

# THE ESTATES OF THE ENGLISH CROWN, 1558–1640

EDITED BY  
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## CHAPTER I

### *Introduction: aspects of the Crown's estate, c. 1558–1640*

*Richard Hoyle*

The Crown lands stand at the cross-roads where the study of estate management and the profitability of land meets that of public finance and the income and solvency of the state. Throughout the early modern period (and despite their progressive diminution) the Crown's estates were the biggest and most widely scattered of all English estates. Their management constitutes the standard against which all other estates ought to be judged. They were much more than a source of rental income, but formed an important part of the Crown's armoury of patronage and rewards. Given that they served to confer status on a considerable number of stewards and bailiffs whose activities were supervised by the Lord Treasurer and the itinerant auditors of the land revenue, the estates can be claimed to be another (to use an overworked notion) 'point of contact' between Westminster and the provinces.<sup>1</sup> There was, of course, a tension between the estates as a source of revenue and their role as a source of patronage. But because they served that patronage purpose, the management of the estates was not a private matter between the Crown and its tenants but a highly public one which concerned the society of provincial England as a whole. And the success with which the estates were run bears directly on the financial history of the English state. The estates still contributed a sizeable proportion of income; conversely, shortfalls in overall income were met by the progressive liquidation of the estates.

If a history of the Crown lands belongs to both fiscal and agrarian history, then it falls between two areas of scholarship which have not been well served in recent years. There are remarkably few recent studies of estates in the century following the dissolution of the monasteries (as opposed to studies of rural communities) and the

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is Professor Elton's; see his papers in *TRHS* fifth ser., 24–6 (1974–6).

most recent overviews of secular estate management, by Stone in his *Crisis of the Aristocracy* and various hands in the fourth volume of the *Agrarian History*, are now a quarter-century old.<sup>2</sup> Public finance has fared even worse. For a comprehensive survey one needs to turn to the monograph by Dietz, published as long ago as 1932.<sup>3</sup> Dr Thomas's short essay is the only recent attempt to assess the financial strength of the Crown and the problems of raising levels of income and controlling expenditure.<sup>4</sup> Sixteenth-century financial history has been diverted into the study of financial and accounting institutions which, whilst valuable, is interesting only in so far as it edges us towards a fuller understanding of how the Crown managed its money.<sup>5</sup> Early seventeenth-century financial history has become an adjunct to debates over the role of Parliament.

For previous accounts of the Crown lands, the historian must turn to a short pamphlet by Professor Pugh, the relevant chapter of Dietz's *English Public Finance* or the overview of developments on the Crown estates by Professor Batho in the *Agrarian History*.<sup>6</sup> The particular contribution of post-war historians to the study of the Crown lands has been their elucidation of the work of the commissions of sale to which the Crown resorted intermittently throughout the sixteenth century and the consequences of sale upon landholding.<sup>7</sup> But this has

<sup>2</sup> L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), ch. 6; G. Batho and J. Youings, in *Agrarian History*, iv, ch. 5. <sup>3</sup> Dietz, *English Public Finance*.

<sup>4</sup> D. L. Thomas, 'Financial and administrative developments', in H. Tomlinson (ed.), *Before the English Civil War* (Basingstoke, 1983). But see now C. Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), ch. 7.

<sup>5</sup> C. Coleman, 'Artifice or accident? The reorganization of the Exchequer of Receipt, c. 1554-1572', in C. Coleman and D. Starkey (eds.), *Revolution Reassessed. Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration* (Oxford, 1986), can represent this school of scholarship.

<sup>6</sup> R. B. Pugh, *The Crown Estates. An Historical Study* (London, 1960). Of Batho it was said in the commentary which accompanied the republication of his article in 1990, 'Professor Batho's treatment of the Crown Estate provides a survey which is not simply useful, but indispensable in the absence of any comparable treatment elsewhere in the literature' (C. Clay in C. Clay (ed.), *Rural Society. Landowners, Peasants and Labourers 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990)). It could not be claimed that the medieval estates have fared better. Professor Wolfe's studies (*The Crown Lands, 1461-1536. An Aspect of Yorkist and Early Tudor Government* (London, 1970) and *The Royal Demesne in English History. The Crown Estate in the Governance of the Realm from the Conquest to 1509* (London, 1971)) are predominantly institutional. No one has attempted to discuss such matters as the accumulation and dispersal of estates, the level of rents and fines, the terms of the leases and the Crown's involvement in demesne agriculture. There is, though, C. R. Young, *The Royal Forest in Medieval England* (Leicester, 1979), and R. C. Stacey, 'Agricultural investment and the management of the royal demesne manors, 1236-1240', *Journal of Economic History* 46 (1986), shows what might be possible.

