

SESSION 5

Exile and return, 1164–1170

Frank Barlow and others see the Council of Clarendon as the point of no return for both Henry II and Becket. The two men met on formal occasions but continued to provoke each other. Thomas attempted to leave England without Henry's permission, thus threatening to violate one of the 'customs' but it was not on this charge that Henry had Becket arraigned and on which he appeared at Northampton in October 1164.

Until 1164 the quarrel between Thomas Becket and Henry II had been – in global terms – a minor affair. However Thomas's flight and self imposed exile involved a number of European powers: the king of England, the king of France, the pope, the emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa). The affair became entangled in two major European struggles: the Empire against the Papacy; and the Angevins against France.

Points to consider:

- 1 During the course of Becket's exile what was the attitude of the papacy, and what factors governed that attitude?
- 2 What conditions were considered for settlement of the dispute at Montmirail (January 1169) and Montmartre (November 1169)?
- 3 What was the significance of the coronation of the young king?
- 4 Why was it possible for reach an accord at Frétéval in July 1170?

Reading Guide

The primary sources are printed in Staunton, *Lives of Becket*, pp. 100–181.

In general see Knowles, *Thomas Becket*, and Barlow, *Thomas Becket*. On (2) see Baldwin, *Alexander III*; on (3) see Heslin, 'The Coronation of the Young King'.