Reformation in Britain and Ireland

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Felicity Heal

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THE OXFORD HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Edited by
Henry and Owen Chadwick

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FELICITY HEAL

To my Mother, for all her support

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PREFACE

It was almost a decade ago that the General Editor wrote to ask if I would be interested in contributing to the Oxford History of the Christian Church. The volume he suggested would address the early English Reformation, with a concluding date in the first years of Elizabeth's reign. Or so I read Owen Chadwick's letter. A more careful rereading added a distinctive dimension to the task: what was needed was a study of the British churches, or rather those of Britain and Ireland, to match volumes being prepared on the Continental Reformations. It was that additional information that seduced me from the paths of social history and persuaded me to sign. In the first half of the 1990s there were at last exciting developments in the integrated and comparative study of the British Isles, following the ideas first proposed by John Pocock a decade and a half earlier. Collections of essays on the British dimension of early modern history began to proliferate. The time had come to try to stretch the understanding of a 'mere English' historian and to think about the ways in which the three kingdoms, and four nations of the British archipelago, responded to the most traumatic experience of the sixteenth century, the coming of the Reformation.

I added only one caveat to the Editor's proposal. It was no longer possible to halt the story of religious change at 1560, or even 1570. It is at present fashionable to argue that the Reformation has to be understood as a long process, finishing, according to taste, in 1640, in the 1680s, or even in the eighteenth century. This seems unnecessarily extended, though there is an obvious logic in continuing the narrative of changes in religious politics up to the war of the three kingdoms in 1642, a point made by Professor Chadwick. Instead Reformation historians would now most usually argue that it is important to proceed a generation or two beyond 1560: to understand the impact of religious crisis both on those who lived through the great transitions in public policy and those who followed them. The latter, as credal Protestants or conscious recusants, had a very different relationship to religious change from their mothers and fathers, and needed to be studied to understand how post-Reformation culture emerged. So, the Editor and I agreed to compromise: both the ecclesiastical narrative and the study of post-Reformation beliefs would have a

terminal date around the turn of the sixteenth century. The latter pos-
sessed an intellectual logic; the former the recognition that James VI and
I's arrival in England provides a temporary caesura for each of his three
kingdoms.

At about the time that *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* became more
than a contract with a rather distant submission date, Diarmaid MacCul-
loch proposed to Judith Maltby, Susan Brigden, and myself, that we estab-
lish an Oxford seminar on Religion in the British Isles 1400–1700. This
has now been a regular feature of the Trinity Term calendar for some
years, with Christopher Haigh joining to replace Susan four years ago. It
has proved a most stimulating seminar, and my gratitude goes to my
fellow organizers who have kept my faith in the intellectual project going
in what have sometimes proved difficult circumstances. We often disagree
about the nature of the Reformation, and about the significance of its
'British' dimensions, but for all of us the Thursday evenings of Trinity
Term have proved a high point in the academic calendar.

A number of the speakers and participants at the seminar have been
generous in offering me advice and comments. Jane Dawkins, Linda Dun-
bar, Donald Meek, and Margo Todd have helped to guide my faltering
footsteps on the Scottish Reformation. I am particularly grateful to Margo
Todd for allowing me to read a chapter of her book on Scottish Protes-
tantism in draft. Jenny Wormald has also been a great source of infor-
mation and stimulating discussion on Scotland, as well as a constant
friend. Alan Ford and Raymond Gillespie provided important discussion
and references on the Irish Reformation. Glanmor Williams, the doyen of
Welsh Reformation studies, gave inspiration through his seminar, but
above all through his written works. Bill Sheils, Alec Ryrie, Craig d'Al-
ton, Peter Sherlock, Alison Wall, and Peter Marshall all offered illumin-
ation on England. Cliff Davies reminded me that the Channel Islands had
to be taken into account. Beyond the seminar I have benefited from
valuable help from Michael Lynch on Scotland and Steven Ellis on Ire-
land. Tony Shaw has been stimulating on the dissolution of the monaster-
ies. Roger Bowers and Brett Usher were both kind enough to show me
unpublished work on the Elizabethan Settlement and the first Elizabethan
bench of bishops respectively, and to discuss their findings with me. My
graduates have been an important source of inspiration and friendship: in
particular Kevin Dillow, Christine Peters, Helen Parish, Greg Duke, and
Mark Bell have all contributed directly or indirectly to my thinking on
this project.

Diarmaid MacCulloch read the material in Chapter 8, and saved me
from a number of theological errors. Owen Chadwick has been a most
patient and supportive general editor, and has read the whole text system-

atically. Hilary O'Shea at the Oxford University Press has also waited uncomplainingly as administrative burdens delayed the completion of the book for longer than was reasonable. That it is completed at all must be attributed partly to the administrative support of two colleagues and friends: Diane Price, who sustained me as senior tutor of my college, and Sue Bennett, who has been a tower of strength in the History Faculty.

I owe particular personal debts to my uncle, Revd Donald Johnson, for sustained interest in the project, and intermittent reminders that it was time it was finished, and to my colleague John Walsh, who (rightly) wondered from time to time if it was wise to commit to a large project of this kind, but who has always been enthusiastic about discussing it. As always my greatest debt has been to my husband, Clive Holmes. Though we have parted intellectual ways since writing together on the gentry, he remains my greatest academic support and critic, always ready to read drafts, debate ideas, encourage, and drive me forward.

F. H.

Jesus College, Oxford
Easter 2002

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AHR	*American Historical Review*
APC	*Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. J. R. Dasent, 32 vols. (1890–1907)
APS	*Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson (1814–75)
ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* (see also *HR*)
BL	British Library
Bodl	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BUK	*The Booke of the Universall Kirk: Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson, 3 vols. (Bannatyne Club, 1839–45)
C16J	*Sixteenth-Century Journal*
Calderwood	*History of the Church of Scotland by Mr David Calderwood*, ed T. Thomson, 8 vols. (Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1842–9)
CPR	*Calendar of Patent Rolls*
CPR Irl	*Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Ireland*
CS	Camden Society
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers Domestic*
CSP For	*Calendar of State Papers Foreign*
CSP Irl	*Calendar of State Papers Ireland*
CSP Sc	*Calendar of State Papers Scotland*
CSP Sp	*Calendar of State Papers Spanish*
CSP Ven	*Calendar of State Papers Venetian*
CWTM	*Complete Works of St Thomas More*, 10 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1963–90)
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Foxe	J. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. G. Townshend and S. R. Cattley, 8 vols. (1837–41)
HJ	*Historical Journal*
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission

HR	*Historical Research*
IHS	*Irish Historical Studies*
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
Knox	J. Knox, *Works*, ed. D. Laing, 6 vols. (Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1846)
LP	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer *et al.*, 23 vols. (1862–1932)
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
LRS	Lincoln Record Society
OL	*Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, ed. H. Robinson, 2 vols. (PS, Cambridge, 1846–7)
PP	*Past and Present*
PRO	Public Record Office, London
PS	Parker Society
RSCHS	*Records of the Scottish Church History Society*
RSTC	*Revised Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland . . . before 1640*, ed. W.A. Jackson and F.S. Ferguson, 3 vols. (1976–91)
SCH	Studies in Church History: Ecclesiastical History Society
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
SHS	Scottish Historical Society
SP HVIII	*State Papers of King Henry VIII*, 11 vols. (1830–52)
SRS	Scottish Record Society
STS	Scottish Text Society
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
TRP	*Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin, 2 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1964, 1969)
VAI	*Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, 3 vols., ed. W.H. Frere and W.M. Kennedy (Alcuin Club, 14–16, 1910)
Wilkins, *Concilia*	*Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hibernicae*, ed. D. Wilkins, 4 vols. (1737)
YAJ	*Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*
ZL	*Zurich Letters, 1558–1579*, ed. H. Robinson, 2 vols. (PS, Cambridge, 1842)

NOTE ON CONVENTIONS AND MONEY

All spellings have been modernized, except in the case of verse where original spelling is pertinent to pronunciation. Dates are given in Old Style, but with the year beginning on 1 January, not 25 March. The place of publication is London unless otherwise specified.

Figures for ecclesiastical income are given in the national currencies, that is pounds English, Irish, and Scots. Until 1460 Irish pounds were equivalent to English. Thereafter they diverged: in the early sixteenth century a pound English was worth 30 shillings Irish. Scottish and English pounds diverged after the mid-fourteenth century. The relationship between the value of the two varied markedly over our period. Between 1475 and 1565 the shift was from a ratio of 4:1 to 5:1. Thereafter the value of the Scottish pound collapsed: by 1603 the ratio was 12:1.

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INTRODUCTION

Early one morning in mid-August 1553 John Bale, Protestant polemicist, dramatist, and bishop of Ossory in the Irish marches, fled from his episcopal see to Dublin. Thence he made his escape by sea, intending to go to Scotland, but, after a series of picaresque adventures with pirates, eventually arriving in the Low Countries. There, in the wearisome years of Mary I's reign, he published his *Vocacyon*, one of the first pieces of writing in English that can claim the status of autobiography.[1] It is, however, autobiography of a narrowly circumscribed kind. Bale describes his calling to the see of Ossory by Edward VI in 1552, his experiences in Dublin and Kilkenny in the months before his flight, and the complex sea journeying that led him to Flanders. The context of the work is scriptural and providential: Bale had experienced calling, persecution, and deliverance, and in this he resembled the saints of the true Church in all ages. The bishop's particular models were Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and St Paul: all were 'called from their mother's womb to that heavenly office of preaching', each suffered under tyrants, and each was finally 'delivered in this life from parlous dangers and in death from sin, hell and damnation'.[2] Though Bale had not been called upon to suffer direct physical martyrdom, the cross that he bore was heavy, involving the fear of death, the killing of several of his servants in Ireland, exile, and the tragic loss of his collection of books.[3]

Bale's precipitate flight was one small incident in a summer of profound crisis for the Protestant cause. His stay in Ireland was so brief that he scarcely had time to disturb the surface of Irish religious politics and neither his coming nor his going can be said to have changed much in the Tudor crown's second realm. However, the bishop's account of his

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[1] The critical edition with facsimile reproduction of the text is P. Happé and J.N. King (eds.), *The vocacyon of Johan Bale*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 70 (Binghamton, N.Y., 1990).

[2] Ibid., 32.

[3] Ibid., introduction. See also A. Hadfield, 'Translating the Reformation: John Bale's Irish *Vocacyon*', in B. Bradshaw, A. Hadfield, and W. Maley (eds.), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of the Conflict, 1534–1660* (Cambridge, 1993), 43–59; S. Ellis, 'John Bale, bishop of Ossory, 1552–3', *Journal of the Butler Society* 2 (1984), 283–93.

experiences is remarkably revealing, both about the nature of evangelical Protestantism, and about religious change in sixteenth-century Britain and Ireland. Bale was one of the most vigorous protagonists of the 'hot gospelling' generation: men whose objective, in Margaret Aston's vivid phrase, was not 'to re-educate, but to re-convert the world'.[4] Steeped in the scriptures—Henry VIII was King David, Edward VI a wise Solomon, the popish clergy of Ireland the spawn of Antichrist—Bale was wholly uncompromising in his determination to preach the gospel. He initiated a crucial sermon cycle from the pulpit of Kilkenny cathedral, preaching repentance, Christ's saving merits and sole capacity to save, while lambasting the clergy for their maintenance of 'white gods of their making', which were 'no gods but idols'.[5] When challenged by his cathedral establishment after Mary's proclamation as Queen he first 'took Christ's testament in my hand' and then, after preaching at the market cross, organized the young men of the town to perform 'a Tragedy of Gods promises in the old law' followed by 'a Comedy of Saint John Baptists preaching'. Both plays were probably by Bale, whose reforming interludes were famous long before he left for Ireland.[6] It may be the sheer vigour and passion of the bishop's approach that won him friends and supporters in the hostile environment of Kilkenny. His own assessment was that he had numbers of ordinary lay adherents, who helped among other things to protect him from murder in 1553, while his enemies were the clergy and a coterie of influential gentry and magistrates. When his servants were killed in the countryside 300 local men carried him back to Kilkenny 'the young men singing psalms and godly songs all the way'.[7]

But John Bale's gospelling, as he narrated it, was of a distinctive sort, regulated by the Royal Supremacy, and insistent on obedience to an established Tudor order. His 'vocation' was not generated by some internal divine calling, but by the summons of Edward VI to take up episcopal office, articulated in a conciliar letter that he proudly prints in full in his text. It was, he claimed, the doctrine of obedience that led him to insist that he and his colleague Hugh Goodacre be consecrated in Dublin according to the new ordinal of 1550. George Browne, the archbishop of Dublin, wanted to use the old text on the grounds that the new had not been sanctioned by the act of an Irish parliament. But Bale argued that 'if England and Ireland be under one king, they are both bound to the obedience of one law under him'. And his view prevailed because it had

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[4] M. Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988), 9.

[5] Happé and King, *Vocacyon*, 54.

[6] On Bale's career as dramatist see L.P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (Purdue, Ind., 1976).

