

## Two lists of prospective bishops, 1559

J. A. Vage

The process by which the first generation of Elizabethan bishops emerged during the opening years of the queen's reign is still imperfectly understood. Admittedly 'the transactions at court', so vital in determining episcopal appointments in the post-Reformation Church, 'have mostly gone unrecorded, or else the records have been lost'.<sup>1</sup> But as a counterbalance we possess two lists of prospective appointees from which it is possible to supply a chronology to the period of gestation.<sup>2</sup> The importance of these lists lies in their origins. One is entirely in the hand of Cecil;<sup>3</sup> the other has been corrected by him.<sup>4</sup> The difficulty, however, is that the lists are undated, though it is possible to affix reasonably precise dates to them and it is this which is attempted here.

Neither list is unknown to historians. H. N. Birt, in his study of the Elizabethan religious settlement published in 1907, drew attention to one,<sup>5</sup> whilst more recently Professor Collinson has introduced the other into the discussion.<sup>6</sup> Both these writers suggest dates for their lists, as does the editor of the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*.<sup>7</sup> In fact Birt follows the latter when he assigns his list to May 1559.<sup>8</sup> But this would seem to be too early. Six dioceses are identified in the list as vacant by reason of the deprivation of their Marian incumbents. These deprivations all occurred on 26 June 1559.<sup>9</sup> It would therefore appear that the list was compiled on or shortly after that date, certainly before 5 July when Heath and Thirlby were removed from York and Ely.<sup>10</sup>

This supposition helps to make sense of the remainder of the list. Birt misleadingly implied that the sees set opposite the column of divines had been assigned to the latter.<sup>11</sup> More probably the only appointments which had been decided upon at this stage were

<sup>1</sup> P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, SP 12/4, 39; SP 12/11, 12.

<sup>3</sup> PRO, SP 12/4, 39.

<sup>4</sup> PRO, SP 12/11, 12.

<sup>5</sup> PRO, SP 12/4, 39; H. N. Birt, *The Elizabethan Religious Settlement: A Study of Contemporary Documents* (1907), 229–30. The substance of this list was inaccurately transcribed by Strype who misleadingly incorporated it with elements of the preceding state paper (PRO, SP 12/4, 38, for which see below, n. 52). Strype assigned the list to 'soon after the parliament was up' but did not discuss its contents (J. Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion* (4 vols. in 7, Oxford 1824), I, i, 227–9).

<sup>6</sup> PRO, SP 12/11, 12; Collinson, 474.

<sup>7</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1547–80*, 130, 149.

<sup>8</sup> Birt, 230.

<sup>9</sup> H. Gee, *The Elizabethan Clergy and the Settlement of Religion, 1558–1564* (Oxford, 1898), 35–6. The eight sees vacant through death had been so since at least the preceding Dec. (Gee, 30).

<sup>10</sup> Gee, 36. The list contains two anomalies. First, the sees of Bristol and Oxford had both fallen vacant by reason of death by 26 June. The failure of Cecil to note this may have been due to a reluctance on his part to fill them. Bristol was eventually given as a commendam to Cheyney the bishop of Gloucester in 1562. Oxford was not filled until 1567 (J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae or A Calendar of the Principal Ecclesiastical Dignitaries*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy (3 vols, Oxford 1854), i, 214; ii, 504). Second, London and St Asaph were both vacant through deprivation, the former since 30 May and the latter, supposedly, since 26 June (Gee, 34–5). Cecil's failure to note Bonner's deprivation may perhaps reflect the legal uncertainties surrounding the latter's restoration to London in Mary's reign (G. Alexander, 'Bishop Bonner and the Parliament of 1559', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 56 (1983), 164–79, at 175). Regarding St Asaph, it is possible that Goldwell was not in fact deprived on 26 June, but very shortly thereafter, perhaps on the following day (see Birt, 218). This, of course, would mean that the list was compiled on either 26 or 27 June.

