

GCE History – Unit 4 – Depth Study 1

4.1 The Mid Tudor Crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570

Part 2: Challenges Facing Mary and Elizabeth c.1553–1570

General context of the period

- 1558 represents the transition from the end of Mary's reign and the beginning of Elizabeth's. Mary died on 17 November and, to avoid any challenges or a vacuum in power, Elizabeth was immediately proclaimed queen.
- The change in regime also marks a change of religion, in effect the transition from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism.
- The transition from the Marian to the Elizabethan regimes also had political implications with the change in government ministers and advisers.
- The Church Settlement was intended to steer a middle way between Catholics and Protestants, in effect, to avoid a costly religious civil war as had broken out in France.
- Elizabeth had to contend with misogynistic attitudes and competing factions for royal patronage. Her marriage was a recurring theme in Parliament and government circles.
- Elizabeth had to pursue a carefully balance foreign policy that did not upset England's relations with the Catholic powers of France and Spain.
- Elizabeth also had to consider her relationship with the Pope and the influence of Papal authority.
- The Religious Settlement is put under pressure by the arrival of Mary, Queen of Scots, in England in 1568.
- The incarceration of Queen Mary caused political and religious problems and pushed some disaffected noblemen, the Northern Earls, to rebel in 1569.
- The Papal Bull, in excommunicating Elizabeth, brought to an end her carefully balanced policy of religious compromise between Catholics and Protestants. The Bull was tantamount to a declaration of war by encouraging English Catholics to disobey, rebel and even to assassinate the heretic queen.

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth I in the period from 1558 to 1570.

[30]

Key: Values
Limitations
Other points of note

Summary of points, including:

- notes on the sources and their attributions/provenances
- notes on the specific context of the sources.

Source A

John Knox, a Protestant minister exiled in Geneva, writing in his pamphlet, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558).

To allow a woman such as this to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm, nation or city is repugnant to nature, God and the subversion of good order of all equity and justice. It is a thing most repugnant to nature, that women rule and govern over men. Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him. Woman was made subject to man by the irrevocable sentence of God, in which sentence there are two parts: (a) Anguish and pain as oft as ever she shall be a mother. (b) A subjection of herself, her appetites and will to her husband and his will. Neither art, nobility, policy nor law made by man can deliver women: but ignorance of God, ambition and tyranny have conspired to abolish and destroy God's instructions. Therefore, the empire of a woman is a thing repugnant to justice and the destruction of every commonwealth where it is found.

- From a pamphlet published abroad by an exiled Scottish Protestant cleric John Knox.
- It is Protestant and misogynistic propaganda.
- Note the date. It represents an aspect of the initial challenges facing Elizabeth on her accession in 1558.
- Knox has serious concerns about a woman's ability to govern the kingdom effectively. In fact, he questions the very nature of female rule.
- The tone of the source is one of bitterness. He is clearly a strong opponent of the queen on gender grounds.
- Knox is a Scottish Protestant forced into exile from his adopted home of London by Mary Tudor.
- The Source highlights the challenges facing Elizabeth as it shows that the idea of rule by a female was repugnant to many men.
- This source shows the difficulties facing any female ruler in a world dominated by men.
- It is important to note that Knox stressed that his criticism was originally intended for the Catholic Mary.
- The pamphlet's influence and impact would be limited by the significant levels of illiteracy in English and Welsh (in addition to the language barrier in Wales) society.

GCE History – Unit 4 – Depth Study 1

4.1 The Mid Tudor Crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570

Part 2: Challenges Facing Mary and Elizabeth c.1553–1570

Source B

An anonymous Papal agent, reporting on events in England, in a letter sent to the Papacy (1567).

I send news from England of the discovery of a new sect called Puritans, which has become so numerous that it will not be long before it gives trouble to the Queen. I hear they do find offensive the following forms of worship, namely: the wearing of clerical vestments, kneeling to receive communion and even the making of the cross in baptism. Some of the more dangerous sort even oppose the sharing and wearing of wedding rings in the service of marriage and also the pealing of church bells. These Puritans are the enemy of the True Religion and they do call on that Queen to make war on our brethren who do remain faithful to our Holy Father. She has, as yet, refused to listen or to yield to their earnest entreaties, but they do grow stronger by the day sustained in their mischief and evil beliefs by the influence of powerful men at Court, who we dare not name for fear. They do use their power to bend the Queen to their will. I hear that upwards of thirty priests refused to obey Archbishop Parker's order that every minister saying any public prayers, or ministering the sacraments or other rites of the Church, shall wear a linen vestment with sleeves, to be provided at the charge of the parish.

