

I

The Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister–Favourite

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In January 1647, in a private letter to his confidante, the nun Sor María de Agreda, Philip IV of Spain (pl. 25) sought to justify why, after the fall of Olivares, he had thought it necessary to take another *valido*:

You will have heard of the prudence and competence with which my grandfather, Philip II, governed this Monarchy, and also that he at all times had servants or ministers in whom he placed his every trust and whom in all his affairs he valued most. Such a form of government has existed in every monarchy at all times, ancient as well as modern, for none has been without a chief minister [*ministro principal*] or trusted servant [*criado confidente*] whom their masters valued above all others, since they could not do all the necessary work by themselves.¹

Philip was, of course, right. There had been favourites in the past (mistresses of both sexes); there had been ministers in the past; there had been minister–favourites in the past; and there were to be minister–favourites in the future.² Can we then talk of *an age of the minister–favourite* at all? If so, when was it? And how is it to be identified? A firm delineation of our target period is obviously crucial to a focused discussion of the institutional or political background against which the phenomenon of the minister–favourite is to be set.

The problem originally raised by Jean Bérenger, in 1974, was centred on 1600–60,³ and was inspired by what seems to be an exceptional clustering of all-powerful ministers dominating politics for long periods in the great states of western Europe: Lerma, Olivares, Haro in Spain; Sully, Richelieu, Mazarin in France; Oxenstierna in Sweden; Cecil, Buckingham in England. Perhaps no less relevant, there seemed an inability to do without epigoni, secondary favourites to fill the gaps: Uceda between Lerma and Olivares; Nithard and Valenzuela after Haro; Concini, de Luynes, Sillery, La Vieuville between Sully and Richelieu; Carr between Cecil and Buckingham – suggesting that ‘favouritism’

was not just a superficial question of exceptional individuals, but a deep-seated feature of the age.⁴

It is true that the distinctiveness of the early seventeenth century in this respect is being increasingly questioned. There is much current emphasis on the continuity between the favourites of the early seventeenth century and their sixteenth-century antecedents.⁵ Part of the difficulty is definitional. The language of ‘favouritism’ is both imprecise and protean, covering different relationships and roles – Wolsey, Leicester, Essex, Cecil, Carr; Ruy Gómez, Olivares, Valenzuela; Epernon, Sully, Concini, Richelieu. In a personal monarchy every minister must in some sense have the ‘favour’ of the ruler, to the extent that his position depended on *beneplacito*, on trust, or acceptance, rather than on his institutional role *per se*. The stress that some historians have placed on the combination of the personal and the ministerial as distinctive of the early-seventeenth-century favourite is not, therefore, entirely helpful. The affective, not to say sexual, connotations of ‘favourite’ may, indeed, be a distraction. There may have been a strong affective element in the relationship between king and minister (Buckingham), or there may not (Richelieu); close friendship was sometimes the source (Haro), sometimes the consequence (Oxenstierna) of ministerial power. There were favourites and factotums; personal favourites, political favourites, minister-favourites, hegemonical favourites and ministers plenipotentiary, men like Oxenstierna, or Don Juan José de Austria, for example, whose position did not originate in the king’s choice at all.⁶ For these reasons, it seems to me that the Spanish terms *valido* and *valimiento* are to be preferred to ‘minister-favourite’, both as being less loaded and as contemporary neologisms which express semantically the sense at the time that the *valido* was in some way different from the *privados* of the past.

The *validos* of the early seventeenth century were clearly not all the same animal; but they did all have similar functions in government, and they were all responses of one kind or other to a common set of problems, political and institutional.

I want to draw attention to four interrelated features which, while perhaps not individually unique, taken together could be said to have been characteristic of the seventeenth-century *valido*, and which defined the range of their political and institutional functions.

First, they were operating in the areas of both power and patronage, *gobierno y gracia*, council and court – and they were predominant, if not monopolists, in both areas. Indeed, the *valido* was commonly denounced at the time for usurping the office of king (or seeming to), and some historians have gone so far as to talk of a complete handover of power.⁷ That view is undoubtedly exaggerated. The dominance of the *valido* was neither total nor uninterrupted, and certainly never as total as contemporaries imagined.