<sup>11</sup> Birt, 230; Collinson, 474.

those involving Grindal, Cox, Barlow and Scory. Noticeably their names are set apart from the other contenders for episcopal office and their positioning is directly opposite the sees to which they were to be preferred. In fact it was known by the end of May that these four were to become the bishops of London, Norwich, Chichester and Hereford respectively.<sup>12</sup> It was also clear that Parker was to be appointed to Canterbury.<sup>13</sup> Yet he is not explicitly associated with the archdiocese in the list, though it is very likely that the cross against his name indicated that he was at the least to receive a bishopric.<sup>14</sup> This discrepancy is to be explained by Parker's misgivings over accepting the office of primate.<sup>15</sup> For whilst the royal congé d'élire for Cox's election to Norwich had been issued on 5 June and those for Grindal, Barlow and Scory on 22 June, Parker's nomination was not despatched until 18 July.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this was on the same day that Cox was removed from Norwich and nominated to Ely.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Birt, Professor Collinson takes issue with the editor of the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* and assigns his list to 'before 22 June [1559]' rather than to January 1559/60.<sup>18</sup> Collinson's reason for doing so concerns the marginal annotation 'despatched' which has been added opposite the names of Scory and Hereford. This he interprets as signifying the sending out of the congé d'élire to the dean and chapter of Hereford. At first sight the earlier dating seems the more appropriate. For if the listing were compiled in January 1559/60 why were the appointments of Sandys to Worcester and Bullingham to Lincoln, the congés d'élire for which were issued on 13 and 25 November 1559 respectively, not also marked 'despatched'?<sup>19</sup> But there is a problem here. Collinson notes Cecil's substitution of Sampson for Scory at Norwich and Scory for Sampson at Hereford in the list and adduces support for his revised dating from these changes. But Cox, whose departure for Ely presumably underlay Cecil's reshuffling, was still heading for Norwich on 22 June, the day of his election to the latter see. Moreover, as we have seen, Ely did not become vacant until 5 July.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, it is possible that the list was drawn up in anticipation of Cox's removal. But if so we need to believe that Berkeley's appointment to Bath and Wells was also being anticipated on or before 22 June. As Bourne the Marian bishop was not deprived until late October 1559, and as the government continued to hope that he might consent to the oath of supremacy, this seems unlikely.<sup>21</sup> There is also a problem concerning Guest's association with Rochester. Again it is possible that Guest was being viewed as the prospective incumbent of this see in June. But it seems unlikely given that Edmund Allen was nominated to Rochester on 27 July.<sup>22</sup> Allen died the following month. He was buried on 27 August.<sup>23</sup> It thus makes better sense to regard Guest as Allen's replacement rather than the

<sup>12</sup> *The Zurich Letters*, ed. H. Robinson (2 vols, Cambridge, 1842–5), i, 23; *Calendar of State Papers Foreign*, 1558–59, 287. Bill and Whitehead were being associated with Salisbury on 28 May.

<sup>13</sup> *C.S.P. Foreign* 1558–59, 287.

<sup>14</sup> W. S. Hudson, *The Cambridge Connection and the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559* (Durham, N.C., 1980), 108.

<sup>15</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D., Archbishop of Canterbury*, eds J. Bruce and T. T. Perowne (Cambridge, 1853), 57–71.

<sup>16</sup> Le Neve, ii, 469; J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541–1857: I, St Paul's, London*, comp. J. M. Horn (1969), 1; J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541–1857: II, Chichester Diocese*, comp. J. M. Horn (1971), 1–2; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1558–60, 80.

<sup>17</sup> *C.P.R.* 1558–60, 80.

<sup>18</sup> Collinson, 474.

<sup>19</sup> Le Neve, ii, 23; iii, 64–5.

<sup>20</sup> Le Neve, ii, 469.

<sup>21</sup> Birt, 222. Bourne was deprived between 18 and 26 Oct.

<sup>22</sup> J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541–1857: III, Canterbury, Rochester and Winchester Dioceses*, comp. J. M. Horn (1974), 50–1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

first choice selection who was displaced and who then came back into the reckoning. Significantly, Guest's congé d'élire was not issued until 22 January 1559/60.<sup>24</sup>

These inconsistencies suggest that the list was compiled sometime after 18 October 1559 the date of the commission to administer the oath of supremacy to Bournie.<sup>25</sup> Probably the cut-off point, both with regard to the list itself and Cecil's emendations, fell before 25 November, the date of an anonymous report entitled 'bishops for the most part discerned upon'.<sup>26</sup> At first sight the report appears contradictory. On the one hand Pilkington, Sampson, Jewell, Bullingham, Sandys, Scory, May, Horne and Parry are identified with the sees assigned to them by the list. On the other hand the report omits to mention the dioceses of Rochester, Exeter, Bath and Wells, St David's, Bangor, St Asaph and Chester. Thus it could be argued that the list in fact postdates the report. The deciding factor would seem to be the association of Thomas Bentham and not Alexander Nowell with the see of Coventry and Lichfield. The author of the report was well informed, for Bentham was nominated to the bishopric on 27 December.<sup>27</sup> It is difficult to believe that Cecil would have failed to correct the list had he made his revisions after the report's appearance. More probably the list was regarded as obsolete by this date. These conclusions certainly tie in with other items of circumstantial evidence. On 16 November Jewell informed Peter Martyr that 'the bishops [had been] marked out for promotion'.<sup>28</sup> Four days earlier Miles Coverdale, the 'bishop elect' of Exeter, had preached a sermon at Paul's Cross.<sup>29</sup> Bentham followed him a week later.<sup>30</sup> As appearing at Paul's Cross was invariably a sign of favour in high places, it might be supposed that the reformers were already aware of their impending advancement.

