A CONTESTED APPOINTMENT TO THE BISHOPRIC OF BATH AND WELLS, 1400-1

BY R. G. DAVIES

There was, even at best, an element of uncertainty in dealings between the English Crown and the Papacy in the later middle ages. On the one hand, there was the basic incompatibility in principle between their respective claims over the English Church. On the other, a clear recognition did exist, if only rarely explicit, that they both did better in practice by working with, rather than against, each other. If, founded upon these two contrasting premises, there could be, over the years, a self-interested working relationship, it was, nonetheless, one characterized by dispute. One party might suspect the good faith of the other. It might itself seek to steal a trick. There might be simple misunderstanding. Moreover, the fact that neither authority could always keep its own house in order further complicated matters on occasion. There was ample opportunity for diplomatic finesse or blundering.

Richard II had often attempted over the years to minimize this uncertainty. In November 1398, shortly before his downfall, he had finally persuaded Boniface IX (the Roman or 'Urbanist' contender for the papacy, whom England recognized against his Avignonese or 'Clementist' rival) to agree to a concordat, an agreement between themselves, indeed, of an almost personal kind.[1] Whilst this was never intended by either party to give the king any sort of decisive control over the church in his realm, it did represent, from the king's point of view, an improvement on the practice of recent years, when, for example, he had found competitors for episcopal promotion, even amongst his own officers, becoming quite negligent of his own interest and approval, and the pope too willing to countenance their intrigues. The concordat was also intended to show that, problems of principle understood and laid aside, the king and the pope were willing to be reasonable and co-operate. The concordat made it probable, too, that the king was prepared, for all his anxiety to improve relations with France (which generally favoured the Clementist pope), to tolerate the present schism in the papacy indefinitely or at least to set high terms for any settlement. Certainly the king intended seriously to stand by his own commitment to the concordat. However, before much could come of it, he was himself deposed on 30 September 1399.

The particular situation created by this political revolution restored and even increased the uncertainty between England and Rome. Henry IV, the supplanter of Richard II, needed the co-operation of the Church quite as much as had his predecessor. Both its moral sanction and its practical support were very important to him. However, he had little room to manoeuvre. Whilst he had of necessity to have access to ecclesiastical money and appointments, he needed also to consider both papal friendship and his own reputation at home. He was anxious, therefore, to inherit Richard's friendly relationship with the Roman Curia. Following his predecessor's example, he obtained permission at once, in his first parliament, to modify at will or even suspend or annul the Statute of Provisors.[2] As in 1398, this gave the king something to offer the pope in any future negotiations. It was hoped, of course, that the pope might respond to this not only with friendship and confirmation of the concordat but also with more specific concessions and acts of grace.

At first such hopes were gratified. The pope proved co-operative in particular matters of immediate concern. Archbishop Thomas Arundel was restored to Canterbury, and his earlier removal from thence treated retrospectively as null and void. The obstinately-irreconcilable Thomas Merk was obligingly removed by the pope from the see of Carlisle. The first episcopal appointments, to Carlisle (in consequence of Merk's removal) and to Rochester, were concluded smoothly and suggested a proper appreciation on the part of the new régime of the merits of churchmanship. However, these were both very minor bishoprics, and, in any case, neither appointment could really be regarded as typical.[3] Whether the government's goodwill would extend to richer and more important sees once the stability of the dynasty, as it was to be hoped, had been assured remained to be seen. Similarly, the extent of the

pope's goodwill, and his price, had still to be discovered. Even in the nature of things there would be disputes and misunderstandings. It is interesting, therefore, to see how the two parties dealt with the first real test, once the immediate circumstances of the revolution had passed.

This test was not long to be delayed. On 10 April 1400 the death of the veteran bishop, Ralph Erghum, left vacant the see of Bath and Wells.[4] This was certainly a prize. It was, of course, much less prestigious or wealthy than either of the metropolitan sees or the exceptionally well-founded bishoprics of Winchester and Durham. It would probably also be considered inferior to the three great sees of Eastern England, Ely, Norwich and Lincoln. But, in spite of the financial retrenchment which Erghum had felt obliged to make, it was the equal of its neighbours, Salisbury and Exeter, and could set against London's greater prestige its own superior wealth. Other dioceses it outstripped.