[7] Happé and King, *Vocacyon*, 64.

the support of Sir Thomas Cusack, the Irish chancellor.[8] Once Edward's death was known the bishop tried every shift legally to avoid restoring the old religion, including arguing that there was no Irish lord deputy in residence to whom he could appeal. Law and conscience finally came directly into conflict when Mary's proclamation allowing the Mass was made public and 'the priests ... suddenly set up the altars and images in the cathedral church'. At this point Bale could no longer retain any conviction in his appeal to authority and fled shaking the dust of the wicked off his feet 'according to Christ's commandment'.[9]

Bale's Irish adventures can usefully introduce many of the issues that are of central importance to this study of the Reformation in Britain and Ireland. The first is that the Tudor Reformation was incontrovertibly political. Historians are currently more attracted to the investigation of 'popular' religion and of forms of religious identity than to the ecclesiastical proceedings of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.[10] But an understanding of the nature of the Reformation demands above all careful analysis of exactly this type of religious politics. The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* was well understood by the subjects of the Tudors long before it became one of the assumptions of the Peace of Augsburg (1555). This doctrine of obedience to the conscience of the prince could take extreme forms. John Foxe cites a remarkable speech by the chronicler Edward Hall to the 1539 parliament, in which he asserts the duty of subjects to obey their prince in matters of religion, following what he, with the advice of the clergy, 'shall at any time please to set forth to be observed or believed'.[11] Bale's Protestantism was not erastian in this way: the conscience of the individual maintained a sovereignty that could not be displaced by prince or parliament. However, obedience to the spiritual will of the monarch, and to the political choices that resulted, was an essential aspect of his behaviour and that of most other leaders of the English church and state.[12] The

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[8] Ibid., 52–3.   [9] Ibid., 67.

[10] Among the important recent studies of religion in early modern England that adopt this approach are E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, Conn., 1992); C. Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England* (Basingstoke, 1998); M. Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520–1725* (Cambridge, 1995); T. Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1992); and A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2000). For Ireland there is R. Gillespie, *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997). Studies which balance the investigation of high politics and ecclesiology with that of lay beliefs include C. Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993); D. MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547–1603*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke, 2001) and *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (1999); and for Wales, G. Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff, 1997).

[11] Foxe, vi. 505.

[12] R. Rex, 'The crisis of obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation', *HJ* 39 (1996), 863–94.

export of religious change to Ireland was also a matter of political choice and will. Bale's remarks on the importance of Cusack's support in Dublin acknowledge that reformation could only be achieved with the help of the magistrate. A prime explanation for the final failure of reform in the Irish Pale was that the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* was simply not accepted by enough of those who had to implement the crown's will.[13]

The Scottish Reformation seems, at first glance, less obviously politicized than its English, Welsh, and Irish counterpart. The monarchy did not make the Scottish Reformation. However, the Lords of the Congregation did, and without their political support, and that of Elizabeth's regime, the ministerial revolution of John Knox and his colleagues would probably have been stillborn. Power to enforce change rested in the hands of the lay elite, though since authority in the Scottish realm was far more decentralized and local than south of the border, the ministers were offered opportunities for political intervention that would have amazed Bale, and that appalled later English bishops.[14] In the late years of the century, under a mature monarch, conflicts at the centre of Scottish politics became ever more closely associated with issues about the governance of the Kirk.[15] So dramatic, and sometimes violent, were these conflicts, that they have tended to mesmerize historians of Scottish reform, who have been slower than their English or Irish counterparts to turn aside from ecclesiastical politics to the study of religious behaviour.[16]

The Reformation, Henry Kamen has observed, became institutionalized in northern Europe through the support of state, of lay elites, and of

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[13] There is a vast historiography seeking to explain the failure of Reformation in Ireland. The best introduction is the debate conducted in article form over the past twenty-five years: B. Bradshaw, 'Sword, word and strategy in the Reformation in Ireland', *HJ* 21 (1978), 475–502; N. Canny, 'Why the Reformation failed in Ireland: une question mal posée', *JEH* 30 (1979), 423–50; K.S. Bottigheimer, 'The failure of the Reformation in Ireland: une question bien posée', *JEH* 36 (1985), 196–207; K.S. Bottigheimer and U. Lotz-Heumann, 'The Irish Reformation in European perspective', *ARG* 89 (1998), 268–309; K. Bottigheimer and B. Bradshaw, 'Revisionism and the Irish Reformation: a debate', *JEH* 51 (2000), 581–92; H.A. Jefferies, 'The early Tudor Reformation in the Irish Pale', *JEH* 52 (2001), 34–62.

[14] The best brief introduction to the relationship between politics and religion in Scotland is in J. Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1470–1625* (1981). The formal narrative is provided by G. Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (Cambridge, 1960). On power relations between nobility and Kirk see J. Wormald, ' "Princes" and the regions in the Scottish Reformation', in N. MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics and Society* (Edinburgh, 1983), 65–84.

[15] For a thorough survey see A.R. MacDonald, *The Jacobean Kirk, 1567–1625* (Aldershot, 1998).

[16] An honourable exception is I.B. Cowan, *The Scottish Reformation: Church and Society in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (1982). The study by Margo Todd on the post-Reformation Scottish Kirk is the first that seeks systematically to study belief and behaviour in the congregation: M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, Conn., 2002). This important volume was published too late to be reflected fully in the present study.

towns.[17] For John Bale this secular formulation would have omitted the one estate below the crown that was of fundamental importance: the clergy. His Irish venture was structured around monarchical and lay support for reform but the opposition of the conservative clergy was sufficient constantly to destabilize his mission. And Bale perceived that he and his opponents were not just locked in conflict about ceremonial or behaviour: he moved unhesitatingly into preaching on the key doctrinal themes of justification, grace, and salvation through Christ's merits. The minister was far more than an agent of an official reformation. Just as the Catholic priest claimed the key intermediary role between God and man through the operation of the sacraments, so the Protestant became the medium for the edification of the congregation through the lively preaching of the Word.[18] The clergy might be beleaguered by the greed and ignorance of lay society: they still had to bear witness to the truth of the gospel and recognize the popish priests as their greatest enemies. Of course, sources like Bale's, or like Knox's far more influential *History of the Reformation*, have a tendency to distort the historical record with their belief in the heroic witness of the godly ministers and their sharp binary division of the world into the forces of light and darkness.[19] The British clergy might, by the early seventeenth century, have deserved Joseph Hall's epithet '*Stupor mundi clericus Britannicus*' (The clergy of Britain is the wonder of the world).[20] It had, however, arrived at that point through a series of crises and disasters, compromises and processes of accommodation that appeared far from wonderful. Only perhaps in its contributions to learning, translation, and doctrinal debate, can the British clergy lay claim to Hall's observation from the very beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

[17] H. Kamen, 'Spain', in R. Scribner, R. Porter, and M. Teich (eds.), *The Reformation in National Context* (Cambridge, 1994), 211. See also G. Parker, 'Success and failure during the first century of the Reformation', *PP* 136 (1992), 43–82.

[18] Key studies of the role of the clergy in England are, for the pre-Reformation period, P. Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1994) and P. Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (1969); for the early Reformation, D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven, Conn., 1996); and for the Elizabethan period, P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982) and R. O'Day, *The English Clergy: The Emergence and Consolidation of a Profession* (Leicester, 1979). On Scotland see J. Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh, 1989) and, for the end of the century, D.G. Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590–1638* (Oxford, 2000). On Ireland see H.A. Jefferies, *Priests and Prelates in Armagh, 1518–1558* (Dublin, 1997) and A. Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland 1590–1641* (Dublin, 1997).

[19] J. Kirk, 'John Knox and the historians', in R.A. Mason (ed.), *John Knox and the British Reformations* (Aldershot, 1998), 14–15, though Kirk points out that it is the ministers as a group whom Knox trumpets, not his own role.

[20] P. Wynter (ed.), *The Works of Joseph Hall*, 10 vols. (Oxford, 1843), x. 29. Quoted by Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, 92. Hall chooses to single out the intellectual luminaries of the English church from Jewel and Humphrey to Willett and White.

Bale's Catholic clergy and conservative magistrates endeavoured to impede the true work of reformation: the conversion of the people. Bale had, he argued, been sent 'to seek the peoples health', which must be achieved by the preaching of pure doctrine combined with good discipline. 'For doctrine without discipline and restraint of vices maketh dissolute hearers. And on the other side discipline without doctrine maketh either hypocrites or else desperate doers.'[21] The reformation of parish, congregation, and individual was the objective of all zealous ministers. The ambition was for nothing less than a regeneration of society: an aim that often existed in tension with the Calvinist conviction that only a minority would be saved. In Bale's narrative we can see hints that he sought to reconcile himself to the failures of general conversion by singling out groups which showed evidence of regeneration, particularly the psalm-singing, thespian youths of Kilkenny. Sermon-gadding laymen in Elizabethan England, or committed congregations like that of the kirk of St Andrews in Scotland, offered the same promising material to their clerical mentors.[22] But the process of conversion was hard, and in practice the ambitions of the clergy for many of the laity extended little further than the conformity that was a requirement of the churches. The very language of conversion indicated a sharp rupture between past and present behaviour that was unlikely to be achieved in most ordinary parochial environments. The establishment of full discipline of the kind contemplated by Bale and largely enacted by the Scottish reformers assisted in redirecting the laity. However, the principal process by which ordinary Catholics became Protestant was one of accommodation and adjustment. The displacement of the old—the loss of the Catholic liturgy, of saints, of prayer for the dead—was followed by slow reconstruction, as conformity was built into acceptance of new liturgy, preaching, and Bible reading.[23]

Studies of religious change and reformation in lands that became Protestant have routinely had a national character.[24] The practical complexity of researching and explaining something as fundamental as a transformation

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[21] Happé and King, *Vocacyon*, 54–5.

[22] P. Collinson, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as forms of popular culture', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560–1700* (Basingstoke, 1996), 20–3. J. Dawson, ' "The face of the perfyt reformed Kyrk": St Andrews and the early Scottish Reformation', SCH Subsidia 8 (Oxford, 1991), 413–35.

[23] This is broadly the revisionist position now accepted by most historians of the English Reformation, who accept the substance of Haigh's argument for a 'slow Reformation' only gradually achieved over the late sixteenth century. Haigh, *English Reformations*, 12–21, 285–95. In recent years there has been more interest in the nature of post-Reformation popular belief than in the speed of religious change. See, in particular, Walsham, *Providence*; J. Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998).

[24] Scribner, Porter, and Teich, *The Reformation in National Context*.

in official ideology and popular religious behaviour has contributed to this pattern. So too has the difficulty of identifying a logical structure of analysis of a supranational kind. Historians of doctrine and ideas have found it easiest to transcend fixed boundaries, for the reformers themselves formed a 'republic of letters', albeit one often divided on critical issues of interpretation. Like their humanist predecessors, Bucer, Bullinger, and Calvin consciously promoted the pursuit of pan-European religious harmony through correspondence, formal debate, and mission.[25] But when the reception of these ideas and their assimilation into the political mainstream is at issue, national historians have a tendency to revert to claims of local exceptionalism. Protestantism itself, of course, legitimated these national impulses, with its acceptance that the true Church could have many particular manifestations, unified only by the possession of the proper 'marks' of faithful preaching and proper ministration of the sacraments.[26] In Germany after Augsburg the way was opened for a full-blooded acceptance that reforming churches could proceed autonomously under their own prince. National autonomy is enshrined in the very fabric of the Reformation.

English and Scottish historians have been among the most committed proponents of a view of reform founded upon the nation. The Scots acquired a rigorous form of Calvinism and forged it into a powerful system of religious identity that also became a major source of political unity. The preachers were already praising its distinctive Reformation at the end of the sixteenth century, and understanding the Scots and their faith has been a major preoccupation of historians ever since.[27] English claims to uniqueness have been less concerned with purity of faith, but have constructed the Reformation as part of the manifest destiny of the English people. While historians no longer subscribe to such teleological theories, they remain intrigued by the contribution made by the Reformation to the emergence of a sense of national identity.[28] They may also be seduced by the distinctiveness of the structure of the Church of England, which has traditionally led to claims of separateness. To privilege the study of religious change in England is at best to acknowledge that distinctiveness, which can be analysed through rich and abundant sources. At worst it can contribute to the 'fog in the Channel, Continent isolated' view of English history.

Irish historians have their own claims to uniqueness, based not of course on the acceptance of Reformation, but on its triumphal rejection.

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[25] P.D.L. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (1981).

[26] D.F. Wright (ed.), *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge, 1994).

[27] For reflections on this theme see M. Lynch, 'A nation born again? Scottish identity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in D. Brown, R.J. Finlay, and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-making of Scotland through the Ages* (Edinburgh, 1998), 82–104.

[28] See particularly P. Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Basingstoke, 1988).

In a northern European world in which rulers claimed to control the consciences of their subjects, goes the argument, the Irish alone resisted. It was, to quote Brendan Bradshaw, 'a kingdom in which the vast majority of the subjects persisted in refusing to conform to the religion of the monarch "as by law established"'.[29] Irish historians, like their English and Scottish counterparts, have retreated from claims that the success of Catholicism was inevitable, but their readings of religious experience remain coloured by a conviction of the uniqueness of the island's experience.