<sup>7</sup> H. J. Habakkuk, 'The market for monastic property, 1539-1603', *ECHR* 10 (1957-8); R. B. Outhwaite, 'The price of crown land at the turn of the sixteenth century', *ECHR* 20 (1967); *idem*, 'Who bought crown lands? The pattern of purchases, 1589-1603', *BIHR* 44 (1971). Chantry lands are dealt with by C. J. Kitching, 'The disposal of monastic and

produced the less than desirable consequence that the Crown lands have come to be seen as an asset awaiting liquidation in times of emergency – a larger and less convenient equivalent of plate or bullion – rather than an estate with its own aims and momentum which sales served to interrupt. The assumption prevails in the literature that possession by the Crown was merely a period of waiting of longer or shorter duration before the manor was sold. It is in this spirit that the *Victoria County History* rarely indexes the fact that a manor belonged to the Crown either under the name of a monarch or some general heading (Crown lands, Exchequer). Some historians have produced studies of Crown manors without acknowledging the fact (or potential significance) of their ownership. The segmentation of the history of the Crown estates into the history of individual manors is unfortunate enough, but more regrettable still when local historians concerned with a Crown manor have failed to appreciate the documentary advantages which possession by the Crown brings.<sup>8</sup> In other respects, the existing literature on the estates is deficient. The houses of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs have been meticulously studied,<sup>9</sup> but no one has thought to place these in the context of the estates in which they stood, so we lack studies of the town and honour of Windsor and the enparking and remodelling of the landscape undertaken by Henry VIII and James I at such places as Nonsuch, Grafton and Theobalds.

The literature is not without its glories. Sir Robert Somerville's two-volume history of the Duchy of Lancaster is an enduring achievement of scholarship.<sup>10</sup> Dr Pettit's history of the Crown forests

chantry lands', in F. Heal and R. O'Day (eds.), *Church and Society in England, Henry VIII to James I* (London, 1977). For the local consequences of the sale of Crown lands, see the recent contributions to the genre by M. Zell, 'The mid-Tudor market in crown land in Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 97 (1981); G. Woodward, 'The disposal of chantry lands in Somerset', *Southern History* 5 (1983); and M. Gray, 'Crown property and the land market in South-East Wales in the sixteenth century', *Agricultural History Review* 35 (1987). The seventeenth-century sale of Crown lands remains largely uninvestigated, but see below, pp. 23–9.

<sup>8</sup> VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, ix (1989) indexes 'Crown, ecclesiastical patronage of' but contains no index heading for the estates. Happily, no such criticism could be levied against VCH, *Oxfordshire*, xii (1990). Ravensdale tells us that his manor of Waterbeach cum Denny was a Crown manor only in mentioning that it was sold in 1614. J. R. Ravensdale, *Liable to Floods. Village Landscape on the Edge of the Fens, AD 450–1850* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 165. Margaret Spufford acknowledges the fact of Crown ownership of Orwell (Cambs.) throughout the sixteenth century until its sale in 1627 but draws no conclusions as to the significance of the fact. M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities. English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 94–5. For a regional study written in full consciousness of the potential importance of Crown ownership, J. T. Swain, *Industry before the Industrial Revolution. North-East Lancashire, c. 1500–1640* (Chetham Soc., third ser., 32, 1986), esp. ch. 4.

<sup>9</sup> H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, iii (London, 1975), iv (London, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> Somerville, *Duchy of Lancaster*.



of Northamptonshire, though ostensibly a local history, provides a thorough study of forest administration which may be read with Dr Hammersley's pioneering work on woodland management and exploitation.<sup>11</sup> But the serious study of the Crown lands in their own right can only be said to have begun with the doctoral theses of G. D. Haslam, D. L. Thomas and K. H. S. Wyndham undertaken in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup>