- This deals with the Puritan challenge facing Elizabeth.
- From a letter written by an anonymous agent living in London—might he have been a spy?
- This is indicative of the increasing challenges facing Elizabeth in terms of the potential for opposition by a growing Puritan sect.
- The report that thirty parish priests have refused to accept the orders of the Archbishop of Canterbury suggests that there is disaffection among the religious rank and file.
- The threat posed by this Puritan sect is heightened by the suggestion that they have friends in high places at Court. Although not named, Puritan sympathisers at Court included Sir Francis Walsingham.
- This suggests that Elizabeth is under pressure to act in a way that satisfies her advisers – ‘to bend the Queen to their will’ but that she has thus far resisted – ‘refused to listen or yield to their earnest entreaties’.
- Some of the men at court were as much a threat to Elizabeth as the Catholics they wished to war with because the queen risked being advised and manipulated by self-interested pro-Puritan parties.
- Note the date because it suggests that the political and religious situation in England was quite volatile in 1567, nine years into her reign.
- There is potential bias here as it is a report by a presumably hostile source—a Catholic agent of the Pope.
- The fact that the papal agent report is based on ‘I hear’ shows the limitations of his wider knowledge. Is he simply relying on gossip?
- It is important to question the papal agent's ability to access the Court or the extent to which he is fully briefed on affairs of state.
- The author has no reason to lie, he is simply reporting on events as heard or seen by the unknown correspondent and published in an open, non-secret newsletter. It may be inaccurate, but it gives a flavour of the political and religious challenge facing Elizabeth.

Source C

Extracted from the Papal Bull of excommunication, *Regnans in Excelsis*, issued against Elizabeth by Pope Pius V (1570).

We — seeing the persecution of the faithful, and afflictions of religion daily growing more severe under the guidance and by the activity of the said Elizabeth, and recognising that her mind is so fixed that she has not only despised the pious prayers and admonitions with which Catholic Princes have tried to cure and convert her but has not even permitted the Papal ambassadors sent to her in this matter to cross into England — are compelled by necessity to take up against her the weapons of justice, though we regret that we should be forced to turn upon one whose ancestors have so well deserved of the Christian community. Since that guilty woman of England rules over two such noble kingdoms of Christendom – England and Ireland – and is the cause of so much injury to the Catholic faith and loss of so many million souls, there is little doubt that whosoever sends her out of this world, not only does not sin but gains merit and a guaranteed place in heaven. And so, if any English gentlemen decide to undertake so glorious a work, we can assure them that they do not commit any sin. We trust in God also that they will escape danger or capture.

- This offers a different perspective on the challenges facing Elizabeth. It is a legal document issued by the Pope—a public notice of intent to destroy a heretic queen.
- Note the date. After nearly twelve years of patient persuasion to encourage Elizabeth and England back into the Catholic fold, the Pope has had enough. The Pope turns against the English queen.
- The incarceration of a Catholic queen — Mary, Queen of Scots — by a Protestant heretic queen is considered to be an outrageous act.
- The brutal suppression of the Northern rebels has convinced the Pope that Elizabeth had and has no intention of returning to the Catholic faith.
- The reports in the regular reports received over the years has given the Pope sufficient evidence to take the most drastic step of all — public humiliation by excommunication.
- The Papal Bull is a call to arms and gives any true Catholic licence to assassinate the queen because it is God's will which will secure the assassin an honoured place in heaven.
- This has the potential for war with the Catholic powers Spain and France. A foreign invasion is a real possibility.
- This led to rebellion by home-grown Catholic recusants – the rebellion of the Northern Earls - is evidence of the ultimate challenge facing Elizabeth for it has the potential of removing her from the throne by force.
- The impact of the Papal Bull was limited because the Pope had no power to enforce its terms. He had to rely on the military resources of other countries to enforce his will.

GCE History – Unit 4 – Depth Study 1

4.1 The Mid Tudor Crisis in Wales and England c.1529–1570

Part 2: Challenges Facing Mary and Elizabeth c.1553–1570

Keeping the question in mind, use the information above and identify similarities and differences between the sources. These may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

Now, considering the general context of the period, your analysis of the sources and their provenances, identification of the specific content and identification of similarities and differences, outline and explain the value and limitations of the sources – both

individually and collectively – to an historian studying the issue in the question. Again, these may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

