland wars cost over £3 million, at a time when regular Crown income was about £150,000 per year. To finance these campaigns, Henry had to **sell off approximately two thirds of the monastic land** he had acquired, and to **tax at an unprecedentedly high rate**. He also began to **devalue the coinage**[[142]](#footnote-142) from about 1542 onwards. Soon the silver coins were almost entirely copper, and Henry himself became known as "old copper nose" from the appearance of his portrait on the coins. This expedient allowed the government to buy what it needed but soon led to **rapid inflation**, as people lost faith in the value of the currency and hoarded their old silver coins. Henry's debasement also made foreign goods far more expensive, as traders on the Continent refused to accept worthless English copper coins. The disruptive effects of debasement continued for many years, until Mary began a partial re-coinage that was completed by Elizabeth. Thus Henry’s military campaigns against France and Scotland had failed to subdue Scotland, or secure any meaningful gain in France, alliance with Charles had been lost and the extraordinary riches that the dissolution had generated had been squandered, leaving England with a burgeoning economic crisis.

At court, also, factional tension was mounting. The 1544 Act of Succession had made provision for the fact that Edward may inherit before he attained his majority (reached 18). If this happened, he would be supported by a regency council of 16 advisors to be appointed in Henry’s last will and testament. This encouraged ambitious nobles to seek favour with the King in the hope of being nominated to the regency council. The conservative faction was particularly anxious. By 1546, the King was emerging less and less from his private apartments. This increased the influence of the Privy Chamber dominated by Sir Anthony Denny, an ally of Hertford’s. Moreover, Hertford and Dudley had fared well in their campaigns against Scotland, whereas neither Norfolk, nor his son the Earl of Surrey, emerged well from the French campaign. Thus even the Privy Council seemed increasingly vulnerable to reformist influence. The conservatives, desperate to hold on to power, masterminded a **plot against Katherine Parr**, as a way of dismembering the Privy Chamber faction which surrounded her.

Norfolk had been trying to link Katherine Parr to Anne Askew, through the association of Anne and Katherine’s ladies in waiting, Lady Denny and Lady Hertford. Despite torture, however, Askew had not revealed any connection with Katherine. Nevertheless, Gardiner persuaded the King that the Privy Council had evidence of Katherine’s treasonous heresy. Henry agreed to allow the Council to draw up articles against her, which Henry signed. But at the last minute Katherine, receiving a tip off from Henry’s physician, threw herself on her husband’s mercy, which resulted in Henry dismissing Wriothesley when he arrived with forces to arrest his wife.

The conservative faction was then dismembered. Norfolk’s son, the Earl of Surrey, was a bit of a liability. He had boasted that, when King Henry died, Surrey's father (Norfolk) would have been ‘meetest to rule the prince’[[143]](#footnote-143), i.e. to act as Lord Protector. Unfortunately, Surrey had made an enemy of the Seymours by blocking a projected marriage between Sir Thomas Seymour and Surrey's sister Mary, the widowed Duchess of Richmond. Thus the King was persuaded that Surrey’s ill-advised comments were evidence of an intention to put Edward aside and assume the throne. His enemies also accused Surrey of having secretly sympathized with the PoG (even though he had actually helped Norfolk crush this insurrection). Surrey and his father were arrested. At his trial, Surrey’s sister admitted that Surrey was still a loyal Roman Catholic, which increased Henry’s suspicion that the Howards were not loyal to the supremacy. **Henry executed Surrey**, but died before he could execute Norfolk or change his mind.

**Gardiner also fell from favour** after he refused to exchange some lands with the king. It is more likely that this was simply the straw that broke the camel’s back. Gardiner had been instrumental in the failed plots against Cranmer and Katherine. Moreover, in 1544 Bishop Gardiner’s nephew had been executed for denying the supremacy. Gardiner’s own papal allegiance was well known, despite his loyal service to the crown. Henry had ordered Gardiner be arrested with his nephew, but then pardoned him. Henry may have feared that Gardiner’s loyalty to Rome would resurface during the minority of his son and threaten the royal supremacy, which would explain why Henry's will omitted him from the list of names of councillors who were to govern for young Edward VI.

With the two leading conservatives down, the reformist faction in the privy chamber continued to gain power. Anthony Denny was given control of the **dry stamp** during 1546. The dry stamp was the signature stamp of the King and allowed the bearer to authorise documents in the King’s name. Previously, it had only been used with Henry’s express permission, now its use was at the discretion of Denny, which was to prove critical.