If it is not surprising, therefore, that an appointment to Bath and Wells should excite lively interest amongst those interested in ecclesiastical advancement at any time, the nature of this interest was, as has been suggested, more particular on this occasion. It was the king's first real chance to promote some loyal supporter, and he could not afford, especially in immediate political terms, to overlook such an opportunity. To realize it, however, he had to have the co-operation of the papacy. Boniface's response, on the other hand, might also be influenced by particular considerations. If he was thinking in terms of political strategy, he might seek, especially in view of his helpful attitude towards the revolution of 1399, to demonstrate his authority to the new dynasty and test its reaction. It would be unfair, however, to assume *a priori* that the pope would adopt *tout court* so calculating a view of his power of provision. As the reign of Richard II had amply demonstrated, this was not the prime cause of difficulty. The pope received many requests for promotion, both public and private, general and particular, and not simply one single, uncontested, royal nomination for each vacancy. Sometimes, indeed, as has been suggested, the king's wishes might not even be clear to the pope, and his support might be claimed by more than one candidate. These had been the problems which Richard II had tried to resolve: to prevent the pope condoning the candidacies of others, and to make his own will clear to the pope and as near binding on him as could be contrived. What now brought these particular problems so quickly to Henry IV's attention was the fact that Richard Clifford, the keeper of the privy seal, had been intriguing for some time to have the succession to Bath and Wells, whether on Erghum's death, which for years had seemed (according to the bishop's own reports) imminent, or by the actual translation of the old man to make room. It is with Clifford and his ambitions that one must begin any account of the appointment.

Clifford had been prominent in the royal administration for almost twenty years and in consequence had accumulated very substantial ecclesiastical preferment.[5] Nevertheless, he had failed, in opposition to the king's former secretary, Richard Medford, to turn his capitular election to the bishopric of Salisbury in 1395 into appointment.[6] This notwithstanding, he continued to enjoy the full confidence of the king and, after seven years as keeper of the great wardrobe, he was promoted to the keepership of the privy seal on 14 November 1397, just when Richard II was becoming more absolutist in his style of rule. In spite of this close association Clifford was apparently not regarded as a party to the 'crimes' of Richard II's last years of government. At least, Henry IV was prepared (or obliged) to confirm him in his office and preferments in 1399. As parliament was to reaffirm, he had been a praiseworthy administrator, and Henry needed such men.

Although by 1398 Clifford had held amongst his several preferments the deanship of York and the archdeaconry of Canterbury, the richest and most influential preferments in England outside the episcopate, he still aspired to episcopacy. However, his collection of preferments made all but a few bishoprics unattractive to him, at least financially.[7] Clifford decided to seek the reversion of one particular bishopric and perhaps even to hasten the time when it should come free.

After his failure to secure Salisbury in 1395, Clifford had turned his mind to Bath and Wells, where Bishop Erghum was not only old but now declared his ill-health whenever he was summoned to a parliament or convocation.[8] Clifford had been a canon and prebendary of Wells since 1386, and early in 1398 he sought, the king being willing, to advance himself within the chapter from the prebend of Henstridge to that of Wiveliscombe.[9] This brought him into conflict with Gilbert Stone, Erghum's long-serving chancellor, who had similar ambitions.[10] Stone, who presumably claimed the prebend by episcopal collation, wrote directly to Clifford, urging him not to trouble or molest his own possession of Wiveliscombe.[11] He wrote also to a friend to thank him for obstructing Clifford's efforts. In the end, however, Clifford secured the prebend by means of a royal grant. On the other hand, Stone himself moved on from the prebend of Buckland Dinham to that of Wedmore Secunda at about this time. Hence, he may have been appeased rather than defeated.[12] Certainly, in spite of this dispute over Wiveliscombe, the two men developed an association. Not only did Stone support Clifford in the execution of his subsequent papal provision to the bishopric of Bath and Wells but he even went with him to Worcester in 1401.[13]

Evidently, Clifford thought Stone of some account. He had been chancellor to the bishop of Salisbury even before Erghum was promoted to that see in 1375 and, continuing in this office, he only transferred to Bath and Wells when Erghum did so in 1388.[14] Erghum thought so well of Stone as to grant him one of the dispensations to residentiary status in the cathedral chapter which the bishop was permitted to bestow upon his own immediate servants.[15] Now, with Erghum nearing his end, Stone had to consider the future, and, at least until the overthrow of King Richard, this seemed, in the diocese, to lie in Clifford's hand. Stone, one may suppose, committed himself to Clifford's succession before the Lancastrian revolution, that is to say, too, before his old master's death. There is, indeed, one enigmatic letter between them *before* Clifford's promotion to episcopacy, in which Stone expresses his hope that some cause of Clifford's was prospering in the papal curia.[16]

Nor was Stone Clifford's only collaborator in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Wells. Erghum was obliged to write an anxious letter to Clifford, Stone being his *amanuensis*, denying the *malum responsum* which Mr. William Lambrooke, the treasurer of the cathedral, had attributed to him. *Inter alia*, he denied categorically that he had said that Clifford ought never to succeed him.[17] Lambrooke, it may be noted, had been established in his office before Erghum was translated to Wells. A man of some influence at this time, he had been constable of Bordeaux on occasion during the thirteen-nineties and, when forced in 1398 to choose between his two masters, had supported Richard II as against the house of Lancaster. For this error of judgment he forfeited his public career in 1399. But, at the probable time when Erghum wrote his letter of excusation, he was clerk to the council and naturally in close contact with Clifford.[18] His retailing of Erghum's unguarded comments to the keeper of the privy seal was clearly more than merely embarrassing to the old bishop who even thought it necessary to send his senechal, John Fyton, to explain more fully the context of what he was supposed to have said.