The development of 'new British history' since the 1970s has provided one form of riposte to national essentialists in the various parts of the archipelago. As articulated by John Pocock the new approach was designed to counter Anglocentric narrative in which the 'matter of Britain' if it was considered at all was constantly identified with 'the matter of England'.[30] Instead, the new British history should endeavour to understand the 'cultural pluralism and partial domination' that was the story of the three kingdoms or four nations. The results have been mixed for the early modern period and for the study of the Reformation. There has been valuable comparative work on the impact of religious change in Ireland and Wales, and on the relationship between religion and politics in these two territories.[31] Gaelic scholars have reminded Anglophone historians of the internationalism of the Gaelic world, and of some of its responses to religious and political upheaval.[32] Religious change in the sixteenth century has been considered, briefly, as the context for the more visibly British crises of religion in the Stuart period.[33] A first attempt has

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[29] B. Bradshaw, 'The Tudor Reformation and revolution in Wales and Ireland: the origins of the British problem', in B. Bradshaw and J. Morrill (eds.), *The British Problem c.1534–1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* (Basingstoke, 1996), 39–40.

[30] The 'Ur' text is J.G.A. Pocock, 'British history: a plea for a new subject', *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975), 601–28. The quotations are from Geoffrey of Monmouth, used as the focus of R.R. Davies's Oxford inaugural lecture: *The Matter of Britain and the Matter of England* (Oxford, 1996).

[31] Bradshaw, 'The Tudor Reformation' and idem, 'The English Reformation and identity formation in Ireland and Wales', in B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.), *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain 1533–1707* (Cambridge, 1998), 43–111. S. Ellis, 'Economic problems of the Church: why the Reformation failed in Ireland', *JEH* 41 (1990), 239–65. C. Brady, 'Comparable histories? Tudor reform in Wales and Ireland', in S.G. Ellis and S. Barber (eds.), *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485–1725* (Harlow, 1995), 64–86. This comparative project has been driven by Irish historians, and Karl Bottigheimer and Ute Lotz-Heumann have warned of its narrowness and its tendency to confirm a nationalist view of Irish exceptionalism: Bottigheimer and Lotz-Heumann, 'Irish Reformation', 274–5.

[32] M. MacCraith, 'The Gaelic reaction to the Reformation', in Ellis and Barber, *Conquest and Union*, 139–61.

[33] J. Morrill, 'A British patriarchy? Ecclesiastical imperialism under the early Stuarts', in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), 209–37.

been made to reflect comparatively on popular religious practice.[34] The most stimulating work, since it studies interconnection between reformers and provides a genuine challenge to national exceptionalism, is that of Jane Dawson on Anglo-Scottish relations.[35]

The disinclination of historians of the English Reformation to participate thus far in this wider analysis of religion in the British Isles is striking. It could be read as an implicit affirmation of older claims of English distinctiveness: there are more important things to be said about England alone than about English religion in relation to the whole of Britain and Ireland. But a more telling assumption is that, in so far as the Reformation was international, it was its European dimensions that most affected English belief and behaviour. Diarmaid MacCulloch's work on Cranmer, for example, emphasizes the influence of Continental reformers on the archbishop's plans for the English church.[36] Thirdly, the exclusion of the other British realms may be understood as a response to surviving evidence. One of Pocock's 'bons mots' in his plea for a new British history was that 'a highly governed society is a highly literate society'.[37] There can be no doubt that the English church and state accumulated documents and preserved them in a systematic manner; and that lay and clerical elites were also generous in their use of paper and printed text. Scotland, Ireland, and initially even Wales, were less administratively centralized, less disposed to elaborate methods of preservation, less routinely able to resort to the printing press. It is easier, though never of course easy, for historians to hear the voices of Englishmen than those of the Irish, the Welsh, or the Scots.[38]

Each of these challenges to a Reformation history of the British Isles carries some weight. The evidential issue is the most significant for the working historian. While the study of political process can be conducted on an equal footing across much of Britain and Ireland the same is not true of ecclesiastical organization or of the study of lay belief and behaviour. Two acute contrasts may stand as exemplary: over 200 sets of churchwardens' accounts survive for England during the Tudor period;

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[34] R. Gillespie, 'Differing devotions: patterns of religious practice in the British Isles, 1500–1700', in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500* (Dublin, 1999), 67–77.

[35] J. Dawson, 'Anglo-Scottish Protestant culture and the integration of sixteenth-century Britain', in Ellis and Barber, *Conquest and Union*, 87–114. See also S. Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity* (Cambridge, 1999) and the collection of essays on John Knox, R.A. Mason (ed.), *John Knox and the British Reformations* (Aldershot, 1998).

[36] MacCulloch, *Cranmer, passim*.

[37] Pocock, 'British history', 611.

[38] Note the title of Eamon Duffy's local study of a Devon parish: *Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven, Conn., 2001).

Scotland and Ireland have none.[39] Episcopal visitation records are patchy throughout the British Isles, but they are available in some quantity in England while they seem rarely to have been kept by the Irish prelates.[40] Only when the kirk sessions become available in Scotland after the Reformation is there a comparable source to English church court records.[41] Moreover, differences in the way local records have been used by historians can compound the problem: in Scotland, for example, the kirk session records are only now being used to gain access to the attitudes of the laity.[42] Evidence about lay religious behaviour in the Gaelic territories is almost non-existent before 1600, and indeed it proves impossible to write a convincing history of lay religion in Ireland before that date.[43]

   Other doubts about the study of reformation in the British Isles are more readily answered. To consider the relationship between the component parts of the isles does not preclude an awareness of the Continental contacts of reforming divines, or the broad influence of international politics on British behaviour. There are circumstances, for example, that of the Geneva exile in the late 1550s, where an understanding of British identities enhances the significance of the European perspective.[44] The earlier diaspora of Scottish Protestants during the reign of James V also exposes fascinating networks of contact across the Protestant world, placing England in its broader context.[45] As for a lingering enthusiasm for English exceptionalism: the comparative study of other Reformations often in practice serves as a reminder that the uniqueness of Tudor experience can easily be exag-

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[39] R. Hutton, 'The local impact of the Tudor Reformations', in C. Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987), 114–15.

[40] Not only are visitation records very rare for Ireland, Dr Jefferies believes that the most basic records of episcopal administration, the registers, were not kept in most Irish sees *inter hibernicos*: Jefferies, 'Early Tudor Reformation', 37. In the case of Scotland Gordon Donaldson also doubted if registers were routinely kept: G. Donaldson, 'Church records', *The Scottish Genealogist* 2/3 (1955), 14. However, it is likely that much was destroyed at the Reformation: D. MacRoberts, 'Material destruction caused by the Scottish Reformation', *Innes Review* 10 (1959), 169.

[41] M.J. Graham, *The Uses of Reform: 'Godly Discipline' and Popular Behaviour in Scotland and Beyond, 1560–1610* (Leiden, 1996).

[42] See particularly the work of Margo Todd on post-Reformation Scotland.

[43] Gillespie, *Devoted People*, draws some examples from the sixteenth century, but is essentially a study in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century devotion, comprehending Catholics and Protestants.

[44] C. Kellar, ' "To enrich with gospel truth the neighbour kingdom": Religion and Reform in England and Scotland 1534–1561', University of Oxford D.Phil. (2000), 161–91, is the first detailed study of these links, though see J.E.A. Dawson, 'Trumpeting resistance: Christopher Goodman and John Knox', in Mason, *John Knox*, 131–53.

[45] J. Kirk, 'The religion of early Scottish Protestants', in J. Kirk (ed.), *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England and Scotland 1400–1643*, SCH Subsidia 8 (Oxford, 1991), 371–84. J. Durkan, 'Scottish "Evangelicals" in the patronage of Thomas Cromwell', *RSCHS* 21 (1982), 127–56.

gerated. This is most obviously the case in the years before Henry VIII's break with Rome: each part of the British Isles existed within a universal Church that had a theology, pattern of worship, and institutional organization that was essentially the same. Differences were probably less significant than similarities, and a fault line, if it existed, divided a Gaelic from an anglophone environment rather than realms from one another.[46] Difference assumes a far greater significance after 1534 but, among the reformers, doctrinal affinity and a division of the world between the true and the false Church discouraged too precise an obsession with national boundaries. Only once in his narrative does Bishop Bale remember that he is among the 'wild Irish' as a separate racial group.[47]

This study of religious change and reformation consciously follows Pocock's prescription that we should study both cultural pluralism and partial domination in the history of the British Isles. It pursues national histories of reform, but places them in the context of supranational relationships. It recognizes that the constant interweaving of the narrative of religious change in the four nations is largely a consequence of English claims to hegemony. Not only was this true in politics. When John Foxe chose in his martyrology to describe persecutions 'in this realm of England and also of Scotland', his Scottish colleagues might legitimately have suspected an implicit assumption of English leadership of the true Church.[48] Those political and ideological ambitions provide the foundation for the British dimensions of this study. The fact that the English Reformation was not confined to the borders of the old kingdom is surely one of its most crucial features. And the response of the Scots and the Irish to English pressures for religious change in the sixteenth century constructed a subsequent history of political breakdown and civil war. The study of cultural pluralism, on the other hand, provides the opportunity to move aside from this English focus into comparative histories of individual territories and into the study of the broader divisions of the British Isles, especially those that separated Celtic and Anglo-Norman societies. Reformation demanded popular evangelism, the use of new methods of communication, the manipulation of language and text: in all of these areas the cultural diversity of Britain and Ireland provides an important stimulus for the ensuing analysis.[49]

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[46] J.A. Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1972).

[47] Happé and King, *Vocacyon*, 58, this was in the period of violence against the English that followed the death of Edward VI.

[48] Foxe, i. 1.

[49] The story of the Counter-Reformation is not the objective of this present study, but would be susceptible to similar treatment. A start has been made on this approach by T. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland and England, 1541–88* (Leiden, 1996).

In the narrative of the coming of reform it is as difficult for historians to delineate a time as a place. The English Reformation was once thought to have begun in the late 1520s and to have been concluded in its essentials once the Elizabethan Settlement was completed.[50] Now academic fashion has moved, and there are exponents of the 'Long Reformation' not concluded until the seventeenth, or even the eighteenth, century.[51] Meanwhile Irish historians, as part of their escape from teleology, have extended the possible dates for the failure of reform in Ireland into the early seventeenth century.[52] And even in Scotland, where the emphasis on the Reformation as transformative moment remains strongest, some historians now emphasize the slow and partial acceptance of religious change.[53] There is certainly nothing of a very specific kind that marks out 1500 as the beginning of a process or 1600 as its end. The former date simply offers the benefit of studying the Church, its relations with the states, and the nature of popular belief, for a whole generation before the bright eyes of Anne Boleyn turned the English world upside-down. The latter takes us forty years beyond the Scottish and English 'settlements', into a period when both Reformations had gained a certain political and ideological maturity and, conversely, when commentators were beginning to acknowledge that the Reformation in Ireland had failed. The narrower logic of 1600 is, of course, that it pre-dates the Union of the Crowns and hence the beginning of a new cycle of ecclesiastical politics. By then James VI, in *Basilikon Doron*, was already looking forward from a Scottish Reformation that was wrought 'by popular tumult and rebellion', albeit 'extraordinarily wrought by God', to the happiness of a Church 'proceeding from the Princes order'.[54] Reformation history was already being reconstructed in the interests of what the king hoped would be a truly British state.

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[50] The classic modern exponent of this view is usually taken to be A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd edn. (1989), though in fact Dickens is more cautious on the nature of popular commitment to the Settlement than some of his critics allow.

[51] See especially N. Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation 1500–1800* (1998).

[52] See above at n. 13.

[53] This is a view particularly favoured by Graham, *The Uses of Reform*, and M. Lynch, *Edinburgh and the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1981), and 'Preaching to the converted? Perspectives on the Scottish Reformation', in A.A. MacDonald, M. Lynch, and I.B. Cowan (eds.), *The Renaissance in Scotland* (Leiden, 1994), 301–43.

[54] J. Craigie (ed.), *The basilikon doron of King James VI*, 2 vols., STS 11, 18 (1944–50), i. 74.