**Henry died in January 1547**. His will was as pragmatically ‘middle way’ as his religious policy in life had been. He wished his body to be buried at St George’s Chapel, Windsor. Lands worth £600 per year were to be granted to the dean in return for two priests to say masses at the altar daily and for a weekly sermon in the town of Windsor. This request for masses suggests the King continued to believe that the living could affect the dead. There were no requests to the Virgin Mary or to individual saints however, suggesting that intercessionary prayers were not required – careful, inclusive and very Henrician.

Henry's will also designated **sixteen** [**executors**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executor) **to serve on a council of regency** until Edward reached the age of eighteen. This move was clearly designed to avoid the risk of Edward becoming the puppet king of a single ‘over-mighty magnate’, and/or to preclude a repeat of Richard III’s usurpation, whilst Lord Protector, of his nephew’s throne. With Norfolk and Gardiner destroyed, the regency council was dominated by reformists. This could be viewed as the triumph of the reformist faction, or more pragmatically as Henry’s own rational choice, as reformists would protect the supremacy.

Should Edward died without children, the Act of Succession stated that he was to be succeeded by Mary. If Mary had no children, then Elizabeth would inherit. Finally, if Princess Elizabeth also did not have children, she was to be followed by the descendants of Henry VIII's deceased sister, [Mary Tudor, Duchess of Suffolk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Tudor_(queen_consort_of_France)). This was a well-thought out strategy for long-term dynastic security, arguably, therefore, supporting claims that Henry’s over-riding motivation for every policy throughout his reign was stability.

Yet the will was in the custody of Sir William Paget, Hertford's ally. You will remember that Hertford’s other ally, Anthony Denny, had control of the dry stamp. Thus, after Henry’s death, two clauses were added to his will: that the Council had ‘full power and authority’ to take whatever action was necessary to run the country; that the Council had the right to award any gifts that Henry would have awarded had he had time (mmm, how jolly convenient!). These additions were duly authenticated by Sir Anthony Denny and the fateful dry stamp!

Henry’s death was kept secret for 4 days, during which time Hertford rallied nobles in the Privy Council to his cause. Wriothesley and Richard Rich, formerly of the Norfolk-Gardiner camp, were enticed to support Hertford by the offer of spoils (what a shock that Rich would be a turncoat, eh?!!). As a result, the executors themselves elected a president of the regency council: [Edward Seymour, 1st Earl of Hertford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Seymour%2C_1st_Duke_of_Somerset), Jane Seymour's elder brother and the uncle of Edward VI became [Lord Protector](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Protector) of the Realm. Henry’s careful attempts to lay the foundation for conciliar politics had failed. Hertford became Duke of Somerset and similar honours were bestowed to other members of the Council. By February Somerset had secured the right to appoint members of the Council and to act outside of conciliar approval if deemed necessary. As Hoak argued; “effectively, Somerset was King”. But that’s a story for another day!

Google Books:

Bernard:

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=HOiXAhKkTNEC&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=1532+Henry+Elizabeth+Barton&source=bl&ots=drglDXbP8J&sig=Ev0AHGBs6fTmee83hMvdqP90htc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=5x4GU4GGN9SFhQfbjIHABw&ved=0CF8Q6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=fisher%20executed&f=false>

Weir, A The Six Wives of Henry VIII <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=M1yHXitDdyQC&pg=PA231&lpg=PA231&dq=peto+preached+greenwich+henry+viii&source=bl&ots=hcbbt5OeD7&sig=HBYTkLGLq1NbNs0IzareKbxjYPA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=OiIGU6ayIO2e7AaKi4CIDg&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=peto%20preached%20greenwich%20henry%20viii&f=false>

Gray – Documents

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=UGi6WWtzkJYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=bray+documents+english+reformation&hl=en&sa=X&ei=1BkGU4y9GYmxhAfW7YD4AQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=bray%20documents%20english%20reformation&f=false>

<http://origins-of-english-reformation.wikispaces.com/Supplication+Against+the+Ordinaries>

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=F9_3ktSGOEwC&pg=PA226&lpg=PA226&dq=first+voluntary+surrender+of+monasteries+1537&source=bl&ots=2yk7WDdhzU&sig=CHL31VS6Z4FTIQhPWEKpVXdserA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i5AMU5CoOa7H7Ab4r4HwDw&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=first%20voluntary%20surrender%20of%20monasteries%201537&f=false> first voluntary surrender furness p226