Erghum indeed had good cause for alarm. Before he entered the episcopate he had been chancellor to John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and had remained the duke's confidant even after his withdrawal into diocesan administration. In 1399 he was to be one of Gaunt's appointed executors. So long as the old duke was alive, the bishop's own position was secure. Indeed, in the normal way, a prelate so long withdrawn from participation in public affairs could view any ebb and flow of political life with equanimity. But things were out of joint. Gaunt's days were clearly numbered. The king was in autocratic mood. And already, in September 1398, he had exiled Henry Bolingbroke, Gaunt's son and heir. More particularly, from Erghum's point of view, the house of Lancaster itself had recently dispossessed another veteran (and quite inoffensive) bishop, John Buckingham, of his see of Lincoln.[19] The king expressed himself most displeased at this remarkable and quite unprecedented action.

But it was a precedent. When Gaunt died on 3 February 1399 and the king moved to seize his duchy and entirely disinherit his heir, Erghum's position became very vulnerable. Especially was this so in view of the king's recent concordat with the pope. What the house of Lancaster had done to one bishop, others could now attempt, and more severely, against its own ecclesiastical associates. They might even anticipate royal support against one who was, as has been said, the old associate and present executor of the duke and thereby likely to oppose the action of the king towards the estate.

At all events, Erghum did indeed find that his position was being undermined in the papal curia. His reputation there was already scarred, in fact, by a grave controversy earlier in the decade with Cardinal Adam Easton, in which the king himself had felt it necessary to lend the bishop his support against papal charges of insubordination as regards the execution of papal provisions.[20] Now the bishop, through Gilbert Stone, wrote urgently to Cosmo Megliorato, Cardinal of Bologna (the future Innocent VII), to thank him for his support against those 'evil-disposed men' who were playing on his reputed senility and infirmity in order to have him translated to some quasi-titular see in Ireland.[21] John Fraunceys, Erghum's representative in the curia, was to discuss the matter further with the cardinal. Although Stone's heading to this letter asserted that Richard II himself petitioned the pope to have the bishop removed, the letter itself does not corroborate this.[22] Even so, it is not improbable (and Stone must have been well-informed) that the king did do so, or was at least sympathetic. There may, therefore, have been real feeling behind Erghum's letter of welcome to Archbishop Arundel on the latter's return with Henry of Lancaster in 1399.[23]

Once Erghum had survived long enough to die under the house of Lancaster, fortune began to turn against Clifford. The precise date of the election is not known, but the *congé d'élire* was requested by the chapter of Wells on 22 April 1400.[24] Henry IV's claim as early as 1 May that the election of his associate, Henry Bowet, had already been made by then was probably premature.[25] Nevertheless, in due course Bowet was indeed elected. The manner of his election, however, was rather disquieting. Bowet, despite being so much the king's choice, received the support of only the *maior pars* of both the canons at Wells and the monks at Bath.[26] Evidently one or both chapters contained a minority who were reluctant to accept the royal nomination. It seems very likely that, encouraged by Gilbert Stone and others, they still dared to prefer Clifford, whose candidature evidently remained active in spite of the king's nomination of Bowet.[27]

Henry Bowet, D.Cn. and C.L., was a man clearly higher in the king's confidence than his formal positions indicate and very influential in affairs of state.[28] After an early career in diocesan administration and the papal curia, he had returned to England in the early thirteen-nineties to join the service of John of Gaunt, notably in Aquitaine and Spain. By July 1396 he was constable of Aquitaine, adding the office of chief justice a year later. In 1398, however, he elected to accompany Henry Bolingbroke into exile and, in consequence, was condemned in his absence as a traitor on 23 April 1399 and sentenced (like Bolingbroke) to perpetual exile.