If therefore the list and its contents may be placed within the period 18 October – 25 November, or even 26 October – 12 November 1559,<sup>31</sup> what is the significance of Cecil's emendations? Even with the revised dating it is still possible to argue that 'despatched' refers to the issuing of the congé d'élire. Sandys's nomination to Worcester on 13 November was the next to be made after Jewell's appointment to Salisbury on 27 July.<sup>32</sup> But this fails to account for the absence of Parker, Grindal, Barlow and Cox from the list. Evidently the phrase 'bishops elect' was loosely defined. It might refer to men who had already been elected by their prospective deans and chapters. It might also refer to divines who had yet to be granted the royal congé d'élire. Scory and Jewell, together with Parker and his three colleagues, had been elected to their respective sees by the end of the summer of 1559.<sup>33</sup> Why, therefore, did the list distinguish between them? The answer may be that the sees to which Parker, Grindal, Barlow and Cox had been appointed, namely Canterbury, London, Chichester and Ely, were irrevocably assigned to them, whereas the appointments proposed by the list were still open to revision. The use of the word 'despatched' in relation to Salisbury and Hereford may thus indicate the willingness of the government, or at least Cecil, to proceed with Jewell and Scory's appointments.

This conclusion sheds light upon the changes of incumbent experienced by the sees of Norwich and Hereford in the list. The point of interest lies in Scory's restoration to

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> C.P.R., 1558–60, 28.

<sup>26</sup> C.S.P. Foreign, 1559–60, 138.

<sup>27</sup> Le Neve, i, 556.

<sup>28</sup> Zurich Letters, i, 55.

<sup>29</sup> *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Soc., 1848), 218.

<sup>30</sup> Machyn, 218.

<sup>31</sup> For 26 Oct. see below.

<sup>32</sup> Le Neve, ii, 606.

<sup>33</sup> Le Neve, i, 342–3, 469; ii, 606; *Le Neve, Canterbury, etc.*, 8; *Le Neve, St Paul's*, 1. There is no record of Barlow's election, but it almost certainly occurred at this time, i.e. July or Aug. 1559.

Hereford by Cecil. Why should the secretary of state do this? After all, Pilkington was subsequently both nominated and elected to Winchester before being transferred to Durham.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps Cecil was merely correcting an error by the list's scribe. But this explanation would carry greater weight had Thomas Sampson been associated with Norwich earlier in the year as Scory had been with Hereford. Thus it may be that the list is something more than an office copy from Cecil's secretariat.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps it was the product of a specific interest group, the contents of which had been submitted to the secretary of state for scrutiny and verification. Professor Collinson has drawn our attention to the progressive temper of many of the first generation of Elizabethan bishops and of the role played by the earls of Leicester, Warwick, Huntingdon and Bedford in securing high ecclesiastical office for those divines.<sup>36</sup> Given the 'radical' content of the list – five of the prospective appointees later declined the offer of a bishopric on the grounds of conscience – it is possible that we have here the original statement of the earls' intentions for a majority of the sees of England and Wales.

That Leicester and his colleagues should be especially influential at the end of October and the beginning of November can be explained by the manoeuvres surrounding Elizabeth's attempt to enforce the act of exchange whereby bishoprics would be divested of their estates in return for crown impropriations.<sup>37</sup> The prospect of this had led Parker, Grindal, Barlow, Cox and Scory to send a protest letter to the queen in mid-October.<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth responded on the twenty-sixth by requesting that Lord Treasurer Winchester proceed with the surveying of the episcopal manors that were to be alienated so that the vacant bishoprics might be quickly filled.<sup>39</sup> What the queen's reply omitted to mention was that she herself had been responsible for the delay in appointing diocesans. Initially Elizabeth had focused her demands upon the sees of Parker and his four colleagues. The five bishops elect, as we have seen, had been nominated in June and July. However, they remained unconfirmed in office until the very end of the year. Meanwhile, the selection of bishops for the other vacant sees was postponed. Even Cecil, who supported the queen in her attack on episcopal wealth, was moved to remark in July that 'there has been hitherto great slackness in appointing bishops, and the same still continues'.<sup>40</sup>