# Henry VIII: A Study in Kingship

By Michael A. R. Graves

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# The Last Days of Henry VIII

By Robert Hutchinson

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# Henry VIII and the English Reformation

 By David G Newcombe

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# Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England

 By Peter Marshall

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=I5woio-hZV4C&pg=PA263&lpg=PA263&dq=wakefield+conspiracy+1541&source=bl&ots=4jNtuAaXbT&sig=oAbr_n1jZCHCB11L3Q2NmK54H2o&hl=en&sa=X&ei=5QYXU5a-BMaohAecvYCQDw&ved=0CGUQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=wakefield%20conspiracy%201541&f=false>

Scarisbrick, JJ Henry VIII

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=sF-yS-HQgyoC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=catherine+howard+henry+viii&ots=edz1kQKN6n&sig=EheSfWuxwNHtNbTXHA1wtSp-ZGY#v=onepage&q=catherine%20howard%20henry%20viii&f=false>

1. Mutually beneficial – like those little birds that live on hippos and eat all the fleas: the birds get fed, the hippos get clean [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Taxes, equivalent to 10% of a person’s income [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. a benefice is a clerical appointment providing a financial income [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pluralism is the holding of more than one appointments [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. payments made to Rome of the first year's income from newly appointed bishops [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Basically a written pardon for your sins, which reduced your time in purgatory – like a ‘get out of jail free’ card. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Not to be confused with the Pope Clement VII 1523-1534, who dealt with the annulment of Henry VIII’s marriage to Katherine. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The idea that a King should have ultimate supremacy over his Kingdom, including over the church. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The spoken language of the people of a particular country [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Wycliffe’s work also influenced **Jan Huss** (1373-1415), who preached many of the same messages from his pulpit in Bohemia (Germany). He was forbidden from preaching by Pope Alexander V in 1410 but continued regardless, as he claimed "in the things which pertain to salvation God is to be obeyed rather than man". I.E that people should listen to God directly rather than to the Church, conscience was more important than doctrine. Radical! This idea was to be echoed in the work of Martin Luther. Huss was eventually executed by the Catholic Church’s Council of Constance in 1415