PART I

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

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I

AUTHORITY AND CONTROL

Papacy

On an October day in 1521 John Clerk, Henry VIII's orator at Rome, stood before Leo X and presented him with a luxurious copy of his master's defence of Catholic orthodoxy against the attacks of Luther, the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*. In his accompanying speech Clerk expatiated on the theme of devotion to the papacy; a devotion displayed both in the sentiments and actions of his monarch, and in the attitudes of his countrymen. 'Let others speak of other Nations, certainly my Britainy (called England by our Modern Cosmographers) Situated in the furthermost end of the World, and separated from the Continent by the Ocean: As it has never been behind in the Worship of God, and True Christian Faith, and due Obedience to the Roman Church, either to Spain, France, Germany or Italy: Nay to Rome itself; so likewise, there is no Nation which more Impugns this Monster [Luther], and the Heresies broached by him . . .'.[1] The occasion demanded florid sentiments and Leo is not likely to have judged England's commitment to the papacy by such words. An Italian observer had felt otherwise two decades earlier: 'the kingdom of England is not quite independent, I do not mean of the Empire, but of the Apostolic See'. The last view clearly proved more prophetic: the identity of the monarch and his people to the cause of Rome, and indeed to the universalism of the Church that it expressed, was to endure only another decade.[2]

The peoples of the British Isles should have had few illusions about their position in late medieval Western Catholicism. They remained physically peripheral, and often politically marginal, in the great game of papal politics. Du Boulay, considering fifteenth-century Anglo-Papal relations, suggested that a glance at Creighton or Pastor indicates how little England figured in the vision of Rome.[3] Scotland received even more scant

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[1] Henry VIII, *An Assertion of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther*, trans T.W. (1687), sig. Ai
[2] C.A. Sneyd (ed.), *A Relation of the Island of England about the Year 1500*, CS OS 37 (1847), 53.
[3] F. Du Boulay, 'England and the papacy in the fifteenth century', in C.H. Lawrence (ed.), *The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (1965), 217.

attention, and Ireland merits only two references in Pastor's study of the period to the end of the pontificate of Alexander VI.[4] There is, of course, far more than this to be said about papal relations with the British Isles in the fifteenth century, yet even a recent commentator like Margaret Harvey would acknowledge that by the end of the Hundred Years' War the papacy only looked intermittently to these northern lands.[5] It was in part this very absence from the stormy heart of papal politics that made possible the ostentatious displays of loyalty and affinity proffered in 1521. The jurisdictional relationship between England and the papacy was already clear in all its essentials. The English monarch was proximate to his clergy and, usually, powerful: the papacy was distant and, for much of the fifteenth century, politically vulnerable. Under the statutes against provisions the crown had secured to itself the general right to control clerical taxation, and had gradually inhibited all but a small group of payments, including annates and Peter's Pence, from being transmitted to the papal treasury. Lunt's calculations put the transmitted figure for regular taxes in the fifteenth century at only *c.* £250 per annum. On the eve of the Reformation Scarisbrick's figure for all dues including episcopal payments for common services is much higher, something under £5,000, but even so not a dramatic flow of wealth from this loyal corner of Western Christendom. The right of provision to benefices other than bishoprics was effectively cut off after 1407. Episcopal patronage remained formally with Rome, but with the full acknowledgement that the crown nominated to all senior posts. By the early sixteenth century no pope could expect to exercise his claim to provisions without royal assent.[6]

The Scottish monarchy had established these controls somewhat later than England. Gradual *de facto* incursions upon papal nominations had been occurring throughout the fifteenth century. The attempt to reassert papal control by finally establishing St Andrews as the metropolitical see in 1472 backfired, since James III was quickly able to establish one of his own men, William Scheves, in control. Finally in 1487 Innocent III formally granted James III the right to have eight months' delay in the case of livings worth more than 200 gold florins before papal nomination occurred, thereby securing both the king's influence over appointments and his interim profit from temporalities. When the Scottish crown was relatively stable this agreement held, but in times of weakness, such as the

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[4] L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, 40 vols. (1890–1953), vols. i–vi. Ireland only features among lists of countries asked to participate in various papal crusades. J.A.F. Thomson, *Popes and Princes, 1417–1517* (1980), 213–14.

[5] M. Harvey, *England, Rome and the Papacy, 1417–64* (Manchester, 1993), 130–213.

[6] W. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England, 1327–1534* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 436–46. J.J. Scarisbrick, 'Clerical taxation in England, 1485–1547', *JEH* 11 (1960), 41–54.

years after Flodden, the papacy sometimes exercised its remaining rights vigorously, as in the appointment of Innocenzo Cibo, nephew to Leo X, to the see of St Andrews. This, however, was unusual, and the Scottish crown, like its English neighbour, seems to have established an effective *modus vivendi* with the papacy on nominations.[7]

By the eve of the Reformation the major area of difficulty in monarchical control over appointments remained Gaelic and marcher Ireland. Since Henry VII and Henry VIII (until 1541) were merely lords over a section of Ireland, the majority of Irish sees were in theory, and often in practice, beyond their control. Here the papal right to provide to benefices commanded significantly greater influence than in England, Wales, or Scotland. Unfortunately, curial knowledge of the native church was so uncertain, and local political patterns so fluid, that provisions were often made to sees not actually vacant, and double nominations occasionally occurred. In 1492, for example, Richard O'Guanach was preferred to Elphin in Tuam province, only to be challenged by Nicholas O'Flanagan, whom the papacy had presumed dead in 1487.[8] A more difficult conflict concerned the see of Cork and Cloyne, an area on the margins of English influence, for which Henry VII supported a candidate of the Geraldine interest, eventually prevailing despite deep uncertainty at Rome about who had been properly provided to the bishopric in the previous generation. It was often easier for the papacy to listen to the cardinal protector of the English, who would promote his master's case for reliable candidates, rather than confront the mass of competing interests that surrounded Irish candidates.[9]

The insularity of the northern lands should not, however, be exaggerated. The revitalized Tudor monarchy, and the vigour of the 'auld alliance' between Scotland and France, did something to persuade the ambitious popes of the Italian Wars period to reconsider their English and Scottish subjects.[10] The enlarged political chessboard of these years demanded that the papacy calculated more fully than before distant events such as conflict on the Anglo-Scottish border. In 1514, for example, Leo X had an ambassador, Balthasar Stuart, resident in Scotland for a whole year, endeavouring to broker peace with England after the debacle of Flodden.[11] Leo might be irritated by the tortuous diplomacy of Henry VIII and Wolsey, and by their reluctance to yield any revenues for his planned

[7] L. MacFarlane, 'The primacy of the Scottish Church, 1472–1521', *Innes Review* 20 (1969), 125–8. Cibo was never resident as archbishop, holding the see with numerous others.

[8] S. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland: 1470–1603* (1985), 184–6.

[9] W.E. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1974), 63–73. K. Walsh, 'The beginnings of a national protectorate', *Archivium Hibernicum* 32 (1974), 72–80.

[10] Du Boulay, 'England and the papacy', 235–6.

[11] J.A.F. Thomson, 'Innocent VIII and the Scottish church', *Innes Review* 19 (1968), 26.

crusade, but he could not afford to reject the papalist enthusiasm that the young king developed as a consequence of their exchanges.[12]

Conversely the importance of the papacy both for control of the Church and for international diplomacy encouraged the English and Scottish kings to adopt cardinal protectors in the curia: men who could mediate between their own agents and the papal court and speak the language of curial politics with confidence. Hostility from the revived fifteenth-century papacy to such 'national' protectors gave way to official acceptance under Innocent VIII and Alexander VI. Giovanni and Silvester de Gigli, successively bishops of Worcester, and the most important Roman agents of Henry VII and his successor, were never cardinals, but they 'managed' key connections with Cardinals Piccolomini, Medici, and Campeggio, around whom English influence was built.[13] Meanwhile Scottish interests were directed by two generations of the Accolti family, uncle and nephew. The oddest figure in this group is that of Christopher Bainbridge, archbishop of York, cardinal in 1511 and resident at the papal court until 1514. In the fourteenth century there had been an expectation that cardinals would reside with the papacy: by the early sixteenth century it was a feature of the growing national identity of the Western churches that men such as John Morton and Thomas Wolsey expected to stay at home to serve their princes. Bainbridge identified himself as strongly with the interests of Julius II as with those of England and, until the rise of Wolsey, he conceived his political and perhaps his spiritual role as bridging the gap between his native land and the curia. The ultimate thanks that he received, characteristic of Renaissance power politics at their worst, was gradual exclusion by Wolsey and his local agent Gigli, and an abrupt death, which led to persistent rumours of poisoning.[14]

These spokesmen for the English and Scottish crown had a threefold pattern of responsibilities that indicate the needs of their home regimes. They had to represent the political interests of their monarchs, to facilitate the transaction of routine ecclesiastical business, and to secure royal nominations to key office. The importance of the last task, interconnected with the first, is shown most intriguingly in the intermittent attempts of the Tudor crown to extend its hegemony over the churches of the British Isles through its Roman agents. The Irish church has already been mentioned: by the beginning of Henry VIII's reign the cardinal protectors were managing royal nominations for Ireland in exactly the same way as England, and much of the earlier confusion about provisions had been resolved. Even earlier there was an abortive plan by Alexander VI to

[12] MacFarlane, 'Primacy', 111–20. J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (1968), 97–134.
[13] Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors, passim.*
[14] D.S. Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge in the Court of Rome* (Oxford, 1965).

allow English bishops to reform the Irish church. The extension of English influence over Scotland was also a possibility at moments of Scottish weakness with the assistance of men at the curia. It was probable that Henry VIII's assertion of 1513 that all Scottish bishoprics should be subordinate to York as they had been originally was intended as no more than a gesture. But there were attempts to influence Scottish provisions, both in that year and again in the mid-1520s. In the latter period the French interest was virtually excluded, and Henry's agents in Rome consistently promoted the candidates presented in the name of the young James V by his mother, Henry's sister. But the cardinal protectors usually bent to the power in the ascendant in their individual realms: Accolti had no difficulty in accepting James's countermanding of the previous nomination of an Anglophile bishop of Moray when he came to majority.[15]

It is not easy to estimate how powerful an identity with the papacy lay behind these political and institutional encounters. The language used by Clerk to Leo X deploys a rhetoric much favoured in official circles in England and Scotland in the post-conciliar period. These northern isles were not to be outdone in their expressions of loyalty to the Holy See; were apparently enthusiastic adherents of such papal initiatives as crusades; and in general wished to assert their centrality within the community of Catholic Christendom.[16] In 1512, for example, Henry used his loyalty to Rome and to the Catholic Church as a justification for declaring war on the schismatic French, who had just participated in the Council of Pisa. His boundless enthusiasm for the attack on Luther in 1521 can be explained as a diplomatic propaganda exercise, which showed identity with the Emperor and Rome in a period when conflict with France was becoming likely again. England had had its great representative of vigorous ideological anti-papalism in Wyclif, whose reputation as a scourge of the papacy owed much to a particularly low moment in relations between European powers and Rome. Yet even the indigenous heretical tradition of Lollardy showed less specific interest in challenging the pope after the early years of the fifteenth century, focusing much of its anti-clerical energies instead on those nearer home.[17] It is perhaps easiest to argue the

[15] Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, 161–8, 172–5. Walsh, 'National protectorate', 78.
[16] On the diplomatic significance of the *Assertio*, and its connection to attacks on heresy, see C.W. D'Alton, 'The Suppression of Heresy in Early Henrician England', University of Melbourne Ph.D. (1999), 125–7.
[17] In the Norwich heresy trials of 1428–31 there were fourteen examples of attacks on the papacy, as against ten challenges to other orders within the Church: N. Tanner (ed.), *Norwich Heresy Trials, 1428–31*, CS 4th ser. 20 (1977), 11. In later Lollard trials there was also only limited evidence of interest in the papacy, though a scattering of references to the pope as antichrist: Foxe, iv. 208. A. Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), 469.

essential acceptance of papal authority by negation. In England there was little political enthusiasm for the most obvious alternative to papal authority: conciliarism. After the critical period of Constance the English church took only limited part in the conciliar movement. There were English delegates at Basel in 1433–4, but their major objectives were to assail the Bohemian heretics and to use the medium of the Council to negotiate about the Anglo-French wars.[18] The English were represented at the Fifth Lateran Council of 1512–17 in a basic show of unity with papal aims, as well as a means of distancing themselves from the competing Council of Pisa. Even the Scots, whose ideological commitment to conciliarism was an abiding feature of the late medieval period, did not always feel the need to be loyal to the practice: James V stressed to Leo X that the Scots had not supported Pisa, despite the obvious temptation to further the 'auld alliance' by pleasing the French in this matter.[19]

The doctrine of papal supremacy met with no direct challenge from British theologians in the early sixteenth century. Zealous support of full claims of papal plenitude of power, however, was quite another matter in the period before positions hardened in the 1520s. The Observant Franciscans seem to have offered the proudest defence of papal authority; their basic commitment to the pope as their only superior being strongly reinforced by Leo X's decision finally to separate them from the Conventuals as an independent order.[20] Among English theologians Bishop Fisher stands out in arguing, as early as 1519, in his *De Unica Magdalena*, that papal pronouncements should have priority in discussion of doctrine. Henry VIII's defence of papal supremacy in *Assertio*, on the other hand, was less than doctrinally exhaustive: 'I will not wrong the Bishop of Rome so much', he wrote, 'as troublesomely or carefully to dispute His Right, as if it were a matter doubtful.' He proceeded to assert the universal consent of nations, the precedents of the past, and the habits of the American Indians, who 'do submit themselves to the See of Rome'.[21] Thomas More's hand in the *Assertio* may go some way to explaining this less-than-wholehearted papalism: Henry's comments on the papal primacy seemed to him too enthusiastic and he advised his monarch to 'leave out that point, or else touch it more slenderly'.[22] More began to move to-

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[18] A.N.E.D. Schofield, 'The first English delegation to the Council of Basel', *JEH* 12 (1961), 167–96.

