



# The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church

*G.W. Bernard*

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## **The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church** G.W. Bernard

Henry VIII's reformation remains among the most crucial yet misunderstood events in English history. In this substantial new account G. W. Bernard presents the king as neither confused nor a pawn in the hands of manipulative factions. Henry, a monarch who ruled as well as reigned, is revealed instead as the determining mover of religious policy throughout this momentous period.

In Henry's campaign to secure a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, which led him to break with Rome, his strategy, as Bernard shows, was more consistent and more radical than historians have allowed. Henry refused to introduce Lutheranism, but rather harnessed the rhetoric of the continental reformation in support of his royal supremacy. Convinced that the church needed urgent reform, in particular the purging of superstition and idolatry, Henry's dissolution of the monasteries and the dismantling of the shrines were much more than a venal attempt to raise money. The king sought a middle way between Rome and Zurich, between Catholicism and its associated superstitions on one hand and the subversive radicalism of the reformers on the other. With a ruthlessness that verged on tyranny, Henry VIII determined the pace of change in the most important twenty years of England's religious development.

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