    Both of these ideas were useful to Henry VIII later on, even if he disliked the radical sources from which they sprung!! [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Other ways of securing salvation were to make donations to chantries (religious institutions whose only job was to say prayers for the dead to lessen time in purgatory), to go on pilgrimages and make donations to shrines, to buy “relics”. All of these practices made the church, and individual monasteries very wealthy. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The laity are the ordinary, non-clerical members of the congregation – us! [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tyndale translated the New Testament into English while living abroad in the years 1525-1526. In October 1536, he died for his Lutheran views at the hands of the Imperial authorities in Vilvorde, Belgium. Other early Protestants, such as John Frith and Thomas Bilney, met the same fate at Henry VIII's hands. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. If you think about Jesus’ disciple, Simon Peter, the fisherman, you can see where the pseudonym came from! [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. If you want more detail, go to <http://www.tyndale.org/Reformation/1/cooper.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. White for York, Red for Lancaster [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Henry VII debated marrying Katherine himself, as Queen Elizabeth had died in 1503. He then decided to marry her to his younger son, Henry, though changed his mind about this later as an alliance with Ferdinand of Spain seemed less appealing. Katherine was kept hanging around, however, so Henry could keep hold of her dowry. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://is.muni.cz/th/152507/pedf_b/Anne_Boleyn-_thesis.txt> (21.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This ‘claim’ is complicated. It basically starts in 1066, when William, Duke of Normandy, becomes King of England: this gives the English King claim to lands in Normandy. Henry II, in the 12th century, increased the size of England’s empire in France, to the point where the English King owned more land than the French King! The Hundred Years’ War broke out in 1337 over who should be the rightful King of France, when the French nobles chose a nephew of the deceased French King to reign, rather than allowing the crown to pass to Edward III of England, grandson and closest living male relative of the dead King. Henry V was the most famous English King during the 100 Years War but the war basically ended in 1453 with the loss of all English land in France, except Calais. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The GCofB was the idea that God had ordained each man’s place in the social order and there he should stay. The related concept, of course, is the ‘divine right of Kings’; the notion that Kings were chosen and appointed by God. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. History Review March 2008 | Issue: 60 | Page 34-39 | Words: 3814 | Author: Marshall, Peter “**Cardinal Wolsey and the English Church”** [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Hutton: Sovereign Education Lecture, Birmingham, 10 March 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Woodacre, Elena. The Queens Regnant of Navarre: Succession, Politics, and Partnership, 1274-1512, p.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/f-j/flodden.pdf> (24.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. J. S. Brewer (editor) [Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 1: 1509-1514](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=1120) 1920, viewed at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=102723> (accessed 4.2.2014) and at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=93631> (21.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Which he gave up in 1518 in return for a pension! [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Henry had first written to Leo X requesting Wolsey’s appointment as Cardinal on August 12, 1514 **Taunton, E.** Cardinal Wolsey: Legate and Reformer. John Lane, London & New York, 1902, p.42-47. <https://archive.org/stream/thomaswolseylega00taunuoft#page/48/mode/2up/search/a+latere> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Gwyn, The King’s Cardinal, p.33 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=O2Jd_aturWQC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=why+did+the+pope+make+wolsey+cardinal&ots=IxMJs-EHAo&sig=AqIFzWSR7g2u55ESMCc8eZhba5Q#v=onepage&q=Wolsey%20cardinal&f=false> (accessed 4.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Gwynn, p.33 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. P. S. Allen **Dean Colet and Archbishop Warham**, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 17, No. 66 (Apr., 1902), pp. 303-306 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Tarr, History Review 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Vergil was Chamberlain to Pope Alexander VI. He came to England as a collector of papal taxes in 1509. He was a friend of Fox and More. He fell foul of Wolsey who charged him with forging dispensations. He was imprisoned and Leo X had to petition for his release. He was released but lost his power to collect taxes. He hated Wolsey! **Taunton, E.** Cardinal Wolsey: Legate and Reformer. John Lane, London & New York, 1902, pp.40-41. <https://archive.org/stream/thomaswolseylega00taunuoft#page/48/mode/2up/search/a+latere> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Tarr, History Review 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Spain wasn’t ‘spain’ but was ruled as two separate kingdoms, Aragon and Castille, united through the marriage of the individual monarchs: **Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille,** parents of **Katherine of Aragon.** Isabella died in 1504. Her daughter, Joana the Mad, succeeded as Queen of Castille. Ferdinand died in 1516. **Joana the Mad** then also succeeded as Queen of Aragon. However, Joana was, as you might have gathered, not really suited to rule, so her son, **Charles** became King alongside her, ruling effectively as King of a united Spain. This made Charles extremely powerful, as he had already inherited the Netherlands from his father (Philip the Handsome) in 1506. Then, in 1519, Charles became Holy Roman Emperor, having been elected after the death of his paternal grandfather, Maximilian I, making him the most powerful monarch in Europe by far. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. A legate was the Pope’s representative – they were usually appointed to act instead of the Pope and had all the powers of the Pope over specific missions. They were hugely important. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. William E. Wilkie, **The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors Before the Reformation** , **Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.106** <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=viA9AAAAIAAJ&lpg=PA113&ots=BZU1fL24_O&dq=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&pg=PA113#v=onepage&q=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&f=false> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. **Taunton, E.** Cardinal Wolsey: Legate and Reformer. John Lane, London & New York, 1902, p.55 <https://archive.org/stream/thomaswolseylega00taunuoft#page/48/mode/2up/search/a+latere> (accessed 13/11/2013). It came into force in reality on July 23 1518, when Campeggio arrived in England. Ibid, p.56 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The surnames of the monarchs – Hapsburg is Charles’ name and Valois is Francis’. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For his defence of the 7 sacraments, begun in 1519 after Luther’s attack on indulgences. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Secret because of the English commitment under the Treaty of Bruges: Wolsey was obviously hoping to ally with Francis without losing the alliance with Charles [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Gwyn, The King’s Cardinal, p.265 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=O2Jd_aturWQC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=why+did+the+pope+make+wolsey+cardinal&ots=IxMJs-EHAo&sig=AqIFzWSR7g2u55ESMCc8eZhba5Q#v=onepage&q=Wolsey%20cardinal&f=false> (accessed 21.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. European Warfare, 1494-1660, Jeremy Black, ed. p.77 http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Dz\_JaYpWSGUC&pg=PA76&lpg=PA76&dq=1524+francis+i+invaded+italy&source=bl&ots=Vzkw3OuGbn&sig=ilcT5M7zHtX142a\_pKM9wBorfeg&hl=en&sa=X&ei=5gIKU7uiMsqt7QaEyoFY&ved=0CFQQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=1524%20francis%20i%20invaded%20italy&f=false [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Hutton, 3.3.14 lecture [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. This may have been in the mind of the rebels in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536: hoping that a rebellion would reverse Cromwell’s Subsidy Bill in the same way as this earlier rebellion had forced Wolsey to back down over the Amicable Grant [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Wolsey had long been angling for this. Campeggio had been well looked after so that he returned to Rome willing to pressure Leo X to extend the legateship, which Leo did for 3 years. On 20 January 1520 Henry VIII wrote to Leo X thanking him for having prolonged Wolsey's commission for three years, *'although he would have preferred it for an indefinite period'* (Martene and Durand, Amplissima colleciio, m, col. 1304; LP m, 600), cited in William E. Wilkie, **The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors Before the Reformation** , **Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.114** <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=viA9AAAAIAAJ&lpg=PA113&ots=BZU1fL24_O&dq=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&pg=PA113#v=onepage&q=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&f=false> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Even after she was separated from her daughter, Mary, in 1528, knowing this separation would continue whilst she disobeyed the King, she did not relent. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Bernard, GW The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church, Yale University Press, p.89 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Praemunire was a crime, dating back to the 12th century and rarely used, of allowing foreign authorities (i.e. the Pope) greater authority than the King within the King’s realm. In reality it had always been recognized that clerics could serve two masters, and Wolsey had managed to juggle both of these roles successfully for many years to Henry’s satisfaction [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. You might remember the interpretation of David Starkey (grr!) that factional intrigue was the principle cause of Wolsey’s demise. Admittedly, the Boleyn faction was baying for blood after the failure of the legatine court at Blackfriars. However, I would argue that faction only came to dominate court politics after Wolsey had fallen, once there was no strong, single figure around whom court politics centred. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Poor old Tyndale. Despite his work being used as justification for the King’s assumption of authority, Tyndale opposed Henry’s divorce. In 1530 he wrote *The Practyse of Prelates* which argued that the divorce was unscriptural. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. 1521 Subsidy Act, 1523 Subsidy, 1525 Amicable Grant fiasco. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Also, H6 was a dithering nonentity who couldn’t rule himself. In contrast, Henry VIII was a tyrannical monster with an iron grip on his country and Wolsey was a commoner – according to Hutton ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Peter Marshall [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. # Symbols of his double papal power – Cardinal and Legate a latere. Retha M. Warnicke The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII Cambridge University Press; New Ed edition (26 July 1991) p.73 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=_iUIzcXV4toC&lpg=PA73&ots=-ibPqWVnK6&dq=clement%20vii%20wolsey%20legate%20permanent&pg=PA73#v=onepage&q=clement%20vii%20wolsey%20legate%20permanent&f=false> (accessed 13/11/2013)