This volume will not deny that the Crown lands were a diminishing asset, reduced by financial exigency, but it will not make that fact the central feature of the work. Instead, it will consider the Crown lands as a continuing enterprise of fearsome complexity (but also administrative sophistication) to which men devoted their careers and which, like any other early modern estate, was managed to a range of ends of which fiscal profit was only one. There remain some areas of importance which are not the subject of chapters in the book. With the notable exception of Dr Gray's second contribution, there is little on the power and influence which office-holding on the estates conferred, nor on the Crown's parliamentary patronage. Neither is there a sustained account of the Duchy of Lancaster (although the existence of Somerville's work may offer an excuse for that particular omission). The book contains no study of the Crown as the owner of urban property, nor of its forests and parks, and most regrettably the chapters presented here stop short of considering the experience of the Crown lands during the dislocation of the Civil War.<sup>13</sup> It would not be our claim to have covered every aspect of the estates or to have solved every problem, but to have made and justified a bold claim for the interest of the Crown lands.

<sup>11</sup> Pettit, *Royal Forests*; G. Hammersley, 'The revival of forest laws under Charles I', *History* 45 (1960); *idem*, 'The crown woods and their exploitation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *BIHR* 30 (1957).

<sup>12</sup> G. D. Haslam, 'An administrative study of the Duchy of Cornwall, 1500-1650' (Louisiana State University, PhD thesis, 1975), and his contributions to C. Gill (ed.), *The Duchy of Cornwall* (Newton Abbot, 1987); Thomas, 'Administration of crown lands'; K. H. S. Wyndham, 'The redistribution of crown land in Somerset by gift, sale and lease, 1536-72' (University of London, PhD thesis, 1976), and her articles, 'The royal estate in mid-sixteenth-century Somerset', *BIHR* 52 (1979), and 'Crown land and royal patronage in mid-sixteenth century England', *JBS* 19 (1979-80).

<sup>13</sup> As a matter of deliberate policy the profits of the Crown's feudal rights of wardship are not treated in the present volume contrary to the practice of both Dietz and Batho.

## I

As a landowner, the Crown possessed every sort and type of landed property known to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century society. Much of its estates consisted of unexceptional leaseholds and copyholds of rural and urban tenements. Like other conservative landowners, it still possessed serfs in the sixteenth century which it sought to manumise for profit.<sup>14</sup> It was a feudal landlord with the right to take wardship from its military tenants; but many private landlords did likewise. Like most other landlords of status, it devoted a proportion of its land to unproductive ends for recreation, maintaining parks and forests.

The Crown is to be distinguished from all other English landlords in three respects. The first is simply that of scale. No other estate was so large, scattered or unsystematic in its contents. Simple considerations of size made it impossible for it to be supervised by its owner and his senior administrators; scale forced delegation and this in turn permitted the possibility of peculation and corruption by local officers. Given the size of the estates, it was inevitable that the Crown should, through either administrative error or deliberate concealment, sometimes lose sight of lands which properly belonged to it. The steps taken to overcome these problems feature prominently in the following pages.

Secondly, the Crown's estate had a privileged legal position. It was managed by bodies constituted as courts which could act judicially to punish their officers or try cases concerning the possession of their lands. These judicial rights were used to the Crown's advantage to establish a claim over land which was 'empty' (such as fenland) or in which the Crown claimed a residual right of ownership, such as forests and assart lands. The use of judicial process to enlarge the Crown's lands by proving the deficiency of the occupier's title was a characteristic of the early seventeenth century and is considered at length below by Joan Thirsk.

The third respect in which the Crown differed from other landowners was in the wide range of other sources of income it possessed and the relative unimportance of estate revenue in the whole. At the turn of the sixteenth century the income drawn from the lands was about 39 per cent of the Crown's total income, about

<sup>14</sup> D. MacCulloch, 'Bondmen under the Tudors', in C. Cross, D. Loades and J. J. Scarisbrick (eds.), *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 107-8.

14 per cent *c.* 1641.<sup>15</sup> Landed income was fairly reliable; it was not, for instance, prone to the sudden downturns from which customs revenue occasionally suffered, but it was also inflexible and incapable of rapid increase. It may be helpful to bear in mind the transformation in customs revenue brought about by the revision of the book of rates in 1607 with the rather pitiful achievements of the prolonged contemporaneous attempts to reform the Crown lands described in chapter 9 below. Lord Treasurers, Chancellors of the Exchequer and (later) Treasury Commissioners had responsibility for all founts of revenue and it would not be too surprising to find that the Crown lands were often overlooked by them in favour of more promising areas in which recurrent income could be more easily raised.