[19] On the Fifth Lateran Council see W. Ullmann, 'Julius II and the schismatic cardinals', in D. Baker (ed.), *Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest*, SCH 9 (1972), 177–94.

[20] On the Observants see K.D. Brown, 'The Franciscan Observants in England, 1482–1559', University of Oxford D.Phil. (1986).

[21] R. Rex, *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1991), 102–3. Henry VIII, *Assertio*, 5–6.

[22] E.F. Rogers (ed.), *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton, N.J., 1947), 199.

wards a full articulation of papal supremacy in his defence of the universal Church in *Responsio ad Lutherum*, but even then he showed a reluctance to dilate on his new-found commitment: 'I am moved', he wrote, 'to obedient submission to this see by all those arguments which learned and holy men have assembled in support of this point' and by fear of the disorder that would ensue without the power of one head.[23] Only Fisher, the papalist, in his *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio*, provided a full testimony in favour of the authority of Rome, based largely on scriptural argument for the precedence of Peter, backed by a wide-ranging appeal to the support of the Fathers.[24]

Conciliarist sentiment might be of limited practical significance for the British churches, but like claims to papal sovereignty it could be revived. There was an acceptance that the universal Church was on occasions best represented by a general council in conjunction with the papacy. On the relationship between popes and councils the position articulated by John Fisher probably commanded most English assent. He assumed that consensus would normally operate between pope and council, that to be a proper body the latter would be convened by the former, and that a council could only admonish and reprove a pope who had fallen from the path of righteousness.[25] His colleague Thomas More may well have begun with the same assumptions, but circumstances led him by a wavering path to an acceptance of conciliarism. More in his later years, despite his growing support for papal monarchism, asserted that a true council could depose a pope.[26] By the 1520s circumstances began to force a reconsideration of the nature of authority on traditional theologians. For example, it has recently been shown that Fisher's writings against Luther produced in the young Thomas Cranmer a surprisingly vigorous defence of the papalist position. This was, however, already tempered by conciliarist views. Cranmer's marginal annotations on his copy of Fisher's *Confutatio* denounce above all the 'impious' German heretic for his argument that a general council, as well as the papacy, can err.[27]

Scottish theologians and canonists were better equipped than their English counterparts for a reopening of the debate on authority. Many had had some of their training in the schools of Paris, where the strongest intellectual commitment to conciliarism survived into the sixteenth century.[28] Thus John Major, the greatest among them, published in 1518 a

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[23] *CWTM* v. 607–9.   [24] Rex, *Theology of Fisher*, 79–81.   [25] Ibid., 102, 107–9.
[26] *CWTM* v. 768, 771–2. There is much debate on More's commitment to conciliarism: see F. Oakley, 'Headley, Marius and the matter of Thomas More's conciliarism', *Moreana* 64 (1980), 82–8.
[27] D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (1996), 28–30.
[28] J. Burns, 'The conciliarist tradition in Scotland', *SHR* 42 (1963), 89–104.

tract entitled *Disputatio de auctoritate concilii supra pontificem maximum*. This rehearsed a number of the old arguments of the fifteenth century: in particular the right of a council to depose a heretical pope was reaffirmed. Major in his turn taught many of the generation of Scottish clerics who were to be engaged in the Reformation conflicts: his views are, for example, generally believed to have had influence on the thinking of the young George Buchanan.[29] On the other hand we should be cautious about attributing radical influence to the conciliarism of Major and his contemporaries. There was no intention to offer any intellectual denial of normal papal authority, and the interest of the Scots in the issue seems to have been constitutional rather than reformist. There was little discussion of the possible role a council might have in promoting active reform 'of head and members'.[30]

One further group within the Church had a particularly strong interest in the defence of papal interest: the canonists. They looked to the authority of Rome to uphold the structures and principles of the universal law by which the Church was governed.[31] This was less an issue of the ability to appeal directly to the supreme pontiff than of a conceptual and institutional preoccupation with the origins of legitimacy. In the distinctive case of English Ireland it has been argued that this canonist belief in the authority of the papacy provided much of the apparatus for maintaining the peculiar claims of the Church to a civilizing and hegemonic role within the island. The original papal bull *Laudabiliter*, which had sanctioned English overlordship, became the justification for the spiritual way of life established in the Pale. This was explicitly designed to conform to the best standards of the universal Church, and was vigorously defended by canon lawyers and senior clerics who feared the contaminating 'degeneracy' of the Gaelic peoples. In these peculiar circumstances Rome acquired totemic status as the guarantor of a way of life through its more general status as the guarantor of the Church's system of law.[32]

It would be unwise, therefore, to place too much emphasis on the homogeneity of views about authority in the late medieval Church. Ac-

[29] F. Oakley, 'Almain and Major: conciliar theory on the eve of the Reformation', *AHR* 70 (1965), 671–90.

[30] The general interest in conciliarism among Scottish theologians is indicated as much by surviving texts, such as those of Gerson and d'Ailly, in Scottish libraries, as in actual writings by Scots: J. Durkan and A. Ross, 'Early Scottish libraries', *Innes Review* 9 (1958), 5–172.

[31] R.A. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England* (Cambridge, 1990), 4–20, though Helmholz notes that the lawyers managed well enough without the appellate jurisdiction of Rome.

[32] J. Murray, 'The Tudor Diocese of Dublin: Episcopal Government, Ecclesiastical Politics and the Enforcement of the Reformation, *c.*1534–1590', University of Dublin (TCD) Ph.D. (1997), 68 ff.

ceptance of the broad supremacy of the papacy, and integration of that belief with some notion that general councils also played a role in the rulership of the Church, left niches for other views as well. In particular a number of English theologians pointed to views that can only be described as proto-Gallican. Richard Ullerstone and Thomas Gascoigne, influenced by the work of Grosseteste, stressed the merits of local episcopal autonomy in matters of discipline and reform. 'The Lord', Gascoigne critically noted, 'gives great power to his vicar the pope of the church that he may reform great ills and give great edification of good acts.'[33] Instead the papacy intruded into the provinces of the Church with demands for money and the issue of inappropriate licences. The best agent for change, in the opinion of several of these writers, was the reforming bishop in his diocese, resident and preaching in person after the manner of the early Church.[34]

Beyond the ranks of the theologians and politicians there is little to suggest that the position of the papacy stirred passions in England or Scotland before the late 1520s. The arch of customary authority was upheld: a man who scorned the papal bull excommunicating rebels against Henry VII was popularly believed to have been punished for his sacrilege by instant death.[35] On the other hand particular popes, like individual clergy, could be the focus of popular contempt. Edward Hall (scarcely an unbiased witness) claimed that in 1527, with the Sack of Rome, 'the commonalty little mourned for it, and said the Pope was a ruffian, and not meet for the room: wherefore they said that he began the mischief, and so he was well served'.[36] Humphrey Bonner preached an anti-curial sermon in 1516, but he was incited to do so by particular conflicts with the apostolic auditor. Bonner felt the latter was discriminating against his superior, the abbot of St Werburgh's, Chester, in a poisonous dispute with the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.[37] Most negative English comment on the papacy was the product of such particular circumstances, especially during the Wolsey era, when the legatine authority was readily labelled as abusive by interested parties.[38] Conversely, it is difficult to read earlier beliefs from the evidence of resistance in the 1530s. Questioning of the

[33] Harvey, *England, Rome and the Papacy*, 230.

[34] Ibid., 229–42. Harvey is at pains to stress that there is no shared theological enterprise here, more a tendency, one among several of the interests of fifteenth-century authors.

[35] C. Harper-Bill, *The Pre-Reformation Church in England, 1400–1523* (1989), 23.

[36] E. Hall, *Henry VIII*, ed. C. Whibley (1904), ii. 95.

[37] *LP* ii. i, no. 2692. On the St Werburgh dispute see R.V.H. Burne, 'The dissolution of St Werburgh's Abbey', *Journal of Chester and North Wales Archaeological and Historical Society* NS 37 (1948), 16–17.

[38] Gwyn argues for limited opposition to Wolsey's legatine powers: P. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (1990), 284–9.

royal supremacy there certainly was, and a number of examples have accumulated of failure to expunge the name of the pope from liturgical material when required to do so by the crown. Some groups of the clergy offered principled resistance as long as they dared: those of the Irish Pale being conspicuous among them.[39] But while the cause of Rome was clearly defended by more than the handful of martyrs of the 1530s, the old notion that it was difficult to lead a counter-revolution on behalf of a distant and indifferent Rome has much to commend it. Even the Gaelic Irish took some time to refocus their loyalties on the papacy: in the early 1540s the English regime had much success in persuading the Gaelic bishops and chiefs to a basic acknowledgement of the supremacy. The early papal missions associated with Archbishop Wauchope of Armagh were conspicuous failures.[40]

This is also surely connected with what men saw, and were taught, daily in the parishes. The bishop of Rome appeared in the liturgical texts, but not on the walls of the church, except in the occasional Last Judgement, where the mighty could be found among the damned as well as the saved. The preaching of the friars, and not just the Observants, no doubt appealed to the authority of Rome from time to time, but surviving preaching manuals make little mention of the theme. It is no accident that Eamon Duffy's massive analysis of the traditional religion of the English people, their liturgy, their forms of devotion, the methods by which they were instructed in the faith, includes scarcely a mention of the importance of the papacy.[41] When Thomas Cromwell's agents and informants began to report on discontent within the realm in the 1530s, it looks as though a lack of enthusiasm for the curious and novel idea of a secular head of the Church was more prominent among men's anxieties than a passionate support for the bishop of Rome.[42]

The most significant modification to this general view of the papacy is the evidence that has been accumulating in recent years of the regularity of individual lay and clerical access to Rome on the eve of the Reformation. A steady flow of litigants and petitioners moved between the north

[39] Murray, 'Diocese of Dublin', 110–16: it is interesting that one of the English clerical defenders of the papacy, John Travers, moved to Dublin in 1533, apparently because he believed his views would be more sympathetically received there.

[40] Ellis, *Tudor Ireland*, 192. J. Durkan, 'Robert Wauchope, Archbishop of Armagh', *Innes Review* 1 (1950), 51–62.

[41] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (1992).

[42] See, for example, Christopher Haigh's view that 'the papacy had become, for the English, not much more than a symbol of the unity of Christendom', *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), 8. Among recent 'revisionist' views of the early Reformation, only that of Richard Rex argues strongly for the spiritual relevance of the papacy, citing the hostility to the supremacy revealed by Cromwell's archive: R. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (1993), 32–5.

and the papal capital, and proctors made a living from the business of those who did not wish to make the tedious journey. *The Calendar of Entries in Papal Registers*, now available to 1513, shows the wide range of contacts that existed, and this records only a part of the business that took English and Irish men to Rome.[43] A combination of litigation and pilgrimage kept the English hospice at Rome active throughout the early Tudor years: there were 205 visitors in 1506 and 1507, and by 1518 Wolsey received a complaint that increasing numbers were adding to the costs of the hospital.[44] The Scottish hospice is less well documented, but was certainly active from the Jubilee of 1450 onwards.[45] More men invested in papal services at a distance. While clerical petitioners were clearly prominent there is consistent evidence of lay involvement as well. Dispensations were regularly given for marriage where there was the impediment of consanguinity: in 1445 William Suthirland and his wife Dalmagyn Marley, for example, alleged that their marriage within the third degree of consanguinity had been contracted in order to end murders and scandals among their kinsmen. They therefore sought and obtained dispensation from incest and the legitimization of their offspring.[46] It has been suggested that the major problem of the Renaissance papacy, when it faced the need for reform, was the pressure created by the demands for litigation, dispensations, indulgences, licences, and the like, all of which stimulated the grossly enlarged bureaucracy of the curia.[47] The records of the papal penitentiary, only recently and partially opened to historians, reveal the great diversity of problems referred to Rome. An aged parish priest from Meltham, Yorkshire, sought permission to employ a housekeeper; Patrick Cantwell from Dublin diocese, son of a bishop, asked for ordination in spite of his parent; Thomas Caylart wanted exoneration from a potentially simoniacal promotion; a layman from St David's sought relief from the penalties of excommunication, imposed on him by his bishop whose horses he had stolen. Most ordinary laymen who needed the administrative or legal assistance of the Church seem to have had no difficulty in accepting the Roman curia as 'a well of grace sufficient for their suits'.[48]

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[43] *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, 19 vols. (1893–1988). For Scotland see *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome*, 4 vols. covering 1418–47.

[44] Harvey, *England, Rome and the Papacy*, 52–67, has an extensive analysis of Rome's hospices in the fifteenth century.

[45] D. McRoberts, 'The Scottish national churches in Rome', *Innes Review* 1/2 (1950), 110–19.

[46] A.I. Dunlop and D. MacLauchlan (eds.), *Scottish Supplications to Rome, 1433–1447*, SHS 4th ser. 7 (1982), 301–2.

[47] Harvey, *England, Rome and the Papacy*, 101–14.

[48] J.A.F. Thomson, '"The Well of Grace": Englishmen and Rome in the fifteenth century', in *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. R.B. Dobson (Gloucester, 1984), 99–114.