    [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. It could be argued that, as the pre-eminent cleric in England and second only to Henry in matters of state, Wolsey’s simultaneous holding of the offices of legate *a latere* and Lord Chancellor set the precedent for power over church and state to be joined in the hands of one man, as would later happen under Henry’s Act of Supremacy. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Hutton: Sovereign Education Lecture, Birmingham, 10 March 2010 (‘red’ as in socialist; overturning privilege and giving support to the underclasses) [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Hutton: Sovereign Education Lecture, Birmingham, 10 March 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Indeed, it may well be that the Roman Curia (Cardinals serving the Pope) were against Wolsey’s appointment as Cardinal in 1515 because they were afraid he would reform profitable abuses of the church. **Taunton, E.** Cardinal Wolsey: Legate and Reformer. John Lane, London & New York, 1902, p.43. <https://archive.org/stream/thomaswolseylega00taunuoft#page/48/mode/2up/search/a+latere> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Hutton: Sovereign Education Lecture, Birmingham, 10 March 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. **Taunton, E.** Cardinal Wolsey: Legate and Reformer. John Lane, London & New York, 1902, p.73 <https://archive.org/stream/thomaswolseylega00taunuoft#page/48/mode/2up/search/a+latere> (accessed 13/11/2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. # During Campeggio’s first visit to England in 1517-18, Wolsey had obtained Papal Bulls allowing him and Campeggio to grant indulgences and visit monasteries and, together, they visited Westminster Abbey on 31 December 1518.

