

Grade 9 Answer

How Far Do You Agree

16
Marks

Question:

'The main reason for Cromwell's rise to power was his handling of the king's annulment.'
How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Catherine of Aragon
- Loyalty to Wolsey

You must also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

Answer:

Cromwell's rise to power was significantly influenced by his handling of King Henry VIII's annulment, but it was not the only factor. His strategic manipulation of political circumstances, particularly regarding the annulment, showcased his skills in navigating court politics. Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was central to this issue; after years of unsuccessful attempts to produce a male heir, Henry's desire for a divorce intensified as he became infatuated with Anne Boleyn. Cromwell recognized that Henry's frustrations with the Pope's refusal to annul the marriage created an opportunity for him to advance his position. By proposing a break from the Catholic Church and establishing the Church of England, Cromwell effectively enabled Henry to achieve his goal without papal interference. This decisive action resolved the king's marital dilemma and positioned Cromwell as an indispensable advisor, greatly enhancing his power at court.

Loyalty to Wolsey was another crucial factor in Cromwell's ascent. Serving as Wolsey's legal advisor provided him with invaluable experience in navigating the complex political landscape of the Tudor court. Even after Wolsey fell from grace for failing to secure the annulment, Cromwell retained key connections and credibility among the nobility. His loyalty demonstrated his competence and understanding of royal matters, allowing him to transition into a position of power. This connection allowed Cromwell to garner support from those who had previously worked with Wolsey, further solidifying his position.

Moreover, Cromwell's political skill in manipulating Parliament was critical in consolidating his power. He was instrumental in passing the Act of Supremacy in 1534, which declared Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. By utilizing Parliament to legitimize Henry's authority, Cromwell ensured that the king could challenge the Pope's influence. This legislative action was pivotal in reshaping the religious landscape of England, showcasing Cromwell's administrative capabilities.

In conclusion, while Cromwell's handling of the annulment was significant, his loyalty to Wolsey and his political skill in manipulating Parliament were equally important, allowing him to shape the political landscape of England effectively.

Feedback:

This answer would get 16/16 marks because the pupil has explained three reasons for the Cromwell's rise to power (securing king's annulment, loyalty to Wolsey and political skills). They have explained each point in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. They have also made a judgement and justified it in their conclusion.