How was the attack on the English Church carried out?

The ‘legislative independence’ of the Church was destroyed. This meant that the Church could no longer make its own canon laws which could be enforced in English courts without permission from the king.

Cromwell played a central role in this process, as he was the architect of much of the legislation which made the break with Rome. However, he was helped by the Reformation Parliament, as they passed the Acts and made them law. They turned threats into real blows, as they legitimised Henry’s attacks. In addition, Foxe and Cranmer’s Collectanea Satis Copiosa had introduced the idea of Royal Supremacy to Henry, and therefore helped Cromwell by ensuring that the King was compliant with his work.

How great an influence did Cromwell have?

ELTON suggests that Cromwell's influence over this was fairly profound, because he states that he “knew exactly how the problem [the Great Matter] could be solved”, and came at a time when the other nobles and councillors “had no answer to the royal perplexities”. This suggests that Cromwell completely turned around Henry’s position regarding the Great Matter, from one where he had no solution to one where he did. Elton also states that “the Tudor revolution was about to begin”, implying that the point when Henry “discovered” Cromwell was pivotal, and that Cromwell caused this “revolution”. This is indicative of Cromwell having had great influence over the solution of the Great Matter.

Was Cromwell more important for putting together the concept, or putting it into action?

ELTON also claims that Cromwell “knew exactly how the problem could be solved”, suggesting that he knew of a solution and how it could be implemented. This implies that Cromwell did not put together the concept of Royal Supremacy, but instead was aware of it, and understood how it could be put into action. It suggests that he took the concept from elsewhere and applied it to solving the King’s problem, rather than coming up with the concept himself.

GUY supports this by stating that it was “members of the Boleyn faction” and “Foxe and Cranmer” who had put together the concept of Royal Supremacy, not Cromwell. This corroborates Elton’s claim as it suggests that Cromwell took the idea of Royal Supremacy from elsewhere (the Collectanea Satis Copiosa) and recognised the fact that it solved the Great Matter, as well as knew how to implement this solution.

SCARISBRICK further corroborates this view, as he states that Cromwell was not “the true initiator” of the establishment of the Royal Supremacy. He
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recognises the fact, however, that “Cromwell was the executant of the King's designs”, suggesting that he played a central role in putting the concept of Royal Supremacy into action, but he was helped by those who came up with the concept.

The Royal Supremacy.

The Royal Supremacy was based on “dubious historical precedents” (Brigden) displayed to Henry in the Collectanea Satis Copiosa.

Why were the “historical precedents” described as “dubious”? Brigden is referring to the “legal judgements, chronicles, scriptures, and arguments from the Church Fathers and the General Councils of the Church” on which the Collectanea Satis Copiosa (and the argument for Royal Supremacy) was based. By calling these documents “dubious”, Brigden is suggesting that these documents did not provide conclusive evidence that the King had the authority to “prevent appeals outside his realm”. She suggests that perhaps these documents had been manipulated to suit the argument of the Boleyn faction and convince the King and others that Royal Supremacy was the right thing to happen.

What was Henry’s attitude to the Royal Supremacy?
Henry made jottings in the margin of the Collectanea which said “here is the truth” and “where does this come from?”. This suggests that perhaps he fully believed in the argument presented by the Collectanea Satis Copiosa; that the King did have authority over the Church in England. He had been convinced by the document that the argument was a strong one and clearly believed that it could convince people of Royal Supremacy. Even if Henry himself had doubts (which seems unlikely), he thought that these documents could, and should, be presented as “the truth”, and was enthusiastic about them as a result. In asking “where does this come from?”, Henry is perhaps wondering about the legitimacy of the documents, as he needed everything to be legitimate in terms of heirs.

The Supplication of the Ordinaries.
- This was an Act which removed the Church power of Convocation, which had meant that assemblies of clergy could pass laws enforceable in their courts.
- The Act meant that no new legislation could be passed unless licensed by Henry, and that existing canon laws standing contrary to royal prerogative would be repealed.
- It effectively put the Church’s legal system under royal control.
- Consequences of the Act included Thomas More resigning as Lord Chancellor.
- In addition, many leading clergy refusing to turn up to the session at which the deciding vote was taken on the issue (thus disassociating themselves with it).
- Henry was established as supreme legislator in England. The convocation could do little to resist the attack (Archbishop Warham was ageing and could only offer token resistance), as Henry increased
pressure by saying that the clergy were only half his subjects because of their oath to the Pope.
- This led to the Submission of the Clergy on 15 May 1532, in which the legislative independence of the Church was officially surrendered to the crown.
- The Act was re-drafted by Cromwell in 1532, in order for it to be passed by Parliament. He cleverly convinced Parliament that this was their Bill, and not to do with the King or government. However, they were really endorsing Henry's attack on the legislative independence of the Church.