That said, and although some sixteenth-century *privados* were also viewed in a somewhat similar way, still it seems to me that overall the determining

influence enjoyed (or thought to be enjoyed) by Richelieu, Mazarin, Lerma and Olivares, in both policy and patronage during the fullness of their long ministries, and perhaps by Buckingham for a shorter time, distinguishes them from a Ruy Gómez, a Leicester, a Don Cristóbal de Moura or a Sully, who, however influential, shared or continuously competed for influence with other faction leaders or close advisers (Alba; Burghley; Idiáquez, Chinchón; Villeroy).

Second, they operated outside (or alongside) established institutional channels, and indeed often without any formal ministerial status. The *valido* was different from a private secretary or privy councillor in that he interfered with the normal processes of conciliar business, interrupting, as Alamos de Barrientos put it, the *corriente ordinaria* and diverting through himself the normal flow of access and information to the king.⁸

Third, they stood at the centre of a national network of clientage, a clientage network that was not restricted to the court, nor to a specific local interest, but which was the means of integrating court and country on a broad front.

Fourth, they were 'political' – and that not merely at the basic management level, as a sort of chief whip, to cajole or to put a bit of stick about (Olivares' brutal dressing down of Lisón y Viedma being a classic example); but, more important, they were using influence for a political rather than for just a private purpose, promoting a 'policy', a programme of governmental or constitutional reform, or merely some fiscal arrangement, designed to reinforce the authority and reputation of the state.

Not all *validos* fit all these slots, or they fit into them in different ways. Nonetheless, these are the key features which can be related to a number of broader institutional and political developments which by the end of the sixteenth century were creating the conditions for which the emergence of the *valido* was an intelligible, if not necessarily an inevitable, response.

The Minister-Favourite and Government Growth

If the rise of the minister-favourite is a general phenomenon of the early seventeenth century, undoubtedly some general explanation is needed that goes beyond that old stock-in-trade, a pandemic of idleness and incapacity among the princes of early-seventeenth-century Europe, not least because, the accidents of royal minorities and female regencies apart, the view that related the rise of the *valido* to the accession of a series of *rois fainéants* has become increasingly less tenable. Certainly James I, Louis XIII and Philip IV are no longer being regarded in this way.⁹

A more serious explanation has seen the *valido* as a response to a crisis of government growth. The increasing administrative complexity of the state, which, with the expansion of its spheres of involvement, was outgrowing personal methods of government, had created a burden which had become too

great for one man, and especially for a prince educated for the court, not the desk. At the same time, the growing emphasis on the majesty of monarchy made it seem inappropriate for the king to be concerned with the minutiae of administrative detail, with negotiating business and dealing with the *hoi pollio* of place-seekers.¹⁰

Undoubtedly government was growing, and especially in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, though perhaps not more so than in the 1520s and 1530s. Historically the role of minister commonly took on a greater salience in such periods of administrative reform (Gattinara, Thomas Cromwell, Cobos), and the need for the king to share the burdens of government was the standard contemporary justification for the *valido*. But kings were not incapable of filling a co-ordinating role themselves (Louis XIV), and were not without secretaries and aides to assist them. Nor is it true that kings necessarily thought the essential tasks of government inappropriate for their immediate attention – Louis XIII embarked on an attempt to govern in person in 1622, and Philip IV was clearly not ashamed of his own efforts in that direction.¹¹

Something of what it was not thought appropriate for a king to do, Philip IV explained to Sor María de Agreda, in that same letter, quoted above:

What he [the principal minister] is ordinarily required to do is to hear ministers and petitioners so that he can tell his chief what they want. He is also to follow up the matters of most importance and see that what has been decided is carried out promptly. That is something necessary at any time, but most of all at present when it is so important that decisions are put into effect without delay. This is something that cannot easily be left for the king to do in person, because it would not be compatible with his dignity to go from house to house to see if ministers and secretaries are carrying out promptly what they have been ordered. But with the information passed on to him by his most trusted ministers and servants he can order what needs to be done and know whether it has been done.¹²

These were important functions, and functions with great potential for influence, but they were not functions that any king of the sixteenth century would have carried out in person either, even Philip II, whose problem was not that he had too much to do, but that he did too much that was not necessary for him to do himself.