Most of the English litigants stopped short of full appeal to the Roman courts. Litigation was an expensive business, and the limited number of English cases recorded in the *Rota*, the principal Roman court of appeal, may in part indicate this.[49] However, the effective control exercised over the Church by the English ecclesiastical courts provides a more convincing explanation. Long legal battles seem to have been the prerogative of a few wealthy clergy like Archbishop Morton, who twice defended his authority in the courts.[50] There is here a striking contrast with the Scots: approximately 370 Scottish cases were heard by the *Rota* between 1464 and 1560, compared to twenty English cases up to 1534.[51] The difference lies above all in the Scottish resolution of benefice disputes before the papal court. It was a source of some anxiety to the Scottish crown: in 1493 the Scottish parliament passed an act ordering home all litigants before the Holy See: to little apparent effect.[52] The Gaelic church also made prolific use of appeal to Rome: indeed it has been suggested that one of the numerous explanations for a measure of continuing loyalty to Rome on the part of the Irish church was that 'Rome running' was a congenial means of dispute resolution far beyond the centralist reach of the English authorities.[53]

There is some paradoxical sense in which the more efficient and accessible the local agents of the universal Church, the less the papacy could or did play a crucial part in the religious life of individual realms. The later medieval papacy had itself contributed to this process by the devolution of powers to legates, nuncios, and judge-delegates. While there is no systematic pattern in such forms of devolved authority, there was a tendency for them to become normative in the years before the Reformation. In the case of judge-delegates, appointed usually for short periods to engage in a particular commissioned mission, or hear a specific cause, Rome was only weakened by a reduction of direct contact with its petitioners.[54] The higher clergy, both secular and regular, routinely acted as judge-delegates in cases not heard in Rome considering election disputes, conflicts between monks and their bishops, tithe misappropriation, and matrimonial

[49] R.N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), 11–16. J.A.F. Thomson, *The Early Tudor Church and Society: 1485–1529* (1993), 29–31.

[50] Harper-Bill, *Pre-Reformation Church*, 12, 19–20.

[51] J. Robertson, 'Scottish legal research in the Vatican Archives: a preliminary report', *Renaissance Studies* 2 (1988), 339–46.

[52] McRoberts, 'Scottish National Churches', 114.

[53] Ellis, *Tudor Ireland*, 191. D.B. Quinn and K.W. Nicholls, 'Ireland in 1534', in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Bryne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland,* vol. iii: *Early Modern Ireland* (Oxford, 1976), 29–31.

[54] R.A. Schmutz, 'Medieval papal representatives: legates, nuncios and judges-delegate', *Studia Gratiana*, 15 (1972), 443–63.

causes. Most of these issues were clerical in nature, but laymen still util-
ized the delegated power of Rome, as in 1518 when the London Court of
Aldermen sought clarification of their tithe obligations.[55] In England,
within a strongly regulated church, the system of judge-delegates seems to
have functioned effectively. When such local control was lacking, how-
ever, it could expose the papal system to abuse, as in Gaelic Ireland,
where petitioners would often be able to nominate delegates in cases such
as contested collation to benefices.[56] When Maurice Flellian, canon of
Limerick cathedral, was delegated to hear a convoluted case of dispute
between the chancellor of the diocese and the bishop, in which the
former needed absolution from a multitude of offences including abetting
his temporal lord in violent crimes and appearing at Mass while excom-
municate, it is unlikely that he could have achieved any judicial impartial-
ity in the conflicts.[57]

The nuncios, more difficult to characterize simply, often combined the
office of papal collector with that of agent. Giovanni Gigli is the best-
known English example: he also occupied the see of Worcester and was
followed in all three offices by his nephew. As Italians closely connected
to the papal court their loyalties were divided, but both men came to play
important roles in English government, thereby weakening the hold of
the papacy upon them.[58] More conventional ambassadorial nuncios, dis-
patched from Rome to promote crusade, reconcile warring monarchs, or
promote papal interests against schismatics, should not be overlooked. A
series of papal interventions in Scotland, the last as late as 1547, came
when Petrus Lippomanus was dispatched to be 'near that realm [England],
for the purpose of taking advantage of any opportunity that might arise'.[59]
Three years later Julius III pursued the same line of thought for Ireland,
when Robert Wauchope, the papally nominated archbishop of Armagh,
was made apostolic nuncio to the whole island on the eve of his journey
to his see.[60]

The legateship was, however, the most significant and contentious
delegated office at the disposal of the papacy, possessing proctorial powers.
The primates of Canterbury and York had, of course, long been *legati nati*,
but this usual arrangement could be enhanced as it was, for example, by

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[55] S. Brigden, 'Tithe controversy in Reformation London', *JEH* 32 (1981), 293.

[56] Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, 32–3. Swanson, *Church and Society*, 14–15. J. Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1972), 189–92.

[57] A. Gwynn, *Anglo-Irish Church Life in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Dublin, 1968), 73. A.P. Fuller (ed.), *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers, 1492–1503* (1994), no. 485.

[58] Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, 9–10.

[59] C.G. Buschbell (ed.), *Concilium Tridentinum . . . Epistularum*, ii. i (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1923), 821.

[60] Durkan, 'Wauchope', 63.

Henry VII and Archbishop Morton who persuaded the papacy that visitation rights over exempt monasteries should be exercised by the archbishop of Canterbury.[61] The final creation of the archiepiscopacy and then primateship of St Andrews, plus the slightly later erection of the archiepiscopacy of Glasgow, gave the same indigenous authority to the Scottish church. But it was the greater prize of the legateship *a latere* that drew ambitious prelates and their political masters. Full legatine powers gave much of the authority and jurisdictional control of the papacy into the hands of its nominees, for the legate more explicitly personated the monarchical authority of the pope than did a nuncio. In the crisis following Flodden, Andrew Forman, nominated to St Andrews, was temporarily given the powers of legate *a latere*, although the fury of the English at the promotion of an enemy quickly robbed him of the status.[62] Wolsey achieved his steadier and more famous ascent to legatine glory first by being given matching authority to that of the papal legate, Campeggio, sent to negotiate for crusade in 1518. His powers were steadily extended until they became a life grant in 1524, by which time, as we have seen, he was handling much of the petitioning that would previously have been addressed to Rome. His unusual powers once again reflected on the vulnerability of the papacy, and especially on its political needs: Leo X could not afford to alienate Henry VIII, whose commitment to the jurisdictional authority of his cardinal was made abundantly clear.[63] The later grants of legateship to Scottish primates, Beaton in 1545 and Hamilton thereafter, reveal much the same pattern, though it is worth noting that Paul III, deeply suspicious of James V's ambition for control of the local kirk, withheld the grant to Beaton until after the king's death.[64]

With the existence of a powerful legateship many of those appeals for dispensations and the like that would routinely have been addressed to the curia could be heard locally instead. Evidence survives for only one year of Wolsey's office, but in that time he granted approximately a hundred dispensations, yielding fees of about £200. The policy also had potential for English control of the Irish church. A letter from a John, possibly John Rawson, prior of Kilmain, to Wolsey, expressed anxiety about the difficulty of persuading Archbishop Inge, the lord chancellor of Ireland, to grant dispensations in the legate's name:

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[61] C. Harper-Bill, 'Archbishop John Morton and the Province of Canterbury, 1486–1500', *JEH* 29 (1978), 6–11.

[62] Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, 83–5, 142–4, 146–9.

[63] Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 265–337.

[64] M. Mahoney, 'The Scottish hierarchy, 1513–1565', in D. McRoberts (ed.), *Essays on the Scottish Reformation* (Glasgow, 1962), 68–75.

whereof hath ensued the decay of the Church of Ireland, for, when an idle person goeth to the Court of Rome, the compositions be to Irishmen so small for their poverty, that by him many other exorbitant matters be sped. So that, in this land, your Graces dispensations be necessary to be granted with less difficulty than else where, for the avoiding of contempt of holy canons, and the occasion of the inconvenience that followeth of the Rome runners.[65]

But Wolsey's legatine control over Ireland remained uncertain. He sought a bull in 1528 to clarify the position and another drastically to reduce the number of Irish sees to make them more financially viable. All of this came too late to have much effect in the period before the Cardinal's fall.[66]

Finally the legateships raise the question of how far the papacy endeavoured to transcend its jurisdictional, fiscal, and political relationship with the British churches. Was reform ever a significant part of its wider agenda in the decades before Trent? It is possible to argue that at least it was expected that, in return for the grant of unusual regional powers, popes required gestures of renewal and renovation. Andrew Forman, during his brief period of delegated power, promulgated the decrees of the Fifth Lateran Council in Scotland. A generation later, admittedly now in the period overshadowed by the growth of Protestant dissent, Archbishop Hamilton held major provincial councils in 1549 and 1552 and made serious efforts to revitalize Scottish Catholicism.[67] And Wolsey exercised his legatine powers in a variety of reforming gestures including the calling of a council that issued new constitutions in 1518.[68] On the effect of this last, historians have been as divided as the cardinal's colleagues: Bishop Fox enthused that it opened the way for reform, while Bishop Fisher's biographer may have reflected the jaundiced view of his subject when he wrote that the synod was held 'rather to notify to the world his great authority ... than for any great good he meant to do'.[69] It may suffice here to note that even if these provincial attempts at reform achieved something, they scarcely did anything to reinforce the positive influence of the papacy in the two realms. When Fox wrote to Wolsey on the merits of the synod his focus was most explicitly upon the English people and their religious destiny:

in reading your grace's letter I see before me a more entire and whole reformation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the English people than I could have

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[65] PRO SP 1/2/103–4 [*LP* iv. 5625].

[66] Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 252–3.

[67] T. Winning, 'Church councils in sixteenth-century Scotland', in McRoberts, *Scottish Reformation*, 332–58.

[68] Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 267–70.

[69] R. Bayne (ed.), *The Life of Bishop Fisher*, EETS extra ser. 27 (1921), 34.

expected, or ever hoped to see completed, or even so much attempted in this age.[70]

Crown and Church

The term *ecclesia Anglicana* may not have readily translated into Church *of* England before the Reformation, but many of the institutional attributes of independence were already in place. Moreover, as Fox's letter suggests, there was a perception of the Church as integral with the realm. The first two Tudor monarchs, while ever willing to parade their devotion to the universal Church, more frequently acted as though they were lords of their own religious destiny. Royal behaviour was often at its most paradoxical in the endeavour to combine devotion and autonomy. The early Tudors had an outstanding prototype in their Lancastrian predecessor Henry V, whose deep and ostentatious piety is not in doubt, but who identified devotion with his regalian authority.[71] Henry VII, Anthony Goodman has suggested, was much influenced by the model of religiosity espoused at the court of the dukes of Brittany with whom he lived in exile.[72] This involved the lavish invocation of papal support for the legitimacy of the monarchy: in Henry's case papal confirmation of title, and of Henry's marriage to Elizabeth of York, backed by the full sanction of excommunication for those who challenged it. Yet the enhanced religious authority with which Henry sought to invest his kingship consisted in the main of the gestures of a 'royal religion': support for the reform of the monastic orders, for the canonization of Henry VI, and for the foundation of the Savoy. There was an intention to stamp a monarchical vision of piety and authority on the realm. His son, equally ostentatious in his piety, articulated the potentially schizophrenic nature of this royal influence when he told a bemused Thomas More that 'we are so much bounden unto the See of Rome that we cannot do too much honour unto it ... For we received from that See our crown Imperial.'[73] The situation in Scotland was little different in fundamentals, though some allowance must be made for the greater plurality and localism of Scottish power.

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[70] P.S. and H.M. Allen (eds.), *The Letters of Richard Fox* (1929), 114–15.

[71] J. Catto, 'Religious change under Henry V', in G. Harriss (ed.), *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship* (Oxford, 1985), 110–15. On the rather oppressive quality of Henry's devotion see W.N. Mackay, 'Sheen Charterhouse from its Foundation to its Dissolution', University of Oxford D.Phil. (1992), 74–5.

[72] A. Goodman, 'Henry VII and Christian renewal', in K. Robbins (ed.), *Religion and Humanism*, SCH 17 (Oxford, 1981), 115–25.

[73] E.V. Hitchcock (ed.), *William Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight* (1935), 68. R. Koebner, 'The imperial crown of this realm', *BIHR* 26 (1953), 29–52. On the erratic evolution of Henry VIII's ideas on imperial authority see Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 245–50.