During August and September information about the estates of the five sees was gathered. On 4 October local commissions of survey were issued.<sup>41</sup> Then came the letter of protest from Parker and his colleagues. This seems to have alerted the queen to the shortcomings of the scheme of expropriation. Exchanges involving all the bishoprics were now likely to be troublesome both politically and administratively. Moreover the short-term financial gains would be small. Accordingly the queen settled for lesser exchanges with the more richly endowed dioceses. The revised policy was set in motion on 13 December when new commissions of survey were issued for the sees of the five bishops-elect.<sup>42</sup> On 17 December Parker was consecrated archbishop.<sup>43</sup> On the following day the royal assent was granted to the elections of Grindal, Barlow, Cox, Scory, Sandys, Merrick

<sup>34</sup> *Le Neve, Canterbury, etc.*, 80–1; *C.S.P. Domestic 1547–80*, 163.

<sup>35</sup> Hudson, 107–8.

<sup>36</sup> Collinson, 62–3. But compare Hudson, 105–6.

<sup>37</sup> For the full story upon which the following draws, see F. Heal, 'The Bishops and the Act of Exchange of 1559', *Historical Journal*, xvii (1974), 227–46.

<sup>38</sup> *Parker Correspondence*, 97–101.

<sup>39</sup> *Parker Correspondence*, 101–2.

<sup>40</sup> *C.S.P. Foreign, 1558–59*, 368.

<sup>41</sup> *C.P.R. 1558–60*, 30–1.

<sup>42</sup> *C.P.R. 1558–60*, 440–1.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Neve, Canterbury, etc.*, 8.

and Davies.<sup>44</sup> Jewell's assent followed on the twenty-seventh.<sup>45</sup> But by then the defections from the ranks of the would-be bishops had begun. If our chronology is correct, Nowell had been offered and had refused his see by 19 November.<sup>46</sup> Coverdale, who may have had early warning of his likely elevation from the earl of Bedford – the reformer had departed for England on 14 August just four days after Turberville the Marian bishop of Exeter had been deprived – seems to have developed cold feet about the matter by 9 December.<sup>47</sup> This was a fortnight after Parry was reported to have refused Carlisle.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Pilkington, who had also declined episcopal office at about this time, Parry did not subsequently change his mind.<sup>49</sup> Becon, too, seems to have come to a swift decision to forgo a bishopric, whilst Sampson procrastinated into the new year before finally withdrawing.<sup>50</sup>

These defections represented a loss to the cause of further reform. But those who stepped into their shoes were not altogether unworthy. Thomas Bentham, John Parkhurst and William Alley were tried and trusted protestants.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the real point about the formation of the early Elizabethan episcopate was not the loss of talent but the demonstration of principle. Returned exiles and other progressives proved ready to defend the wealth of their sees against the depredations of the crown and in spite of the misgivings which they themselves entertained about the organisation of domestic church government. The resistance of the five bishops-elect in the autumn of 1559 had forced the queen to relent and to unfreeze the vacant bishoprics, thereby opening the way for the introduction of zeal into the uppermost branches of the Elizabethan ecclesiastical establishment.

<sup>44</sup> *Le Neve, St Paul's*, 1; *Le Neve, Chichester*, 1–2; *Le Neve*, i, 74, 104–5, 342–3, 469; iii, 64–5.

<sup>45</sup> *Le Neve*, ii, 606.

<sup>46</sup> See above.

<sup>47</sup> C. H. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of English Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1938), 133; Gee, 37; *Le Neve, Canterbury, etc.*, 8. Coverdale was very probably a Russell client. Bedford's father was most likely responsible for the reformer's appointment to Exeter in 1551 (see A. L. Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall: Portrait of a Society* (1969), 266).

<sup>48</sup> *C.S.P. Foreign, 1559–60*, 138.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; *Le Neve*, ii, 469.

<sup>51</sup> Garrett, 86, 244–5; J. Vowell alias Hooker, *A Catalog of the Bishops of Excester* (1584), no 46.