If his sacrifices for Lancaster were, then, considerable, his rewards after the assumption of the crown by Bolingbroke were commensurate. He stood close to the new king and on 14 October 1399 he was appointed constable of Bordeaux. The duties of this office kept him in Aquitaine from May to December 1400, during which time his ecclesiastical prospects remained in doubt. After his return the king made a point of commending him in parliament for the perils he had faced, whilst, as befitted a bishop-elect, Bowet secured papal absolution for 'taking part in warlike acts and being present at homicides and mutilations'.[29]

Whilst Bowet had been away, matters had become a good deal more difficult. Although Clifford and his adherents had failed to gain the valuable advantage of capitular election, his earlier work in the curia for the succession to Erghum had borne much richer fruit. On 12 May 1400 the pope made provision to him of the

bishopric.[30] Nor did Clifford decline to accept, in spite of the knowledge of the king's displeasure. He had several contacts in the papal curia. including several cardinals, but it was the cardinal of Bologna whom he, like Erghum, regarded as his special patron and friend. He hastened to offer him his thanks.[31]. He wrote also in gratitude to the pope that his promotion had been made in spite of all the malicious abuse which had been cast against him.[32] It is to be remarked that Gilbert Stone (whom, incidentally, E. F. Jacob thought quite adept at catching the epistolary fashion of the day in the curia) was by now writing his letters for him.

Given the chronology of the appointment, the pope, in what would have been a contravention of the concordat of 1398, had clearly not waited for an election result before making the provision for which Clifford had been pressing for so long. Probably he had received no *formal* royal nomination of Bowet which, under the concordat, would come ostensibly as assent to an election.[33] Presumably the pope, in any case, no longer felt bound by that agreement. Clifford's comments do suggest, however, that his own candidacy was well-known, and that certain men in the curia, probably the royal proctors themselves, knowing that the king did not approve, had been at pains to obstruct it. The pope, at least aware that Clifford was not unanimously recommended, whatever he did or did not know of the king's own wishes, had not taken long to reject the efforts of Clifford's critics. Whilst the king could obstruct the provision in effect by refusing to restore the temporalities and, in practice, too, by forbidding the archbishop to restore the spiritualities, without papal agreement he could do nothing to ensure Bowet's promotion.[34] It should be emphasized, however, that the king was not necessarily in the better position to endure a lengthy dispute. For Clifford's part, he may not have realized how obstinate the king would be. Richard II had, with whatever grace, bowed to the defeat of his candidates on occasion, perhaps with some promise of their better fortune another time, and one should not *assume* that everyone regarded the king's wishes as binding or insuperable.

However, it proved that both the king and the pope were inclined to obstinacy. For some time the pope remained firmly opposed to Bowet's promotion to Bath and Wells despite the king's persistent demands that he supersede his first provision. Clifford, for his part, was at pains to reassure the pope that he would persevere in his candidacy in the face of the evil men (unnamed) who sought to undermine it.[35] In November one of the Albertini, the pope's financial agents in England, wrote to Archbishop Arundel that William Creek had returned from Rome with no bulls at all, because the pope regarded the royal letters as inadequate. The merchant was sure enough of Arundel to give his opinion that the king ought to be persuaded to accept Clifford.[36] The archbishop presumably lent his official support to the king but may well, as this letter implies, have been sympathetic to Clifford's cause, indeed to have preferred him to Bowet, with whom he had had unsatisfactory dealings in the past. If Arundel was playing a double-game in the affair, it would not be for the last time. In ecclesiastical affairs, as in much else, he had a mind of his own and was not beholden to the king.[37]

With time, the problem became something of a *cause célèbre*.[38] Most unusually, the matter was even raised twice in parliament in 1401, whether by the king himself to try to enlist support or, perhaps more probably, by Clifford's friends. The Commons urged Clifford's cause. On the first occasion, in February, they asked the king to show favour towards him as being so diligent a keeper of the privy seal. The king replied that he agreed wholeheartedly that Clifford was indeed deserving.[39] This evasive response did not satisfy the Commons who themselves pressed the matter further on 2 March. Clifford's loyal service apart, it was pointed out that he had been elected in vain by the chapter of Salisbury in 1395; the pope, therefore, was only acknowledging that election as well as Clifford's deserts in providing him to Bath and Wells. Clifford should be allowed full execution of the bulls notwithstanding the Statute of Provisors, 'bearing in mind that the majority of the prelates of the realm had so occupied and do occupy their benefices and dignities by apostolic provision, the Statutes aforesaid notwithstanding'. It is, indeed, an interesting point that the

king had not publicly threatened Clifford with the penalties of the statute and still retained him in high office. It is yet more remarkable that the Commons, inveterate critics of the effect of papal provisions, should have appealed to that form of appointment as against capitular election, which on other occasions they held so dear.