The heart of the problem was to separate decision-making in routine matters from matters of policy, by allowing routine administrative and governmental matters to be dealt with directly by established institutions. The English Privy Council was perhaps the supreme example, but in Spain as well the councils and the *audiencias* had areas of effective, if much more limited, administrative autonomy. There were, in other words, existing models of solutions to the problems of administrative and government growth that did not involve the concentration of power in one minister, which was, in any case, a solution more to the problem of the royal dignity than to the excessive burden of

business. So, even in Spain, where, given the size and the multiple administrative structure of the Monarchy, the expansion of the tasks of government had a much greater impact than in smaller or more uniform states, I am not sure that the growth of government by itself was the main consideration in the emergence of the *valido*.

Rather more pertinent was the nature of the institutional development to which the growth of government gave rise. The institutions of government in Spain were markedly different in character from those in France and England. Partly for jurisdictional reasons, Spain's central institutions were more numerous, more formalized and more differentiated. The presidents and secretaries of the councils were more departmentalized than the ministers and secretaries of state in France, and there was no overarching institution in Spain with the open-ended competence of the English Privy Council. But this high degree of institutionalization and specialization brought with it associated problems of bureaucratic routinization, institutional rivalry and corporatism. Government was obliged by law and due process to work through an administrative and judicial system that had become largely self-regulating and whose component parts were in systemic jurisdictional conflict with each other. Its permanent officers were appointed internally from within a narrow professional coterie, and, protected by law and by their ordinances, pursued an agenda, set by judicialist principles and collegial interests, by no means always coincident with that of the king or his ministers. This was likely to be a particular problem for a new king, encumbered with an administration staffed by the instruments of the previous reign, especially if that reign had been a long one.

The search for an effective mechanism for co-ordinating, controlling and imposing obedience on the central agencies of government in Spain had been a major preoccupation at least from the 1540s, and one made more acute from the early 1580s by the combination of administrative overload and the progressive debility of the king. The *valido* thus emerged in the 1590s as one solution to a long-standing problem of control, one of a line of proposed solutions going back to the great ministerial secretaries in the decades up to the 1560s (Cobos, Vázquez de Molina, Eraso), the ministerial president (Espinosa), the private secretary (Mateo Vázquez), the inner cabinet (*junta de noche*) of Philip II's last years, and the old king's own *valido*, or quasi-*valido*, Don Cristóbal de Moura. Feros is right in this respect, therefore, to point to the elements of continuity between Lerma and the immediate past, a continuity which reinforces the view that the emergence of the full-scale *valimiento* in the seventeenth century was the result not just of the chance of personality and circumstance, but of the broader needs of government.¹³

Where, as in France and England, such a complex and institutionalized administrative development did not occur, or was slower to mature, leaving access to government office more open to political considerations, it was less necessary to impose control on the administration from the outside, from the court. Personal favour and the *ministérial* were, therefore, more likely

to remain separate spheres (Essex, Cinq Mars). While in Spain the *valido* came from inside the king's household, in France and England the chief minister was more likely to emerge from within the council or the secretariat (Villeroy, Cecil, Richelieu). Robert Carr's appointment in 1612 as acting secretary of state, slotting the favourite into an already existing government role, is thus interesting as a sort of 'missing link' in the evolution of the *valimiento*.

The rise of the *valido* was visibly the counterpart to the diminution of the secretary, many of whose duties both in the king's private office and as state secretary the *valido* took over.¹⁴ Up to the 1560s the secretaries in Castile had been developing very like the state secretaries in England and France. Men like Francisco de los Cobos, Juan Vázquez de Molina, Francisco de Eraso were departmental pluralists, with supervision over multiple areas of business, and far more important in government than their individual offices. This development was curtailed by the progressive specialization and separation of departments and the multiplication and bureaucratization of the secretariats.¹⁵ Though an undeniable sign of increased business, the effect was to fragment and weaken the authority of the secretaries. The space between the king and the institutions of government left by the downgrading of the secretaries, and those co-ordinating, admonitory and patronage functions, crucial for the political control of the court and the councils, for which a mere secretary was not appropriate, were taken over variously by ministers, cabinet committees or *validos*. Secretary and *valido*, and indeed *valido* and cabinet committee as the repeated alternation between them suggests, were competitive outcomes for particular constituencies. Which solution was to be most appropriate was as much a social and political as a governmental issue.