    # William E. Wilkie, The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors Before the Reformation , Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.113 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=viA9AAAAIAAJ&lpg=PA113&ots=BZU1fL24_O&dq=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&pg=PA113#v=onepage&q=why%20was%20wolsey's%20legateship%20made%20permanent&f=false> (accessed 13/11/2013)

    [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. <http://www.tudors.org/asa2-level/64-wolseys-significance.html> (no longer available as a link since publication of the book) [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. [Samuel Pegge](http://www.google.co.uk/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Samuel+Pegge%22), An Assemblage of Coins, Fabricated by Authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury (Paperback), p.86 [google ebook: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=wH9LAAAAcAAJ&pg=PP2#v=onepage&q&f=false>, accessed 6/11/2013]] [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. non-clerical [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Prorogued – suspended [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. <http://www.theanneboleynfiles.com/7-march-1530-pope-clement-vii-forbids-henry-viii-to-marry-again/> (21.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Cromwell may actually have written this as early as 1529. Details of the supplication can be read in A.G. Dickens, Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation, page 53 or at <http://origins-of-english-reformation.wikispaces.com/Supplication+Against+the+Ordinaries> (20.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Bernard p.176 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Bernard, The King’s Reformation, p.152

    FYI: Ahab was the 7th King of Israel. Listed as most evil King of any before him. Built pagan temple. Married to Jezebel. Responsible for stoning of Naboth: wanted Naboth’s vineyard but Naboth wouldn’t sell ancestral land. Jezebel took matters into own hand and had him stoned for cursing the King! Prophet Elijah condemned him as murderer and warned him that dogs would lick his blood as had licked the blood of Naboth, and all his male heirs would die. This then came to pass. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. This prompted the resignation of Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Bernard, p.89 [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. It didn't negate historic appeals, however, thus Katherine's appeal to Rome, lodged in 1529, remained valid- though ignored! [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=77584> (25.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Weir, A. The Six Wives of Henry VIII, p.260 [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. If you watch Man for All Seasons, which is a truly great play, you can see Rich’s alleged perjury in court, which largely reflects the traditional view of More’s downfall. In fact, More’s conviction for treason rested not on any perjury by Rich; there was no lie. Rich reported accurately the discussion he had with More. However, that conversation had been held within a privileged context; the ‘putting of cases’. This was a hypothetical discussion, which was a common format for discussion of contentious issues without fear of redress. It’s a bit like the American idea of ‘without prejudice’, which you may have seen on movies. More did indeed, within this context of a hypothetical ‘putting of a case’, suggest that Henry could not become Head of the church, but this shouldn’t have exposed him to the Treason Act because of the type of conversation held. His conviction therefore, actually rested on the fact that Cromwell directed the jury to disregard the context for the discussion, making More’s hypothetic argument a real denial of the supremacy. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. David Knowles The Religious Orders in England, Volume 3, p.182. <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=eEhFlM6Qf7YC&pg=PA181&lpg=PA181&dq=monks+oath+to+the+act+of+succession&source=bl&ots=xiqezhqnWs&sig=S1si0IoqM_AccdiiU6OpAMASrfg&hl=en&ei=h7CNTr6ADczCtAaHxZ3tDw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=monks%20oath%20to%20the%20act%20of%20succession&f=false>. 5/10/11 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. An ascetic is a person who renounces material comforts and leads a life of austere self-discipline [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. i.e financially support the running of the court and country from his own pocket, rather than through regular taxation. The exception was defence, of course. As England (and most European nations) of this period didn’t have a standing army, extraordinary taxes had to be raised to finance any army for individual expeditions. Taxes tended to be granted only in such ‘extraordinary’ circumstances and were standalone charges rather than regular, reliable income for the Crown. Henry VIII had spent the vast majority of the money his frugal father had left him on futile, but expensive, wars with France in the 1520s –which we will look at in due course. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Patronage was gifts, of offices (jobs), or titles, which came with land. It was an established way of securing loyalty between monarch and nobility – remember Henry really needs their loyalty now! [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. People who gave money to support the monastery [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. The notion of a ‘commonwealth man’ wasn’t a formal title, but a group of European thinkers who shared the revolutionary view that rulers could and should improve the lives of their subjects – as opposed to the traditional notion of the ‘Great Chain of Being’. Elton argued (1973) that Cromwell built up a group of similar thinkers around him who helped him to implement legislation that would improve peoples’ lives and that his efforts at social and economic reform were interrupted by his fall. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Remember that ‘reformist’ thought at this time was many shades of grey; there was no clear statement of ‘protestant’ doctrine, but a variety of different ‘reformist’ ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Land that belonged to the monastery directly, that wasn’t rented out and that was farmed either by the people who did rent land from the monastery as a feudal service (ask me if you don’t know how the feudal system worked), or by paid servants of the monastery. Any spare crops could be sold, bringing in an additional income. It is pronounced ‘de-meen’ [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. This simply means parishes ‘linked to’ the monastery. Land that belonged to local nobles would pay their state taxes to the nobles and also pay a tithe to a local monastery or church even if they didn’t live on crown land. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. The dissolution can be seen in stages, which may help you make your notes for revision:

    1. Survey into the wealth of the church
    2. Visitations
    3. Closure of the smaller monasteries
    4. “Voluntary” surrenders
    5. Closure of the larger monasteries

    A helpful haiku:

    **Hal to monks: “In faith,**

    **Rich ye be; corruption sure.**

    **Away! (leave the loot).”** [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. “Value of the Church” [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. These tended to be the small under-occupied houses with insufficient income. This was all open and above board; papal authority had been received. [Unfortunately, Wolsey was unable to complete the paperwork before his fall, so the land passed to the Crown along with everything else! [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. This doesn’t mean a legal court; it was a term used to mean ‘organisational body’ – like we would use department today [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Bernard, GW Anne Boleyn: Fatal Attractions Yale University Press,

    <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=pRDY4TPCMgwC&pg=PT93&lpg=PT93&dq=how+did+cromwell+survive+fall+of+anne+boleyn&source=bl&ots=oCY-mmhpFl&sig=KPWWpEMAoJgCm4kESz_j-KhR210&hl=en&sa=X&ei=d6AVU83oEsmVhQf-uIAw&ved=0CFYQ6AEwBjgK#v=onepage&q=how%20did%20cromwell%20survive%20fall%20of%20anne%20boleyn&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. 28 Henry VIII c.10 Statutes of the Realm, iii, 663 in Joseph Robson Tanner Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603, p.48 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Q9o8AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=Act+Extinguishing+the+Authority+of+the+Bishop+of+Rome.&source=bl&ots=2wzJyZYr7n&sig=-loC5sQ_UHMWnC0xafGZdL8u8pQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=9tbwUu3XMMn17Ab3sYC4Cw&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=act%20of%20succession&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Starkey D From Feud to Faction: English Politics 1450-1550 [History Today](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/43) [Volume: 32 Issue: 11](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/2523) [1982](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/14756)  viewed online: <http://www.historytoday.com/david-starkey/feud-faction-english-politics-1450-1550> (4.3.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. The privy seal is Henry’s official seal (disc pressed into warm wax to ‘sign’ an official paper, such as a law, or correspondence with foreign Kings. This was a massive promotion. Remember Wolsey had been accused in the Parliamentary Act of Attainder of taking the seal abroad without Henry’s permission, as proof that Wolsey was acting as an ‘alter rex’: the seal was the King’s agreement to any document to which it was attached; control of it was power indeed. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. *“These essentially orthodox articles left the door open to Protestant interpretation, especially in the matter of the number of the sacraments. Whilst the Articles made specific mention of baptism, penance and the Eucharist, they remained silent on confirmation, ordination, marriage and extreme unction (last rites).”* (**Newcombe**). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Transubstantiation was the ‘transformation’ believed by Catholics to take place during the Eucharist when the bread and wine literally becomes the body and bloody of Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Justification by faith (solafideism) is the Lutheran doctrine that God alone can save or damn, no priest can intervene. The only way to ensure salvation was to believe and to carry out the word of God in your life. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. A revolt which can beautifully be summarised by the haiku:

    Grim it were up north:

    Faith forfeit and sorely taxed.