To this second representation the king repeated that he was aware of Clifford's good service and held him in high esteem for it, but Bowet had likewise served him well 'and had in several ways put himself in great peril for love of him'. Moreover, Bowet had been duly elected according to the custom of the realm and the royal assent given, 'which he could not honestly countermand'; and two people could not be granted one favour. When the lords temporal and spiritual had also spoken up for Clifford, and the king still held out, the Commons pressed for the obvious compromise, that royal favour might be shown both men. 'And [the king] said he would be very ready to do so, for he wanted, with God's help, to help more than them.'[40]

Although one should not underestimate the importance of the capitular election to a candidate in a dispute, Henry's arguments were, in practical terms, not strong. The Commons clearly felt that the king was being unrealistic and unfair, and apparently the king had little support. It was a dilemma which any usurper might have to face. On the one hand, he wished to establish continuity and avoid the appearance of being the leader of only a faction; but, on the other, he had those loyal followers, whose support he could not lightly disregard, men who, hardships stoically endured, now expected a share in the good fortune of their leader, and whose appointment to positions of importance strengthened his own position. The king was scarcely strong enough to afford concessions either towards parliament or the curia, yet he needed the support of both, and if the former at least would not regard one episcopal appointment as a crucial issue, they might nonetheless murmur at it as a (typically?) scandalous action on the part of the none-too-popular new ruler.

In part, at least, the willingness of the Commons to espouse Clifford's cause may have derived from their general dissatisfaction with the government at this time. This extended to ecclesiastical matters quite explicitly in this parliament of 1401. For Henry might well feel that he had done enough already in this parliament to win the pope's favour by having it agree to make obstinate heresy at long last a capital offence. In accepting the statute, *De Heretico Comburendo*, with its especial references (as contemporaries noted) to the regulation of preaching of any sort as well as to evangelizing of heresies in particular, the king may well have had particularly in mind the spate of pro-Ricardian preaching at the time, especially by friars and other religious. Nevertheless, in the face of some hostility amongst the laity, the statute did answer the recent petitions of the clergy for sterner secular penalties against dissenters.

Perhaps, indeed, the statute did win some favour with the pope, for it was not long after this time that the king and pope appear to have adopted the suggestion made in parliament that Bowet and Clifford should both be promoted to the episcopal bench as soon as possible. It was indeed a well-precedented solution and suggests some sensible re-thinking on the part of the king. Nevertheless, at some point Clifford grew very alarmed about rumours reaching England that the pope was going to revoke his provision altogether, and he wrote to the cardinal of Bologna urgently for his aid.[41] However, his fears were exaggerated ones. Whether through the cardinal's intercession or, more probably, because the pope himself was unwilling to admit his own failure and deny the validity of a provision once made, Clifford's proposed episcopal status was protected. Even the king now felt unable to deny him this. Even so, he could not have Bath and Wells. This Henry, on his side, would not allow. It was Clifford, not Bowet, who had to accept a change of promotion. What was required, therefore, was another suitable vacancy.

This could not have been provided more satisfactorily than by the death of Tideman of Winchcombe, bishop of Worcester, on 13 June 1401. Thus was removed one of Richard II's erstwhile staunchest supporters, his former physician. The danger of local complications was minimal, and the process of appointment could be carried

out quickly.[42] On 15 June the *congé d'élire* was requested, and on 20 June granted. The election took place a bare week later, when the prior led his monks in an election of Clifford *per viam Spiritus Sancti* (that is to say, by immediate acclamation). However, in spite of this use of a mode of procedure which was supposed to reflect spontaneous unanimity, the notary to the election could only say that no-one was 'wholly dissenting', which does hint at some abstentions, or at least a lukewarm attitude. The next day the pittancer and precentor set off for London, where Clifford received them on 30 June and, after the customary 'mature deliberation', gave his assent on the following day, declaring, in similarly customary fashion, that he was 'unwilling to resist the divine will'. Custody of the temporalities was granted to Clifford the very next day.[43] The king wrote to the pope for him, and he was formally translated on 19 August, Boniface being allowed adoption of this formal mode, 'so that he might more easily tolerate the rebuff' (Adam of Usk).[44] The bulls travelled quickly, arriving in London on 20 September, and on the next day Clifford, having sworn his oath of fealty, received the temporalities.[45] On 9 October Archbishop Arundel consecrated him in the presence of the king in St. Paul's.[46]

It was eventually a not unsatisfactory solution. Clifford, who had come through the final years of Richard II's reign and the deposition without incurring either disgrace or public malice, retained his favour with or, rather, usefulness to the king and was to prove a loyal and valuable magnate to both Henry IV and Henry V. His henchman, Gilbert Stone, at least, was avowedly very content with the move to Worcester, at least in the circumstances. Clifford, too, wrote to the pope of his 'great fear of adversity and fluttering heart' and of how he had expected a far worse fate at times.[47] For all that Worcester was rather inferior to Bath and Wells, Clifford's relief was probably genuine. In any case, although he resigned the privy seal on 2 November 1401, his service to the Crown remained such that he visited the diocese only four times, to reside there altogether for some thirteen months of his six years' episcopacy.[48]