In a very real sense, it is mistaken to talk of the Crown lands or the Crown's estate as though it consisted of one unit. The lands were in fact under the control of a number of institutions, all with their own officers, courts and procedures, but not all of which had a continuity of existence. The first and most important was the Exchequer, headed by the Lord Treasurer. Its form throughout our period was the result of the merger into the Exchequer of the Court of Augmentations in 1554. From this date, the Exchequer had three historically distinct groups of estates under its supervision.

The oldest (and most obscure) were the lands under the charge of the sheriffs, the so-called custody lands. The income from these lands (which included the fee-farms of towns as well as the rents of lands) was paid to the Clerk of the Pipe and never passed through the hands of the Exchequer's auditors of land revenue. Even contemporaries were uncertain as to their nature. Sir Walter Cope, in his apology for Salisbury said that the late Lord Treasurer had found them to be 'a revenue which seemeth decayed by descent of time and worn out of all knowledge and remembrance'. As a good hagiographer, Cope naturally claimed that Salisbury had revived many of these revenues, but in 1642 the Exchequer man Christopher Vernon wrote that a good number of them were very hard to levy and were likely to be

<sup>15</sup> Figure for *c.* 1600 calculated from the table in W. R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1910-12, repr. 1951), III, p. 517 (printing an abstract of BL, Cotton MS Titus B IV, fols. 285v-93v); that for *c.* 1641 calculated from C. Russell, 'Charles I's financial estimates for 1642', *BIHR* 58 (1985), pp. 109-20.

lost.<sup>16</sup> As table 1.1 shows, the income from these lands never exceeded £15,000 per annum.<sup>17</sup>

The second and third groups of estates were all lands which had been under the control of the Court of Augmentations and, in the phrase used by Elizabethan administrators, had been 'annexed' to the Exchequer. The revenue of these lands was collected by the county receivers under the supervision of the seven auditors of land revenue. The first of these groups of estates were those of private landlords, like the Duchy of York, which had accrued to the Crown over time by marriage or inheritance. These estates had no separate administrative existence except as units within the accounts of the Exchequer.<sup>18</sup> The second component was the remaining monastic and chantry lands which had augmented the core estate of the Crown during the decade or so after 1536.

The other landholding agency was the only noble estate which had become subsumed in the Crown and preserved its administrative identity, the Duchy of Lancaster. The Duchy had its own staff and officers under the Duchy Chancellor and despite the suggestions made in the 1550s and again in 1617 that it should be merged into the Exchequer as a cost cutting measure, the institutional continuity of the Duchy has been preserved through to the present day.<sup>19</sup>

No such claim can be made for the estates assigned to the Prince of Wales, the Duchy of Cornwall and the principality of Wales. In the absence of a prince, his estates were placed in the charge of the Exchequer. Whilst the Henrician arrangements for Wales were clearly designed to be unscrambled in the appropriate circumstances,<sup>20</sup> the lack of a figurehead gave neither politicians nor administrators cause to regard the interests of the Duchy and, as Dr Haslam describes, it was largely (and illegally) sold during the late Elizabethan land sales. Haslam goes on to show how the Duchy was reconstructed for Henry Prince of Wales in the first years of James's reign and then reestablished for Prince Charles. On his accession to

<sup>16</sup> Sir Walter Cope, 'An apology for the late Lord Treasurer, Sir Robert Cecil, earl of Salisbury', in J. Gutch (ed.), *Collectanea Curiosa* (2 vols., Oxford, 1781), 1, p. 123; Vernon, *Considerations*, p. 58. I owe these to Dr Thomas.

<sup>17</sup> This is an exaggeration; the figures given there include the income from Ulnage (the tax on cloth) which cannot always be separated out from land income. Ulnage was worth £639 in 1560 and £1,407 in 1606.

<sup>18</sup> The lands were divided between the auditors and receivers along the usual territorial lines.

<sup>19</sup> For the abortive proposals of the 1550s, see below, pp. 36–8. *APC 1618–19*, p. 220, also *CSPD 1611–18*, p. 520; Somerville, *Duchy of Lancaster*, II, pp. 10–11. Cf. Prestwich, *Cranfield*, pp. 256–8.

