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978-0-521-09809-0 - Reform and Renewal: Thomas Cromwell and the Common Weal

G. R. Elton

Frontmatter

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REFORM AND RENEWAL  
THOMAS CROMWELL AND THE COMMON WEAL

THE WILES LECTURES  
GIVEN AT THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST  
1972

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## PREFACE

The Wiles Lectures at The Queen's University, Belfast, have established themselves as the highlight of the academic historian's year. For once that much-abused term, *symposium*, may be properly used: *fratres, ergo bibamus – aquas doctrinae et aquam vitae*. I am deeply grateful to Mrs Janet Boyd (*fundatrici rerum*) and the trustees of the Wiles Foundation, as well as to the History Department at Queen's and especially Professor Michael Roberts, for inviting me to deliver the lectures in May 1972. I am for ever obliged to my colleagues at Queen's and to those friends who joined the occasion for providing so joyous a battle and so happy a peace. Especially I wish to thank Miss Helen Miller who, with her accustomed courtesy and familiar learning, saved me from some deplorable howlers. It alters a man's view of life to see how the comity of scholars may flourish even in a discommodity of nations.

The four lectures as delivered were compressed from the seven chapters of this book, and the necessity to fit things into a compass has imposed certain limitations upon the exploration of its theme. This is to be my last engagement with Thomas Cromwell, at least at book-length. In the quarter century since I first encountered that extraordinary man I have always wanted to study three sides of his multiple nature and work: the ruler of the state, the chief of police, and the promoter of reform. Though more can still be learned, that undertaking is now finished. The man who has at length emerged differs somewhat from the figure I first discerned those many years ago, though I remain convinced of one thing I believed about him from the first – his central position in the history of his time, the history of the Tudor century, and the history of England. But his cast of mind was less determinedly secular and less ruthlessly radical

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PREFACE

than I had once supposed. It was because he brought to the task of breaking-up and rebuilding firm principles of a spiritual renewal resting upon the truths of the past, as well as a clear-sighted conviction of the need for profound change, that his achievement reached so deep and lasted so well.

*Clare College, Cambridge*  
*May 1972*

G.R.E.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

I have modernized and standardized the spelling and punctuation of all citations, even where these are taken from printed books or modern editions. I believe that this practice makes access to the evidence much easier while depriving the reader of nothing of importance.

- BM British Museum
- CUL Cambridge University Library
- E.E.T.S. Early English Text Society
- Ellis Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters illustrative of English History*, 3 series, eleven vols. (London, 1824–1846)
- LJ *Journals of the House of Lords*
- LP *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, R. H. Brodie, 36 vols. (London, 1862–1932)
- Merriman Roger B. Merriman, *The Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1902)
- STC *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books printed abroad, 1475–1640*, ed. A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave (London, 1926)
- StP *State Papers of Henry VIII*, 11 vols. (London, 1830–1852)
- TRP *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols. (New Haven, 1964–1969)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Manuscripts cited without location are from the Public Record Office, London; the following classes have been used:

- E 36 Exchequer, Treasury of the Receipt, Misc. Books
- Req 2 Proceedings of the Court of Requests
- SP 1 State Papers, Henry VIII
- SP 2 the same, folio volumes
- SP 6 the same, Theological Tracts
- St Ch 2 Star Chamber Proceedings, Henry VIII