Meanwhile, events had been set in train for Bowet's simultaneous promotion. As the king had told Prince Henry, Clifford would have Worcester only 'as soon as the said Mr. H[enry Bowet] could have sure possession of the bishopric of Bath'. By August, when the pope's goodwill was assured, the prince in turn could write to Bowet to congratulate him on this 'sure possession'.[49] As early as 20 April 1401 he had been granted the temporalities, excepting advowsons, for the duration of the vacancy, which may indicate approximately the date when agreement was finally made as to the settlement of the affair and Bowet's certainty of having the bishopric.[50] The provision was made on 19 August, the day of Clifford's translation, together with an absolution to Bowet for his interference in the administration of the property of the see and conversion of it to his own uses.[51] Arundel was persuaded, perhaps even reluctantly, to accept an innovation for Bowet's convenience, namely, the latter's appointment, on 23 September, of Nicholas Ryssheton, John Bath and John Pitt to make his profession to Arundel. Five days later Ryssheton caught up with Arundel at Coventry and secured restitution of the spiritualities. Bowet made his profession personally, as the archbishop required, when he was consecrated in St. Paul's on 20 November.[52] Like Clifford, he had received the temporalities on 21 September.[53] Even more than Clifford, however, he did not turn to his diocese. The same close association with the king which had won him such determined royal support for promotion (and was to do so again a few years later) was too important to Henry IV to allow him to release the new bishop from attendance upon himself.

In the end the king had had his way, but it had been by a display of personal obstinacy rather than one of royal strength of will. It did not impress. Set amidst the many serious problems of government at this time, the episode won him little credit. If small in itself, it represented, nonetheless, the much greater issue of his whole authority and influence in the affairs of the Church. Even parliament showed no enthusiasm for resistance to the papal mandate as a matter of principle. Already made uneasy by the enactment of *De Heretico Comburendo*, it was too well-aware of the particular circumstances. The pope's power of provision was the crux of any

appointment and, once exercised, could not easily be gainsaid. The critical need for any candidate was, therefore, to gain this provision, and here the pope was not intransigent on his own account but only reserved to himself the right, indeed duty, to arbitrate between the candidatures presented to him. This was evidently well-understood in England. Furthermore, even in his own delicate personal situation after the revolution, Clifford did not fear to oppose the king in such a matter. His greater apprehension was that the pope would betray him, not that the king would seek to penalize him for his defiance. Opinion was that the obligation lay with the king to prove why Clifford, having competed successfully for the provision, should not now enjoy his victory. No-one questioned Clifford's right to contest the wishes of the king.

Henry IV's first major episcopal appointment was, therefore, an unhappy augury for the future and an omen which was to be borne out in good measure. The king's recalcitrant reaction to the decision in the curia in no way persuaded his subjects that intrigue was, from a political point of view, impermissible or dangerous, still less unnecessary. Henry IV had to accept that the king was at any time only the leading suitor for patronage. He had to realise, too, that it was not the pope's own inclinations but, rather, the competition within England which was the chief problem. And, rather than that he could enlist papal support to strengthen himself within the realm, he would need to demonstrate his own effective authority at home in order to gain the benefit in the curia.