<sup>20</sup> Dr Gray describes this subsequently, pp. 138–9.

the throne, Charles broke with precedent to maintain the Duchy as an independent entity with its own Council.<sup>21</sup>

The Crown's estate, like that of any other landlord, was also divided when the need arose to provide jointures for wives and estates for younger sons. Where the principality and Duchy formed discrete entities within the Crown lands, the jointure estates had only an *ad hoc* existence tied to the life of the Queen herself. On the accession of James there was a general ignorance of the proper arrangements for the endowment of both Queen and heir and in the case of the jointure it is clear that the precedent of Catherine Parr's jointure was consulted.<sup>22</sup> Each Queen possessed her own Council (based on that of the Duchy of Lancaster)<sup>23</sup> and officials but no body of estates can be identified as being invariably assigned to the Queen for her support. Anne of Denmark's jointure estate (or as much of it as was not granted away) was on her death absorbed back into the Exchequer and Duchy of Lancaster from whence it came; the jointure created for Henrietta Maria had no administrative continuity with that of her late mother in law, nor did it consist of the same lands. Anne of Denmark's jointure consisted of lands worth £4,310 and fee-farm rents of £16,547, Greenwax (a tax on sealings) leased for £10, the farm of sugars (£5,000) and an annuity of £500 out of the Exchequer, in all £26,367. Henrietta Maria had slightly more, with £28,190 in rents and Greenwax leased for £514 in 1632-3, but had no customs.<sup>24</sup>

These divisions need to be acknowledged because of the problems they bring in writing the history of the Crown lands. One problem is entirely practical. The documentation for each part of the Crown lands is uneven. It is not surprising that the jointure lands, where the administrative continuity was least, are the worst documented. The order books of the Queen's Council (which administered her estates and supervised her finances) are entirely lost until after 1660. But many other papers survive, absorbed back into the Exchequer archive in much the same way as the estates themselves were returned to the charge of the Exchequer's administrators. The other problem concerns the writing of the history of the estates. The historian of the Crown lands needs to keep his eye on several moving objects at once, rather like the targets in a shooting range.

<sup>21</sup> See below, pp. 110, 267-8, 284.

<sup>22</sup> LR9/11/48; SP14/3, no. 37.

<sup>23</sup> SP14/12, no. 7 (a reference I owe to Mrs Ruth Fisher).

<sup>24</sup> SP14/86, nos. 28, 29; BL, Stowe MS 322, fol. 52.

## II

If the Crown lands were in administrative terms several estates and not merely one, they were equally not the same lands throughout the period. At some periods the Crown sold land heavily and from time to time made grants to subjects for reasons of patronage; but there was also a constant circulation of lands in and out of the Crown's hands which stands apart from the progressive reduction of the estates by sale.

Before considering the ways in which lands entered and left the estates it is helpful to turn to estimates of their overall value. It is remarkably difficult to prepare reliable estimates of income for pre-modern landowners and the Crown is no exception to this general rule. The most accessible sources are the contemporary estimates of revenue made intermittently throughout the period. These tend not to be consistent in their use of accounting categories. The problem in essence is that the Crown's income from land can be measured at two different points as it made its way into the Crown's coffers. Figures were produced for the charge placed on the receivers, in effect rental income. We have called this gross income in table 1.1. Figures were also produced for the net income available from the receivers after charges on their accounts (of officers' fees, repairs, monastic annuities, quit rents, expenses of manorial court dinners, etc.) had been satisfied. Some payments made by the receivers funded the local agencies of executive government including the fees of keepers of castles, the northern wardens, the garrison at Carlisle, the Northern and Welsh Councils and the Welsh Court of Great Sessions.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, these are not in any sense the costs of managing the estates or the collection of revenue but for the sake of compatibility they have been included in the figures in table 1.1. The distinction between gross and net income is extremely important. At an extreme, the figures for the year ending Michaelmas 1551 show that only two-fifths of the income charged on the Augmentation's receivers was paid into the central treasury, the remainder being expended locally in fees, pensions and other costs (table 1.4). By the end of Elizabeth's reign the local charges on the receivers had fallen to 13 per cent of gross revenue for reasons which are of themselves of the greatest interest.

<sup>25</sup> The Councils cost about £1,357 in 1572 and £3,600 in 1635.