    Aske, seek; find Hal’s noose. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. The 1534 Subsidy Act – (don’t confuse this with the clerical Subsidy Bill of 1531!!) This subsidy has been seen by some historians as evidence of Cromwell’s revolutionary overhaul of government, in that it justified peace time taxation primarily on the basis of the civil benefits gained through the king’s government – previously, taxation had been for specific purposes such as war. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. A complicated piece of legislation that basically imposed greater inheritance taxes on feudal land [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. The Chamberlain was basically the head of the domestic staff in a royal house [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. ML Bush’s argument [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. heirs [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. peasant (‘peasant’ as a term was out of use really by this period. The term ‘commons’ rather than ‘peasants’ is more historically accurate) [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. restoration [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. There had been poor harvests in 1535 and 1536, resulting in food shortages and rising prices. These were exacerbated, however, by enclosures and rack renting (raising of rents). Tax assessments for the period confirm that Yorkshire was a poor area. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. The uncle of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, the most powerful nobleman at court [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Which suggests that Aske, at least, believed that most of Parliament was pro-catholic rather than reformist [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Normal laws are suspended and the military leader in that area has full power to do whatever he likes to restore order [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. The Marcher lordships were the lands that were on the border between England and Wales – e.g areas around Chester, Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow. These Lords were independent of the English King. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Which you can read online via: <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/cranmerbib.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. “Henry had required the bishops to state their opinions, and they had done so; he was now trying to finesse their agreed, but often uncertain, ambiguous and contradictory text, building on those passages with which he was in sympathy and revising, skillfully, those he liked less, while carrying Cranmer with him”. (Bernard) [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Robert Tittler, Norman Jones, eds. A Companion to Tudor Britain, Wiley-Blackwell, May 2008, p.226 <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=F9_3ktSGOEwC&pg=PA226&lpg=PA226&dq=first+voluntary+surrender+of+monasteries+1537&source=bl&ots=2yk7WDdhzU&sig=CHL31VS6Z4FTIQhPWEKpVXdserA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i5AMU5CoOa7H7Ab4r4HwDw&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ%20-%20v=onepage&q=first%20voluntary%20surrender%20of%20monasteries%201537&f=false#v=snippet&q=first%20voluntary%20surrender%20of%20monasteries%201537&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02372a.htm> (25.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Seward, D The 'Exeter Conspiracy' of 1538: The Extermination of the White Rose, [History Today](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/43) [Volume: 61 Issue: 1](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/25476) [2011](http://www.historytoday.com/taxonomy/term/25471) online at: <http://www.historytoday.com/desmond-seward/exeter-conspiracy-1538-extermination-white-rose> (4.3.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. You can read the proclamation here: <http://conclarendon.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/henry-viiis-proclamation-1538.html> (25.2.2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Paul III used Clement VII’s original bull of excommunication, so some books talk about Henry having been excommunicated in 1534, and others in 1538 – it was 1538. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. i.e they couldn’t find any written evidence in his study that conclusively proved his opposition to the supremacy, so they began again to question him [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Henry had spent 1538 offering himself in marriage to various French princesses and to Christina, Duchess of Milan and niece of Charles V, but these negotiations fell through; the women making it clear that they preferred suitors without such a poor track record as a husband! [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. The only role of Chantries was prayer for the dead. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Murphy et al, Flagship History - England 1485-1603 Collins Educational (1 Feb 1999) [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Guy p.? [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Lockyer and O'Sullivan [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Remember that the HRE ruled the German lands in a complex system of political hierarchies [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. **Bernard** argues that *“Henry brought him down, because the destruction of Cromwell, on the grounds of Cromwell’s alleged religious radicalism, strengthened the king’s negotiating position in diplomatic bargaining with the emperor and the king of France, and dramatically emphasized the precise nature of royal religious policy within his realm”* [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Weir, p441 [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Weir, A The Six Wives of Henry VIII p.440 [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Marshall, p.233 [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Fraser, A The Six Wives of Henry VIII <http://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=HKynDn8DnhEC&oi=fnd&pg=PT1&dq=katherine+howard++henry+viii&ots=YtGd0Ry0iB&sig=kCV_MS3yUUhJ9xxZwZouYWFloXI#v=onepage&q=katherine%20howard%20%20henry%20viii&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Weir p. 447 [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Weir p.447 [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Scarisbrick, p.431 [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Scarisbrick, JJ Henry VIII p.434 [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Scarisbrick, JJ Henry VIII p.434 [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. <http://www.whscms.org.uk/index.php?category_id=1954> (5/3/2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Scarisbrick, p.439 [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Scarisbrick, p.439 [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Mottram, Stewart James Empire and Nation in Early English Renaissance Literature, p.166 [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Scarisbrick, p. 439 [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Scarisbrick, p.478 [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Guy, Tudor England p.196 [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Scarisbrick, p.455 [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. By mixing base metals such as copper, which weren’t worth very much, with the silver that was used for most English coins. The result was poor quality, low value coinage. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Scarisbrick p.483 [↑](#footnote-ref-143)