Henry was now SUPREME LEGISLATOR in England. NO LAW enforceable in English courts could be passed without his consent. He had more legislative power than Rome, as NO-ONE could come above him in terms of law-making – all laws needed his permission.

In fact, the Pope had no legislative authority in England, as the King could remove any canon law he wished to. The Church was now in no position to withstand attacks.

How did Acts of Parliament secure the Break with Rome?

Why did Henry use Parliament to attack the Church?
- It made his actions seem legal.
- There was a rising tide of nationalism felt by the people of England, who felt strong loyalty to their King. This was reflected by Parliament.
- It made his actions seem more threatening – he said that he had “let slip the dogs of war” when he called Parliament.
- It took the Reformation step by step, by way of different Acts. This could reflect the fact that Henry did not have an overall plan for reformation, but was taking each move as it came.

The Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates.
- Annates were payments from newly appointed bishops to the Pope.
- They gave the Pope one third of their first year's revenue.
- These payments were banned in the First Act of Annates, 1532, meaning that the primary source of papal revenue in England was removed.
- The Act was made conditional, and remained so on the statute book until 1533. This showed that Henry had still not given up hope of the Pope granting his divorce even at this stage.
- The Act challenged centuries of tradition and worship, and Henry still had some doubts about asserting authority over the Pope, as the repercussions across Europe could have been serious. As a result, the House of Commons were fearful. They feared economic reprisals, such as the disruption of the wool trade with Charles V.
Was this a change in tactics for Henry? Henry was changing from trying to request an annulment to trying to declare it himself. When Rome would not give him what he wanted, Henry faced a dilemma, and a possible solution appeared in the *Collectanea Satis Copiosa* – *Royal Supremacy*. He began to understand that he could place his own authority above that of Rome, and began to make threats. These turned into real blows for the Church when Acts, such as the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, were passed to restrict Papal power. Henry was then on his way to granting himself enough authority to declare his annulment without any consent from Rome. However, he did not completely give up hope of an annulment being given through Rome, hence the ‘Conditional’.

**Cranmer: A new Archbishop of Canterbury.**

Why did Henry appoint Cranmer? Henry was becoming very impatient for the divorce to be granted as Anne was pregnant by January 1533. This meant that Henry needed a cleric who would be sympathetic to his divorce and prepared to act quickly. Cranmer was prepared to be compliant to Henry’s wishes, and as a result, was appointed to the post of Archbishop of Canterbury.

A contemporary, Chapuys, has written of the “astonishment” that came from Cranmer’s appointment and has given possible reasons for it. However, we must question how well-informed Chapuys really was. It is clear that Chapuys understood how strongly the King’s wish for a divorce dominated business at the Tudor court, as he states that “it is suspected that the object of this haste is... the new marriage... [and] the necessary divorce”. He also suggests that the King was becoming impatient to have the divorce granted, as he mentions Henry’s “haste”. In addition, the source refers to the “astonishment” which came from Cranmer being appointed to the post. This means that he knew that the rise for Cranmer had been an obscure one, and perhaps that Gardiner had been in line for the job. However, there are limitations to the source. There is no evidence that Chapuys understood quite how urgent Henry was for the divorce to be granted and his new marriage authorised, and the reason for this (Anne’s pregnancy), although it is clear that he understood Henry’s intention to marry Anne. Additionally, Chapuys states that Cranmer’s appointment had been “to the great astonishment of everybody”, however if he had known about Gardiner’s opposition to the *Submission of the Clergy* and understood the impact that this would have on his position in Henry’s favour, he would perhaps not have been so astonished.

What other factors added impetus to the break with Rome? Anne Boleyn’s pregnancy added a great deal of impetus to the break with Rome, as Henry was convinced that she was carrying his son and, if they were married, heir. Henry was desperate to secure his dynasty and felt that marrying Anne would do this. It was becoming less and less likely for permission to be granted by the Pope, and the only solution appeared to be to establish *Royal Supremacy*. Henry’s haste to marry Anne before she gave