Table 1.1. *Estimates of income from the Crown lands, 1551-1641*

	1551 <sup>a</sup> (gross)	(net)	1560 <sup>b</sup> (gross)	[NI]	(net)	(gross)	1572 <sup>c</sup> (gross)	(net)	Mean of five years 38-42 Elizabeth <sup>d</sup> (gross)	(net)
Revenue in the Pipe	£7,495	£3,665				£4,467	£11,432	[NI]	£14,168	£14,068
Exchequer	£134,515	£51,468	£90,423		£61,377		£99,002	£76,760	£106,523 <sup>j</sup>	£91,089 <sup>j</sup>
Duchy of Lancaster	£17,984	£8,972	£12,744 <sup>n</sup>				£14,755 <sup>o</sup>		£17,309	£14,461
Duchy of Cornwall	£4,496	£3,717	£3,500 <sup>p</sup>				£3,701 <sup>q</sup>	[NI]	£4,066	£3,719
Jointure										
Total	£164,490	£67,822	c. £115,000			c. £129,000			£142,066	£123,337

  

	1605 <sup>e</sup> (gross)	(net)	1621 <sup>f</sup> (gross)	(net)	(gross)	Mean of five years to 1635 <sup>g</sup> (gross)	(net)	1641 <sup>h</sup> (gross)
Revenue in the Pipe	£14,710	[NI]	£9,296	[NI]	£12,133	£11,851		£9,093
Exchequer	£90,927	£72,479	£81,656 <sup>k</sup>	£66,774	£61,902 <sup>l</sup>	£38,220		£55,170 <sup>m</sup>
Duchy of Lancaster	£13,802	£12,372	£12,410	£11,176	£10,855	£8,635		£10,522
Duchy of Cornwall	£4,090 <sup>r</sup>	£3,612	£12,000	[NI]	£14,880	£14,103		£19,435
Jointure		£20,851 <sup>e</sup>			£28,190 <sup>l</sup>	[NI]		£28,974 <sup>u</sup>
Total	c. £145,000	c. £123,300	£115,362		£127,960 <sup>v</sup>	c. £97,000	c. £123,194	

*Notes and sources:* All sums have been rounded to the nearest pound. [NI] = no information. Totals marked 'c.' are estimates.

<sup>a</sup> Calculated from Richardson, *1552 Report*: the figures given for the Exchequer are actually for Augmentations. All figures include casualties. See table 1.4 for a further breakdown of these figures.

<sup>b</sup> BL, Lansd. MS 4, fols. 57r-64v (giving income in the Exchequer only).

<sup>c</sup> BL, Lansd. MS 14, fols. 7r-14v (giving income in the Exchequer only).

<sup>d</sup> BL, Cotton MS Titus B IV, fols. 285r-94v.

<sup>e</sup> BL, Add. MS 36969, fols. 1r-10v.

<sup>f</sup> Kent AO, U269/1, OE 1373.

<sup>g</sup> E407/78/5.

<sup>h</sup> C. Russell, 'Charles I's financial estimates for 1642', *BIHR* 58 (1985), pp. 114-19 (printing BL, Egerton MS 2541, fols. 266-71). 'My calculation from the assignments and allowances listed without distinction.

<sup>i</sup> Including the palatinate of Chester (worth £771 gross, £282 net).

<sup>j</sup> Including £18,554 assigned to the Prince of Wales.

<sup>k</sup> MS gives £90,696 gross, £67,014 net with an assignment of £28,794 to the Queen for jointure (which is deducted here).

<sup>l</sup> MS gives £83,964 which appears to include the assignment for Queen's jointure (£28,974) as in the corresponding figure for 1635.

<sup>m</sup> Calculated as the charge on the Receiver-General's account for 3 Elizabeth less arrears, DL28/9/3.

<sup>n</sup> Calculated as the charge on the Receiver-General's account for 13 Elizabeth less arrears, DL28/9/13.

<sup>o</sup> Under the head of payments into the Pipe.

<sup>p</sup> Under the head of payments into the Exchequer.

<sup>q</sup> Includes £2,121 for coinage of tin.

<sup>r</sup> Figure from SP14/86, nos. 28, 29 (certificate of the Queen's income based on her receiver's account for 12 James I with allowances, etc., deducted).

<sup>s</sup> Figure for the rents of the Queen's manors in 1633 taken from BL, Stowe MS 322, fols. 54r-5v. The profits of courts amounted to an additional £943. The 1635 and 1641 estimates include this approximate sum as an assignment from the Exchequer.

<sup>t</sup> Sum assigned to the Queen.

<sup>u</sup> Including £25,000 for lands in the hands of the Queen.