REFERENCES

1. E. Perroy, *L'Angleterre et le grand schisme d'Occident* (Paris, 1933), ch. 8, especially pp. 348–52; R. G. Davies, 'Richard II and the Church in the years of "tyranny"', *Journal of Medieval History*, i (1975), pp. 329–62.
2. *Rot [uli] Parl[iamentorum]*, ed. J. Strachey *et al.* (London, 1767), iii, 428.
3. Rochester was unique in being of the patronage of the archbishop of Canterbury, not the king, and went accordingly to one of the archbishop's officials.
4. John Maidenhead, a leading official in the Salisbury diocese, and Gilbert Stone, the late bishop's own chancellor, were appointed keepers of the spiritualities and conducted a visitation of the diocese on Archbishop Arundel's behalf: Lambeth Palace, Reg[ister of Thomas] Arundel [Archbishop of Canterbury], i, fo. 12. Erghum had made his will over a year earlier when 'sound in mind and body', but his health had been in doubt for some years, and he had resided exclusively at Banwell and Wiveliscombe.
5. Biographical details and some discussion of the problem of Clifford's family background are provided by R. G. Davies, 'The Episcopate in England and Wales, 1375-1433', unpublished Ph. D. thesis (Manchester, 1974), pp. xcv-c, and cf. A. B. Emden, [*A Biographical Register of the University of*] *Oxford* [*to* 1500 *A.D.*] (Oxford, 1957–9), pp. 440–1.
6. Salisbury DRO, Chapter Act Book, *Holmes*, fo. 13v; *Rot. Parl.*, iii, 460.
7. On 14 Oct. 1399 Clifford's possession was confirmed in the deanship of York, archdeaconry of Canterbury, prebends of Lincoln, Salisbury, Wells and York, and the mastership of St. James's Hospital, Westminster: *C[alendar of] P[atent] R[olls]*, 1399–1401, 3; PRO, *Ancient Petitions*, SC8/100/4978.
8. Having been a regular participant, Erghum secured an exemption from further attendances in parliaments on 9 Nov. 1395, and attended no more. There are no grounds for supposing the reasons to have been political rather than physical. *CPR*, 1391–6, 635; cf. Bodley Ms. 859 (Letter Book of Gilbert Stone), fos. 14r-v, 25v-6; BL Harley Ms. 431, fo. 24r-v; PRO, *Parliamentary Proxies*, SC10/40/1970.
9. J. le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300–1541*, revised edition, viii, compiled by B. Jones (London, 1964), pp. 50, 78.
10. For his career, A. B. Emden, *Oxford*, pp. 1787–8.
11. Bodley Ms. 859, fos. 9–10. The bishop's register does not survive.
12. J. le Neve, *ut supra*, pp. 20, 70. It is not possible to be precise over the form or chronology of this matter.
13. He became Clifford's vicar-general on 4 May 1402; Worcester DRO, Reg. Clifford, fo. 14r-v.
14. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 1.
15. *Ibid*, fo. 13r-v; K. Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages* (2nd ed., Manchester, 1967), pp. 19–20.
16. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 19r-v.
17. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 22r-v.
18. For his career, A. B. Emden, *Oxford*, p. 1087.
19. R. G. Davies, *op. cit.*, *J. Med. Hist.*, i (1975), pp. 348–54.
20. *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, ed. E. Perroy (Camden Society, 3rd series, xlviii, 1933), pp. 156–7, 241, 248.

21. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 22v. The grounds for moving Erghum are exactly those reported by Thomas Walsingham to have been used to oust Buckingham: *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti*,, in *J. de Trokelowe, Chronica et Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley (Rolls Series, 1866), pp. 226–8.
22. The Bodley letter-book is a 'fair-copy', perhaps only a selection from Stone's probably much larger collection, with headings which may therefore have been introduced by Stone only at the final stage of composition. Prepared after c. 1408, Stone intended the selection of letters to be a gift to John Langrysh, prior of the Charterhouse at Witham. See E. F. Jacob, 'Verborum Florida Venustas', ch. xi in *Essays in the Conciliar Epoch* (3rd ed., Manchester, 1963), pp. 203–5. for an appreciation of the letters.
23. Bodley Ms. 859, fos. 26v-7. However, being by then in his final months and long unable to get to London, Erghum may only have been doing in writing what other bishops hastened to do verbally.
24. *Historical Manuscripts Commission, 3rd Report*, 1872, *Appendix*, p. 352; PRO, *Ecclesiastical Petitions*, C84/38/13 and 14. Bath was one day later in making its request, presumably on receiving the envoys of Wells.
25. Durham, Prior's Kitchen, *Locelli*, xxv, no. 93. The king was addressing the monks of Durham Cathedral, who were the patrons of certain benefices which Bowet would vacate on his episcopal promotion and which Henry IV hoped to secure, in the face of competition, for nominees of his own; hence his urgency in informing the monks of Bowet's promotion.
26. *Anglia Sacra*, ed. H. Wharton (London, 1691), i, 571, printing BL Cotton Ms. Vitellius E. v. 12, *Historia de Episcopis Bathoniensibus et Wellensibus, authore canonico Wellensi*. This work, written some twenty years later and explicitly to honour the memory of Bishop Erghum, is dispassionate about the dispute of 1400–1, but seems to have had little time for Bowet. It is surprisingly uninformative from one who presumably was quite closely involved.
27. Although the chapter of Wells had the notably large complement of fifty-two prebends, which might tend to make difficult the successful promotion of a private candidature, no less than seventeen of the prebendaries were residents in 1400, which, by analogy with instances elsewhere, might make for a more independent spirit at elections. See K. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 73, for residence by canons in this period.
28. For full biographical references, A. B. Emden, *Oxford*, pp. 2154–5, and cf. *Bodleian Library Record*, vii (1963), p. 163 (where Dr. Emden transferred Bowet to Cambridge University) J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Career of Henry Bowet, archbishop of York', unpublished B.Litt. thesis (Oxford, 1964); cf. R. G. Davies, thesis, *op. cit.*, pp. xl-xlvii.
29. *Rot. Parl.*, iii, 459; *C[alendar of] P[apal] L[etters]*, v. 396.
30. Reg. Arundel, i, fo. 207; cf. D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, iii (London, 1737), p. 276, '6 April'.
31. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 23, and cf. fos. 38–40.
32. *Ibid*, fo. 23v.
33. The author of the Cottonian manuscript (see n. 26) recorded that the pope 'spurned the election', which is true by implication rather than explicitly.
34. The canon of Wells (*ut supra*) wrote that Archbishop Arundel dared not consecrate Bowet. It is unlikely, however, that the king would have pressed for so drastic a step, although one cannot discount the possibility altogether, given Henry's total hostility to the pope's provision and the rejection of his own, elected candidate. The pope, as usual, had claimed to have reserved the see, which canonically prohibited any (highly unlikely) reversion to the older mode of appointment by capitular election and metropolitan confirmation.
35. Clifford wrote urgently to him to resist such 'daily' manoeuvres, *subtiliosa consilia callidis machinacionibus exquirentes in detrimentum suum et status mei*: Bodley Ms. 859 fo. 7.
36. *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions*, ed. M. Dominica Legge (Oxford, 1941), pp. 351–2.
37. For further consideration of this point, see R. G. Davies, 'Thomas Arundel as archbishop of Canterbury, 1396–1414', *J.Ecc.H.*, xxiv (1973), pp. 14–15, and *idem*, 'After the Execution of Archbishop Scrope: Henry IV, the Papacy and the English Episcopate, 1405–8', *Bull. of J. Rylands University Library of Manchester*, lix (1976), especially pp. 42–6.
38. One example is in a letter from J[ohn] P[rophete?] to a friend in the privy seal office, asking for the latest London gossip, in particular regarding the bishopric of Bath: PRO, *Council and Privy Seal Records*, E28/291.
39. *Rot.Parl.*, iii, 459.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 460.
41. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 24r-v.
42. The prior of Worcester was, as usual, the keeper of the spiritualities. The election is fully reported in the *Register of the Diocese of Worcester during the Vacancy of the See, 1301–1435*, ed. J. W. Willis Bund (Worcestershire Hist. Soc., 1897), pp. 371–4.
43. Clifford had successfully resisted attempts to have the temporalities directed *sede vacante* to meet the high expenses of the king's household. *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions*, pp. 393–4, 401; Rymer, *Foedera . . .*, viii, 205; CPR, 1399–1401, 504, 508, 529, 547–8.
44. Usk, pp. 230–1; *Anglia Sacra*, i, 571n.; PRO, *Lists and Indexes*, xlix, *Papal Bulls* (London, 1923), p. 307.

45. Worcester DRO, Reg. Clifford, fo. 1r-v; Rymer, *Foedera . . .*, viii, 226; CPR, 1399–1401, 547–8. Clifford was also unfortunate enough to have put his seal to the agreement he had made with the Albertini agents for the payment for his bulls for Bath and Wells and the *servitia*. Henry IV was sympathetic but felt unable to see how Clifford could repudiate the Albertini, who had already disbursed the money: *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions*, pp. 350–1; Bodley Ms. 859 fos. 35v-6.
46. Reg. Arundel, i, fos. 12v-13; Reg. Clifford, fo. 1. Clifford was not enthroned until 4 Feb. 1403: *ibid.*, fo. 43v.
47. Bodley Ms. 859, fo. 33r-v.
48. Reg. Clifford (Worcester), *passim;* fos. 21-3v, 60–2v, 78v-81, 97v-9v, for his periods of residence.
49. *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions*, pp. 315–7. The prince had ulterior motives in that he wanted two of Bowet's prebends for his own clerks.
50. *CPR*, 1399–1401, 470–1. The temporalities had previously been used by the king to pay Bowet and his retinue for his journey to Guienne in royal service: PRO, E404/10/727.
51. Reg. Arundel, i, fo. 11v; *CPL*, v, 396.
52. Reg. Arundel, i, fos. 11v-12, 13r-v; cf. Canterbury Cathedral, Dean and Chapter Archives, Register S, fo. 46.
53. *CPR*, 1399–1401, 547. By 1408, with both his and Erghum's *servitia* still unpaid, perhaps indeed because the episcopal revenues were in straits, he was excommunicated. His successor, Nicholas Bubwith, paid off everything with remarkable despatch: Bodleian Library, Arch. Seld., B 23 (*Letter Book of William Swan*, part 1), fo. 129; W. E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England, 1327–1534* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), p. 187.