Similarities between the sources	What is the value of the source or sources to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth I in the period from 1558 to 1570?	Why is this a value? (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)
Sources A, B and C are all concerned with religion and the religious challenges and/or threats facing Elizabeth.	The most significant value of Source A to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth is that it represents the widely accepted view of women and their place in society. It is misogynistic in tone and expresses a distaste for female rule backed up by scripture. The critic is a Protestant theologian who might be expected to support the replacement of a Catholic ruler by a Protestant one.	This is of value because it comes from a fellow Protestant, someone who shares Elizabeth's religious beliefs and outlook. This suggests that Elizabeth is likely to face criticism from within her own religious denomination in addition to the expected antipathy of orthodox Catholics. There is a fear that as Mary was dominated by her husband and male courtiers, Elizabeth, too, might be subjected to undue pressure from ambitious noblemen. This highlights the challenges facing Elizabeth on social, religious and political grounds.
Sources A, B and C share a misogynistic bias in their content though Source A is by far the more obvious in this regard.	The main value of Source B is that it represents the opinion of a Catholic agent operating in England, whose sole purpose was to provide the Papacy with accurate reports on events within the kingdom. It also highlights the growth of the Puritan movement in England and the fractured nature of Protestantism within the kingdom.	The value here lies in the accuracy and truthfulness of the reports. Although they may be based on hearsay and gossip, and some factual intelligence, it conveys the mood of the people within the kingdom and the possible political and religious challenges facing Elizabeth. It suggests that Elizabeth is facing opposition from the more extreme elements of the Protestant movement which might work in the Catholic Church's favour.
Sources A and B agree that women in general, and Elizabeth in particular, are not fit to rule and are easily influenced or manipulated.	Source C is valuable because it represents an end to the fragile Via Media or middle way in religion. The Church Settlement has come to an end and the uneasy peace between England and the Papacy is over. The Papal Bull is, to all intents and purposes, a declaration of war.	The challenge facing Elizabeth has now become international – she is beset by potential enemies from within her kingdom and from without by the Catholic powers who might be persuaded by the Pope to take up arms against a heretic queen.
Sources B and C are products of the Catholic opposition to Elizabeth and are indicative of Catholic attitudes to the English Queen and to England in general.	Of significant value is that the three sources, taken together, demonstrate the existence of rampant misogyny and the escalating problem of religion and the increasing pressure on Elizabeth as a woman, a ruler, a politician and as 'head' of the Church.	The sources align with, and indeed punctuate, the path of open, though not necessarily all-encompassing, misogyny and religious rivalry at the start of Elizabeth's reign, through to its conclusion in the Bull of Excommunication. They also indicate that this was largely driven by a misogynistic mindset, religious zealotry and political ambition, that influenced some, but not all, of the queen's subjects.
Differences between the sources	What are the limitations of the source or sources to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth I in the period from 1558 to 1570?	Why is it a limitation? (include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)
Source A differs from Sources B and C in that it is from a Protestant perspective as opposed to a Catholic one.	The most significant limitation of Source A for historians is that the extract is taken from a pamphlet printed abroad, by a Scottish Protestant minister, and distributed clandestinely in England.	It remains uncertain how widely the pamphlet was circulated or if it was discussed by or read to a largely illiterate population.
Source B differs from Sources A and C in that it identifies another religious group, the Puritans.	For Source B, the most significant limitation is that the author is anonymous, a Catholic agent with an agenda, and a man unlikely to have access to the corridors of power.	As a Papal agent the author is dedicated to the task of undermining or usurping Elizabeth. Equally significant is the fact that his information is largely, not exclusively, dependant on rumour and gossip.
Source C differs from Source A because it involves the Pope, the head of the Catholic church, whereas John Knox is a minister and preacher and does not represent the leadership of the Protestant Church in England.	For Source C, the most significant limitation is that the author is the Pope, head of the Catholic Church and an avowed enemy of Protestantism and all such-like heresy.	The Papal Bull is the final nail in the coffin of the Pope's attempt to woo Elizabeth and return her and her kingdom to the true faith. It has but one purpose, to contribute to the destruction of Elizabeth and the English Protestant faith.
Source B differs from Sources A and C in that it represents the opinion of someone living in England whereas the other two are from outsiders – one a Geneva-based Scottish exile and the other a Rome-based Italian Pontiff.		

In summary, what is the value of these sources to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth I in the period from 1558 to 1570

Overall, all three sources are of some value to an historian studying the challenges facing Elizabeth during the period 1558-70. Each one discusses the nature and scale of the challenges facing the queen. Source B is valuable because it is a secret report and provides an objective observation on events in England,

but it is also perhaps the most subjective as the Papal agent is not an impartial observer. His account is influenced by his antipathy to Elizabeth and the Anglican Church making this source, potentially at least, the most unreliable. Source A, taken from a pamphlet and Source C, taken from a published Bull of excommunication, indicate clearly the attitudes of its authors, both of whom, in their individual way, are critical of Elizabeth.