The picture is further confused by the seventeenth-century practices of charging the income with assignments which were not properly distinguished from allowances in the abstracts of income and treating lands granted to the jointure and Prince of Wales as assignments on the revenue of the Exchequer.<sup>26</sup> This was simply to develop further the basis on which the provincial Councils had been funded. It was perfectly legitimate to lump together allowances and assignments in so far as the Exchequer wished to know its freedom of movement rather than its gross income (in 1641 only a little over £14,000 was available from the receivers, £70,000 being assigned out of a total charge of £84,000), but the burden is laid on the historian of trying to disentangle the two where it is possible.<sup>27</sup>

The figures presented in table 1.1 are additionally unsatisfactory in that they include the fines on copyhold lands (which were paid to the receivers) but not the fines on leases (which were paid directly into the Exchequer of Receipt). Fines on leases occasionally appear as a further head within the contemporary estimates, but not invariably and are ignored here.

It would be incautious to read too much into the figures contained in table 1.1. It is convenient to start with the very full abstract of income produced by the commission of 1552. Total gross income from lands, including casualties, then stood at about £165,000. The sales of Mary's reign and the first years of Elizabeth's reduced this somewhat, but each estimate of gross income from the whole estate from 1560 to 1641 falls in a band between £120,000 and £140,000. This seems paradoxical given the sales of land which punctuated the intervening century, but income was maintained at this approximate level by the flow of lands into the estates, the sale of lands in fee-farm and the successful exploitation of the preemption of tin by the Duchy of Cornwall.<sup>28</sup> If this seems a creditable performance, then it must be admitted that it makes no allowance for inflation; in real terms the value of the estates was progressively reduced.

During Elizabeth's reign the increase in net income brought about by the reduction of charges on the receivers more than compensated for inflation. The 1552 report shows how 29.8 per cent of the recurrent income charged to the receivers was paid out by them to ex-monastics as pensions or to monastic annuitants.<sup>29</sup> As these indi-

<sup>26</sup> In this context 'assignment is the regular earmarking of particular revenue to particular expenditure'. Russell, 'Financial estimates for 1642', p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115. The assignments on the Duchy of Lancaster exceeded the income.

<sup>28</sup> See below, pp. 14-15, 28-9, 285-92.

<sup>29</sup> See table 1.4 below.

viduals were a charge on the Exchequer for their lives only, the normal process of ageing served to relieve the Exchequer of a sizeable burden. Other steps were taken to reduce the charges on the receiver's accounts with the result that where in 1552, 62 per cent of income was expended before it reached the Exchequer, in 1596–1601 the corresponding figure was only 15 per cent. The 1552 report also shows how a smaller sum, £12,744, was expected to return to the Crown's hands as reversionary grants fell in. From the vantage point of 1552, the Crown's administrators could look forward to a gradually rising level of receipts at the Exchequer but the Crown was to assist this with a policy of reducing the charges on the receivers by transferring the costs of repairs onto the tenants themselves.<sup>30</sup> Net receipts at the Exchequer were therefore 40 per cent greater in 1596–1601 than 1552 even though the gross income of the Exchequer had fallen by a quarter over this same period.<sup>31</sup>

As income was gradually rising of its own accord, it is understandable why the management of the Elizabethan estates tended to complacency. The possibility of benefiting from such savings was denied the Stuarts. Table 1.1 makes clear the damage done to the Crown's finances by the establishment of the jointure and the Prince of Wales's appanage (although the period when both were in existence was limited to a few months in 1616–18): in 1617–19 the Duchy of Cornwall and other lands granted to Charles were worth £35,000.<sup>32</sup>

On the evidence of the table, it would be wrong to equate the sale of lands with the reduction of recurrent income from land. The balance of sales and the countervailing movement of lands into the estates through attainder and exchange was not unfavourable to the Crown, as Dr Thomas's careful calculations for Lincolnshire show.<sup>33</sup> But even there three-quarters of the Crown's increase in net income came from the cessation of pensions rather than the improvement of landed income.

<sup>30</sup> See below, pp. 39–42, 175–6.

<sup>31</sup> 1552: gross £140,512, net £54,329 (table 1.4); 1596–1601: gross £105,752, net £90,807 (BL, Cotton MS Titus B iv, fol. 290v).

<sup>32</sup> See table 10.3 below. In Kent AO, U269/1, OE 1373 (1621) the Duchy of Cornwall is estimated to have been worth £12,000 (an underestimate) and the Prince of Wales was noted as having an assignment of £18,554 charged on the Exchequer's receivers.

<sup>33</sup> See below, pp. 60, 79–81, and table 2.2.