James IV and James V both valued papal support on occasions and both produced serious gestures of devotion to the universal Church. James IV complicated European politics in the period before Flodden by his enthusiasm for a crusade: his son was an appropriate scourge of heretics in the years before Solway Moss. But like their English counterparts these adult monarchs were committed to determining the essential directions in which their national churches should evolve.[74]

For most practical purposes it was the bishops, keeping a wary eye on their royal masters, who governed the English and Scottish churches, ensuring essential conformity with the wider Catholic community through a shared canon law and correspondence with the papacy. The crown meanwhile routinely permitted itself and its agents to intervene in the affairs of its spiritual servants, not directly denying jurisdictional authority, yet tempering its practical consequences. The two issues of most immediate relevance to the Tudor monarchy, provisions and taxation, had clearly been resolved in its favour long before this period. This is shown most dramatically in the case of taxation raised from the Church, an old right given new vigour by the first two Tudors. Figures vary markedly, and are in any event difficult to calculate from the surviving material, but by the 1520s the clergy were being asked to produce a loan of £60,000 in 1522, a subsidy of £120,000 spread over the five following years, and then the Amicable Grant of a third of income on top.[75] This is dramatic, yet Henry VII had also squeezed large revenues from his clergy: four separate grants of tenths were made between 1487 and 1496, and to these were added demands for benevolences and loans from the most affluent. There was little protest from the Church. Only the Amicable Grant of 1525, which produced such vigorous resentment in lay society, generated complaints. Then Archbishop Warham reported on the clergy's 'untowardness' and their fear that they would have to 'live in continual poverty'.[76] Nothing as ambitious as this could be contemplated in the Scotland of the 1510s, yet by the 1530s James V was able to follow the precedents of his southern neighbour, burdening the Church with a range of exactions reluctantly sanctioned by Clement VII.[77]

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[74] J. Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1470–1625* (1981), 78–9. J.H. Burns, 'The political background of the Reformation, 1513–1625', in McRoberts, *Scottish Reformation*, 5–9.

[75] Scarisbrick, 'Clerical taxation', 49–50. F. Heal, 'Clerical tax-collection under the Tudors', in R.O'Day and F. Heal (eds.), *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church in England, 1500–1642* (Leicester, 1976), 97–102.

[76] *LP* iv. i. 1267. G. Bernard, *War, Taxation and Rebellion in Early Tudor England* (Brighton, 1986), 101–3.

[77] W.S. Reid, 'Clerical taxation: the Scottish alternative to dissolution of the monasteries, 1530–1560', *Catholic Historical Review* 35 (1948), 129–53.

The great years of jurisdictional conflict between the English crown
and its clerical subjects were long past by the late fifteenth century. How-
ever, Henry VII's reign revealed a tendency by the crown to support the
claims of the common law against those of the church courts when any
contest did emerge. In the years of Morton's ascendancy (1486–1500)
these tendencies were kept in check: thereafter they emerged in the sup-
port given to the issuing of writs of prohibition, evoking disputes from
the church courts into those of the king.[78] There had long been a convic-
tion on the part of the common lawyers that papal claims to jurisdiction in
areas covered by common law were invalid. In Henry's reign some key
areas, especially defamation involving the imputation of crime, were sys-
tematically prohibited by the royal courts; by the end of the reign all cases
of this kind were under secular control. In this, and in other areas, the
secular courts succeeded partly because they offered adequate remedy.
The same was true of benefice disputes involving property right: while in
Scotland these arguments moved through the system of ecclesiastical juris-
diction and might easily end in Rome, in England they were under the
control of the common law, and might end in Common Pleas.[79]

While the common lawyers and in some measure the litigants them-
selves helped to promote the movement away from ecclesiastical jurisdic-
tion, the crown's sensitivity to any jurisdictional challenge was visible as
well. Henry VII began a process of restricting some of the liberties granted
by earlier monarchs grateful for ecclesiastical support in difficult times.
Two acts of 1489 and 1497 limited benefit of clergy: more dramatically
there were ten cases of *praemunire* before King's Bench in the last two law
terms of the reign. Bishop Nykke of Norwich, the principal sufferer,
complained bitterly to Warham in 1504 that he would 'curse all such
promoters and maintainers of *praemunire* as heretics'.[80] Then in 1512 Par-
liament returned to the attack, prohibiting all clerks in minor orders from
claiming benefit of clergy for certain serious crimes.[81] This act eventually
produced a vigorous clerical reaction when, in a St Paul's sermon of 1515,
Richard Kidderminster, abbot of Winchcombe, preached in defence of
the sacrosanctity of all orders major and minor. Henry Standish, warden
of the London Grey Friars, became the spokesman of crown interest
against the seculars at the subsequent Blackfriars Conference summoned

[78] M.J. Kelly, 'Canterbury Jurisdiction and Influence during the Episcopate of William War-
ham, 1503–32', University of Cambridge Ph.D. (1963), 98–110.
[79] R. Houlbrooke, 'The decline of ecclesiastical jurisdiction under the Tudors', in O'Day
and Heal, *Continuity and Change*, 241–2.
[80] 4 HVII c. 13; 12 HVII c. 7. PRO SC 1/44, fo. 83: quoted in Houlbrooke, 'Decline', 241.
[81] Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 43–50. G. Gabel, *Benefit of Clergy in England in the Later Middle
Ages* (New York, 1969).

to debate the act. The issues debated were made more complex by one of the few actions of the Fifth Lateran Council that had impact in England: two papal bulls of 1514 specifically invoked the powers of the Church against any lay interference with the clergy. Standish was eventually cited before convocation, which was in its turn threatened with *praemunire* by the royal judges.[82] The final gesture and threat in this crisis was explicitly Henry's, when he declared at a conference at Baynard's Castle in November 1515 that 'by the ordinance and sufferance of God we are King of England, and the kings of England in time past have never had any superior but God alone'.[83]

It is customary to see the events of 1515 as evidence of a crown determination to signal clearly to the clergy the limitations of their jurisdictional autonomy. What is less frequently noted is that the dispute arose out of a willingness by the clergy to assert that autonomy. It has recently been suggested that an aspect of the generally recognized energy and efficiency of the last generations of pre-Reformation prelates was a growing clericalism, a toughness and self-confidence in the assertion of rights and authority that risked confrontation with royal interests.[84]

There are obvious dangers, however, in reading relations between the Church and the monarchy in the light of the English break with Rome and the Scottish Reformation. The key to the weaknesses of the religious establishments is to be found rather in too intimate an association with the lay authorities than in overt conflict, or even subliminal tension. Crown control of senior appointments within the Church could be employed with various degrees of beneficence or otherwise, but it always tended to affirm the identity of prelates and other higher clergy as kings' men. The best test of this proposition is the English bench, which historians generally agree to have been of impressive quality in the pre-Reformation years. Among the forty promotions of Englishmen between 1485 and 1529 there were few disasters, in the sense of administrative or moral failures. If Wolsey is discounted, only James Stanley, the aristocratic bishop of Ely, can be criticized under both heads. While there were a few nonentities, such as Penny and Leyburn, the vast majority of the early Tudor bishops were men of learning, capacity, and great administrative experience. Most were graduates who had been trained in the laws and all but four had held some office under the crown before reaching the bench. It is important for an understanding of later religious change to analyse the

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[82] A. Fox and J. Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician Age: Humanism, Politics and Reform 1500–1550* (Oxford, 1986), 167. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, 47–50.

[83] A. Ogle, *The Tragedy of the Lollards' Tower* (1949), 151.

[84] For an interesting, if not wholly convincing, argument along these lines see R.N. Swanson, 'Problems of the priesthood in pre-Reformation England', *EHR* 105 (1990), 845–69.

ways in which these admirable prelates were vulnerable. They rarely failed their dioceses at the level of basic administrative control, left of course on a daily basis in the hands of their deputies. Many, for example successive bishops of Lincoln, were energetic in ensuring that the clergy, both regular and secular, were disciplined through visitation, that their church courts were maintained in full vigour and that intruders upon their jurisdiction were challenged. A number took a positive interest in learning, displayed most notably through the founding of colleges, but also through endowments within their cathedrals or the promotion of better standards among the parish clergy. It has recently been suggested that they collectively adopted an intelligent humanist-reformist view of the early stages of Lutheran heresy. No doubt many were remote from the ordinary religion of the parishes, but this was scarcely an unusual feature of any episcopate, and most juggled their dual role as royal administrators and diocesan overlords with some skill.[85] The guilt expressed by Bishop Fox that 'to serve worldly' was 'the damnation of my soul and many other souls whereof I have the cure' was the reaction of a politician who had temporarily failed to reconcile these roles.[86] The risk of such imbalance was always present but, given that the daily routines of a diocese rarely needed the attention of a prelate, most seem to have coped with their broader directive duties.

The weakness of the late medieval bishops came rather from the very confidence instilled by their essentially harmonious relationship with the crown. Their training was most commonly in the two laws, and as canonists they might be expected, in Maitland's memorable phrase, to be 'steeped and soaked ... in the papal law-books'.[87] Yet that absorption no longer appeared to demand eternal vigilance about ecclesiastical autonomy of the kind that had marked church–state relationships since the Investiture Contest. The environment in which these capable men operated was,

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[85] There is an extensive literature on the early Tudor prelates, with few voices raised in criticism of their activities. Much of the best work is contained in two dissertations, J.J. Scarisbrick, 'The Conservative Episcopate in England, 1529–35', University of Cambridge Ph.D. (1955) and S. Thompson, 'The Pastoral Work of the English and Welsh Bishops, 1500–1558', University of Oxford D.Phil. (1984). B. Bradshaw and E. Duffy (eds.), *Humanism, Reform and Reformation: The Career of Bishop John Fisher* (Cambridge, 1989), app. 3. Thompson shows that many pre-Reformation prelates were resident in their dioceses at least 75 per cent of the time. There is a useful summary in Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, 46–60. M. Bowker, *The Secular Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln, 1495–1520* (Cambridge, 1968) and *The Henrician Reformation: The Diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521–1547* (Cambridge, 1981). D'Alton, 'The Suppression of Heresy', *passim*.

[86] Allen and Allen, *Letters of Fox*, 83. See also his famous protestation of the renunciation of worldly duties, 30 April 1517: ibid., 93.

[87] F.W. Maitland, *The Roman Canon Law in the Church of England* (1898), 93. R.J. Schoeck, 'Canon law in England on the eve of the Reformation', *Medieval Studies* 25 (1963), 131.

to use the words of a recent historian, slightly 'stuffy'.[88] They were well-attuned to detecting threats to the integrity of the Church from heresy, and threats to the crown from political subversion, less well-armed against inappropriate behaviour by God's anointed. While prelates could often detach themselves from the obligations of secular office in their later years and tend to their benefices and souls, they could not so readily escape from the political and patronage identities of the English state. Bishop Fox expressed these anxieties to Wolsey on several occasions, especially at the time of the attempted legatine reforms of 1518:

As far as I can see this reformation of the clergy and religious will so abate the calumnies of the laity, so advance the honour of the clergy, and so reconcile our sovereign lord the king and his nobility to them . . . that I intend to devote to its furtherance the few remaining years of my life.[89]

The reactions of the bench to the one great exception to all rules, Thomas Wolsey, are indicative of the difficulties of the Church under a strong monarch. No amount of historical rehabilitation of the cardinal as politician or putative reformer can disguise the contrasts between his behaviour and that of his colleagues. His appropriation of power, and even his flouting of moral norms, had the visible support of the young king. The hostility of some of the episcopate, and especially of Archbishop Warham, to his jurisdictional claims, has been meticulously documented, but so has their failure to make any essential difference to the cardinal's authority. Wolsey was the king's man, and as such the prelates had to accommodate to him, indeed had to regard him as the source of much of their own power and patronage. What we seem to observe here is not just a recognition of the realities of royal power, but an acceptance that that power in some sense legitimated Wolsey's activities: the beginnings perhaps of a displacement of moral authority from church to state? Scarisbrick's comment on the cardinal's secular policies, 'his sins were scarlet, but his writs were read', is a fitting acknowledgement of the ambiguities of power that the leaders of the Henrician bench had to accommodate.[90]

While English bishops have received general approbation from recent historians, the prelates of the Scottish and Irish, and even the Welsh,

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[88] D. MacCulloch, 'Henry VIII and the reformation of the Church', in D. MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety* (Basingstoke, 1998), 161.

[89] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, i. app. 18. The original Latin is printed in Allen and Allen, *Letters of Fox*, 116.

[90] Kelly, 'Canterbury Jurisdiction', 176–94. J.J. Scarisbrick, 'Cardinal Wolsey and the common weal', in E.W. Ives, R.J. Knecht, and J.J. Scarisbrick (eds.), *Wealth and Power in Tudor England: Essays Presented to S.T. Bindoff* (1978), 67. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, takes a very different view, arguing that Wolsey simply did not possess the power traditionally attributed to him.

churches are still, like the curate's egg, considered good only in parts. This is often represented as a matter of wealth, dividing the British and Irish churches along economic fault lines. The seventeen English sees (excluding Sodor and Man) had an average income according to the figures of the 1535 *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of £1,594.[91] The four Welsh sees averaged only £233. Figures for Ireland are complicated by the nature of English power there and cannot be given exhaustively for the period on the eve of the Reformation. But among the thirty-two dioceses, those within the Englishry that were assessed in Henry's reign varied in value from Dublin at £535 IR (£357) to six bishoprics worth less than £75 each. Bishoprics within the Irishry were probably even poorer.[92] Scotland's figures have to be drawn from a later date when, in the early years of the Reformation, ecclesiastical rentals were recorded for dividing resources between the crown and the old and new kirks. These show an episcopate divided between comfort and relative poverty, with the fault line largely corresponding to the highland and lowland zones. St Andrews, Glasgow, Moray, and Dunkeld were prosperous, with incomes in money and kind of between £2,500 and £6,000 (Scots): Caithness and Galloway had barely any income in kind and only £1,200–1,300 in money. In Scotland a cleric with powerful connections was likely to aspire to one of the key lowland sees.[93]

Yet the weaknesses of these other churches, the Welsh perhaps excepted, are more usually attributed to the deficiencies of the lay patronage system than to absolute poverty. The Scottish hierarchy, in particular, has commonly been seen as the collective victim of ambitious but poor monarchs, ruthless nobles, and long royal minorities. The crown needed all the patronage advantage it could obtain, so both James IV and James V were guilty of such blatant actions as giving the see of St Andrews to a royal bastard (James IV) and nominating five illegitimate children to hold five of the great Scottish abbeys in commendation (James V). Neither monarch was overly squeamish about the elevation of men of known immorality either: James V's promotion of Patrick Hepburn to Ross being the prime example. Long periods of minority and the bitter rivalries of Scottish politics produced a bench with at least 50 per cent noble blood, and the tastes and interests to accompany affinity to that social

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[91] F. Heal, *Of Prelates and Princes: A Study of the Economic and Social Position of the Tudor Episcopate* (Cambridge, 1980), 20–34.