Bishopricks<sup>52</sup>

mortuus	Canterbury 2900 <sup>l53</sup>		+ Mr Parker
	London 1000 <sup>l</sup>	Mr Grindall	+ Mr Bill
mortuus	Norwych 600 <sup>l54</sup>	Mr Coxé	+ Mr Whithed
mortuus	Chichester 590 <sup>l</sup>	Mr Barloo	+ Mr Pilkynnton
mortuus	Herford 500 <sup>l</sup>	Mr Scory	+ Mr Sands
privatus	Wynton 3700 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Horne
mortuus	Sarisbury 1000 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Sampson
privatus	Lincoln		+ Mr Juel
privatus	Lychfield et Couentry 600 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Bentam
privatus	Carlile 268 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Nowell
mortuus	Rochester 207 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Beacon
privatus	Chester		Mr Pullen
privatus	Worcester 920 <sup>l</sup>		+ Mr Daviss
mortuus	Glocester 300 <sup>l</sup>		Mr Aylmer
mortuus	Bangar 66 <sup>l</sup>		Mr Wisdom
	Asaph 10 <sup>l</sup>		Mr Gest
	177 <sup>l</sup> spiritualities		Mr Peddar
			Mr Leauer
			+ Mr Ally <sup>55</sup>

Yorke 1000<sup>l</sup>  
 Ely 2000<sup>l</sup>  
 Duresme 2700<sup>l</sup>  
 Bath 500<sup>l</sup>  
 Excester  
 St Daviss 300<sup>l</sup>  
 Landaph 126<sup>l</sup>  
 Bristoll  
 Peterburgh 300<sup>l</sup>

Oxon<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Endorsement. *C.S.P. Domestic* offers the following description: 'List of bishoprics in England and Wales and their values with names of various divines'. The list is a close relative of the preceding state paper (PRO, SP 12/4, 38) which is endorsed 'A note of bishoprics etc. presently in queen's disposition with the names of learned men without living'. Like the list, the paper is undated. However, it was evidently written prior to Bonner's deprivation on 30 May as the only sees noted as vacant are the ten whose Marian incumbents had died before the end of 1558. The paper makes no attempt to apportion sees to the divines mentioned as being 'without promotion at this present' and who included Barlow, Scory, Cox and Parker. The absence of Grindall's name may, perhaps, indicate that his advancement to the see of London had already been decided upon. If so, the paper can be tentatively dated to early or mid May 1559 (see P. Collinson, *Archbishop Grindall 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (1979), 91).

<sup>53</sup> Cecil's estimates of the values of individual sees are, with the exception of St Asaph, conservative estimates. The figures quoted here are in some cases (Rochester, Carlisle and Bangor) as much as fifty per cent below the official valuation of 1535 (see also Heal, 236).

<sup>54</sup> '590<sup>l</sup> struck through.

<sup>55</sup> Added ? as an afterthought. Erroneously transcribed as Allen by Strype (229).

<sup>56</sup> Added.

Bishops elect<sup>57</sup>

Wynton	Mr Pilkinton
– <u>Norwiche</u>	Mr Thomas* Sampson <sup>*58</sup>
dispeched* – <u>Sarum</u>	Mr Jewell
– <u>Roffensis</u>	Mr Edmund* Gest with the Archedeaco of Canterbury <sup>59</sup>
– <u>Lincolne</u>	Mr Bullingam
– <u>Lichefelde couentry</u>	Mr Alexander Nouell
– <u>Worceter</u>	Doctor Edwyn* Sands
dispeched* Hertfordensis	Mr Skorye <sup>*60</sup>
– Exeter	Mr Miles* Coverdall
– Bathon	Mr Barcklye
– <u>Menenensis</u>	Mr Yonge
– <u>Bangor</u>	Doctor Myrrick
– <u>Assaven</u>	Mr Davis
Eborocensis	Doctor May
– <u>Dunelmensis</u>	Doctor Robert* Horne
Carloliensis	Mr Parrye
Chestrensis	Mr Thomas* Becon with the benefic impropriated <sup>61</sup>
Oxoniensis	
Peterburg	
Glocestrensis	
Bristolienis	

<sup>57</sup> Endorsement. *C.S.P. Domestic* supplies the following: 'List of bishops elect: containing some who were not bishops here assigned, as Dr Pilkington for Winchester'. The words with an asterisk are in Cecil's hand. The christian names the bishops elect added by Cecil are interlineations. Cecil also appears to have been responsible for the dash opposite a number of the sees and for underlining several of the dioceses. The purpose of these markings unclear.

<sup>58</sup> 'Skorie' struck through.

<sup>59</sup> i.e. to be held in commendam with the see.

<sup>60</sup> 'Sampson' struck through.

<sup>61</sup> To be held in commendam.