Power in Tudor England

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Glossary

advowson The right to present to an ecclesiastical living or benefice.

apange Literally 'privilege'; used of substantial jurisdictional franchises or peculiars, normally accompanying grants of large estates.

bouge of court The right to be fed at the king's table; a privilege of those who held Chamber or Household office.

certiorari A writ, issued out of Chancery or King's Bench, enabling proceedings made by any court of record, or by provincial officials, to be removed and certified before the superior courts at Westminster.

first fruits and tenths Dues from bishoprics and other major ecclesiastical preferments, originally paid to the pope, but transferred to the Crown by a statute of 1534. First fruits were in theory a full year's revenue of the benefice. Tenths were a regular annual tax, in theory 10 per cent of the value.

General Eyre Visitation by the royal justices, similar to the later assizes. Henry II divided England into six circuits, and sent out itinerant justices in groups of three. They were empowered to hear all pleas of the Crown.

nisi prius A writ so called because it ordered the sheriff to cause jurors, summoned to be present at actions put down for trial in the central courts, to appear at Westminster before a specified day 'unless before' the circuit judges should visit his county.

mignon A favourite; used specifically of the king's favourites, especially the 'gentilshommes de la chambre'.

oyer and terminer A judicial commission issued by the Crown to a group of named individuals, conferring upon them the power to 'hear and determine' certain cases. Such commissions might be limited by time, or area, or confined to a single case.

Provisors and Praemunire A group of statutes passed between 1363 and 1393, restricting papal rights to appoint to benefices in England, and prohibiting the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction without the king's consent.

socage A traditional tenure by non-military service.

supersedeas A writ issued to cancel or annul any normal judicial process.

terminari A writ used to move an indictment into the central courts when a defendant wished to plead error of process.