[92] S.G. Ellis, 'Economic problems of the Church: why the Reformation failed in Ireland', *JEH* 41 (1990), 249–51.

[93] J. Kirk (ed.), *The Books of the Assumptions of Thirds: Scottish Ecclesiastical Rentals at the Reformation*, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History NS 21 (1995), pp. xlvi–xlviii.

group. Such men could, of course, on occasions be rather successful in resisting royal pressures, but usually only in the equally secular interests of their own families.[94] Historians are now sometimes disposed to express surprise at the relative success of some Scottish prelates, rather than to dwell upon this gloomy tale. The most distinguished bishop was without question William Elphinstone, bishop of Aberdeen from 1483 to 1514, an important royal servant, but a diocesan bishop who combined administrative skill with a desire to evangelize his flock. He founded the University of Aberdeen and laboured to improve the educational standards of his clergy. Above all he sponsored a specifically Scottish approach to liturgy and the saints through his *Martyrology of Aberdeen* and *Aberdeen Breviary.* Both emphasized national Scottish saints such as Ninian, eliminating a number of English saints from the calendar. Elphinstone also showed some of the spirit in defence of ecclesiastical interest that seemed essential for the preservation of institutional stability. He fought both king and other patrons to establish control over 'his' patronage in Aberdeen diocese. Yet Elphinstone also shows the vulnerability of the late medieval episcopate: he was excluded from Aberdeen for five years after 1483 because his episcopal revenues had been pocketed by the crown and he could not pay his common services to the curia.[95]

Revisionists can certainly list a number of effective Scottish prelates to place beside Elphinstone: the learned Robert Reid of Orkney, or Archbishop Blacadder of Glasgow. The two most famous archbishops of St Andrews, James Beaton and John Hamilton, both exercised themselves in defence of the kirk: Beaton resisted James V's passion for the feuing of church lands, Hamilton summoned reforming councils. It is, however, difficult to escape the impression that the Scottish hierarchy was remarkably ill-equipped to withstand any of the demands of the crown, or to bring much moral suasion to bear upon the nobility bent on the expropriation of ecclesiastical property.[96]

The Gaelic church in Ireland, beyond the regular reach of the English crown, also had its own problems of episcopal authority and lay control. Here the prelacy was deeply integrated into the system of familial control characteristic of the clan culture. Thus the Diocese of Clogher, Fermanagh,

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[94] Mahoney, 'Scottish hierarchy', 39–84. MacFarlane, 'Primacy', 111–29. L. MacFarlane, 'Was the Scottish church reformable by 1513?' in N. MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408–1929* (Edinburgh, 1983), 23–43.

[95] L. Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1995), 217–89, 192–3. James IV actively supported Elphinstone's liturgical endeavours: he sponsored the printing of the *Breviary*, the first volume to be printed on a Scottish press.

[96] For a reasonably positive assessment of the episcopate see Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community*, 80–2. The older view, of weakness and worldliness, is presented by G. Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (Cambridge, 1960), 13–26.

was dominated by the clerical dynasty of MacCawells, who shared with the local Maguires the rulership of the see for most of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[97] The papacy itself compounded this problem by allowing procedures to circumvent the canon law requirement that no son should succeed to a father's benefice. Where local competition for power made the issue less certain, and Roman candidates were inserted into bishoprics, the results were often absenteeism as friars, for example, supplemented their positions in England or elsewhere from Irish benefices. Even on the rare occasions when a man of distinction was promoted within this confused system, it did not necessarily benefit the local establishment. For example, Maurice O'Fihilly, the only distinguished Irish theologian of the early sixteenth century, was promoted to the archbishopric of Tuam in 1506. Yet he spent scarcely any time in Ireland before his death in 1513.[98]

The ecclesiastical hierarchies of the British Isles may in many ways be said to mirror the polities in which they were located. Where authority was strong and centralist, as it was in England, the episcopate was vigorous and effective. It was also rather firmly committed to a perception of the Church as a national body, not detached from the universal Church but whole unto itself. Where political authority was weak, and/or fractured, as it was in Ireland, the episcopate either adhered to the norms of secular society or sought patronage and support outside the island, from the papacy or from England. Where a strong underlying perception of political unity was regularly disrupted by power struggles, as in Scotland, the episcopate followed the fortunes of the politically strong. In all cases lay power profoundly influenced ecclesiastical behaviour: in all, except perhaps Gaelic Ireland, there was until the Reformation sufficient adjustment between God and Caesar to ensure the stable management of the institutional Church.

The Distribution of Power

The jurisdictional and organizational complexity of the late medieval churches need detain us here only in so far as they have relevance for the future and reveal something of the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional order. Medieval Catholicism might be monarchical, with only general councils contesting the high ground of control, but it was a monarchy in which power was constantly devolved and evolved away from the curial centre. Provincial councils and synods legislated on many matters of regional import; bishops exercised high judicial powers and of

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[97] Gwynn, *Anglo-Irish Church Life*, 72.   [98] Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 185–7.

course bowed to the will of their political masters. The devolution continued to the sub-diocesan level of archdeaconry, commissary, and rural deanery. Meanwhile the regulars presented another hierarchy of control: often independent of local episcopal management, and integrated instead with their universal order, sometimes with their own provincial chapters, always governed by their own heads of house.
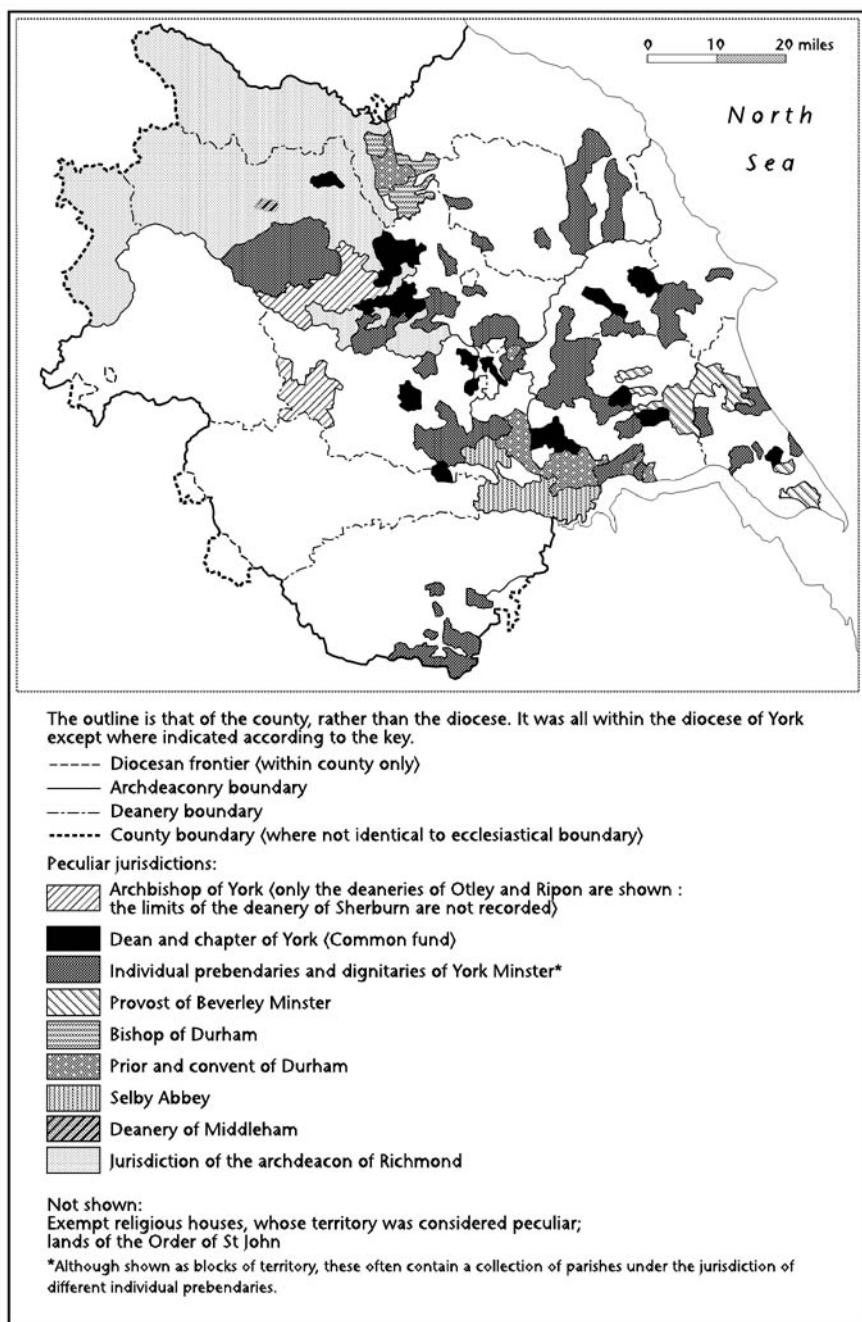
Such complexity was not automatically a source of either strength or weakness. The long evolution of the medieval church had led to the establishment of reasonably clear patterns of hierarchical order and explicit definitions of obligation and duty that were cumulatively functional and only intermittently confusing. A few distinctive jurisdictional patterns can be itemized for the British Isles. In the case of England and Wales the fixity of the Northern and Southern provinces, and the absence of a separate Welsh province, are the most notable features. The primacy of Canterbury over York had been fully acknowledged by the sixteenth century, but could still generate tensions when due form was not observed. After three centuries of dispute titles had been settled: Canterbury had 'the primacy of all England' while York was known as 'primate of England'.[99] The distinctive quality of the convocations of Canterbury was that they met concurrently with Parliament. For a brief period during Wolsey's legateship the division of provinces ceased to have much meaning and a more genuinely national church emerged in embryonic form.[100] Relations between the seculars and the regulars were characterized by the generally high level of disciplinary control that the former exercised over the latter. But there were major exceptions: the Cluniacs, Premonstratensians, Carthusians, Gilbertines, and Cistercians maintained their exempt status and were not subject to episcopal visitation.[101] Above all the orders of friars preserved their autonomy and their capacity profoundly to annoy the leaders of the secular Church. Finally, though this is by no means exclusive to the English church, the pattern of peculiar or exempt jurisdictions, well demonstrated in Swanson's map of medieval Yorkshire, is revealing of the limitations of authority even in a rather centralized and hierarchical corner of Christendom.

The key organizational and structural features of the Scottish church arise partly from the late establishment of the two archiepiscopal sees of St Andrews and Glasgow. This left an unresolved issue of primacy: first superiority was given to St Andrews but then the elevation of Glasgow, as

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[99] Swanson, *Church and Society*, 16–26. J.C. Dickinson, *An Ecclesiastical History of England: The Later Middle Ages from the Norman Conquest to the Eve of the Reformation* (1979), 66–8.

[100] D.B. Weske, *Convocation of the Clergy* (1937).

[101] D. Knowles, *The Monastic Orders in England*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1959), iii. 28, 33, 39, 222.

The outline is that of the county, rather than the diocese. It was all within the diocese of York except where indicated according to the key.

----- Diocesan frontier (within county only)
——— Archdeaconry boundary
—·—·— Deanery boundary
······· County boundary (where not identical to ecclesiastical boundary)

Peculiar jurisdictions:

- Archbishop of York (only the deaneries of Otley and Ripon are shown : the limits of the deanery of Sherburn are not recorded)
- Dean and chapter of York (Common fund)
- Individual prebendaries and dignitaries of York Minster*
- Provost of Beverley Minster
- Bishop of Durham
- Prior and convent of Durham
- Selby Abbey
- Deanery of Middleham
- Jurisdiction of the archdeacon of Richmond

Not shown:
Exempt religious houses, whose territory was considered peculiar;
lands of the Order of St John

*Although shown as blocks of territory, these often contain a collection of parishes under the jurisdiction of different individual prebendaries.

'Peculiars, or exempt jurisdictions of Medieval Yorkshire' from R. N. Swanson,
Church and Society in Late Medieval England (1989).