The *valido* emerged then at a particular moment in the development of the central administration. It was also a moment which presented uniquely favourable opportunities for patronage in the Castilian lay bureaucracy (lay as opposed to the legist bureaucracy of the councils, which was always more institutionally advanced). The period from the 1580s to the reign of Philip IV was precisely the time in the secretarial bureaux when the 'servants' of the secretary were being transformed, first into 'royal officials' and then into 'officials of the secretariats'. For thirty or forty years there was opened a patronage window; by the end of Philip IV's reign, the royal officials, appointed *ad lib.*, had become a departmental bureaucracy, with promotion governed by rule and seniority, and that window had again closed.¹⁶

The *valido* operated not only by inserting clients into key conciliar offices, disrupting the normal paths of bureaucratic advancement – promotion in leaps ('por saltos') not in steps ('por grados'), as Bermúdez de Pedraza complained¹⁷ – but also by diverting essential business from formal, institutionalized channels, the 'via ordinaria', to informal, hand-picked juntas or commissions. He was thus not merely acting as a quasi-secretarial channel between the councils and the king, but also controlling the flow of information and

the management of business and resolutions. The *valido* was therefore in a sense taking government back into court. The process is most obvious in Spain, but it does appear to have parallels elsewhere: perhaps in James I's restoration of the bedchamber and privy chamber favourites, which Cuddy suggests was also a way of circumventing administrative sclerosis in the pursuit of new policies.¹⁸

Viewed, then, as a system of government, the *valimiento* can be seen as a form of de-institutionalization, or politicization; the instrument for the crown to recapture control of government from an administration regarded as ineffective, corrupt, obstructive and irremovable, and to impose on it a policy direction, absent from the normal considerations for appointment and advancement. Indeed, the force (and the weakness) of the *valimiento* lay precisely in the fact that (unlike kingship) it was not an office, and was therefore extra-legal, not regulated by rules and ordinances, but driven by a guiding principle which was not distributive justice, but reason of state.¹⁹ The coincidence of the age of the *valido* with the development of the doctrine of reason of state is not, therefore, accidental. The *valido* was the political persona of the 'Christian Prince', the negative identity of a king who could do no wrong; he was a buffer, a lightning conductor, or at worst a burning-glass interposed between king and people at a time when a moral consensus for government policy could not be relied upon.²⁰

The Minister-Favourite and the Court

The *valido* had another constituency – the court, and the court nobility who looked to the new regimes in 1598, 1603 and 1610 to reverse what they saw as their exclusion from government and favour under Philip II, Elizabeth and Henri IV. Closed court rituals, notoriously parsimonious rulers, the narrowing membership of the councils of state, the professionalization of government and, indeed, of war, and the cornering of influence by secret cabinet juntas, ministers and even secretaries were blocking off the channels of magnate patronage upon which the whole nobility depended. And all this at a time when, for economic, demographic, political and cultural reasons, the pressure on the nobility to get its hands, one way or other, on the resources of states, which were absorbing an increasing proportion of the wealth of the community, was irresistible. The shift in the balance of resources between aristocracy and state, with the crisis of noble finances at the end of the long upward swing of the sixteenth century, was dramatic.²¹ But no less important was the increasing centralization of honour, and the shift of the basis of clientage from authority in the localities to influence at court that was related to it. Courtiership and court patronage necessarily acquired increasing significance as alternative avenues of social advance and enrichment, not least among them the opportunities offered by war, were narrowing.

The new regimes – seeing enough warning signs of discontent – partly in response to the patronage bottleneck of the late sixteenth century, partly to win the allegiance of the nobility, and partly to create new government clientèles, adopted strategies of accommodation: opening the councils to the great nobility, splashing out on their courts, bestowing honours, freeing access to administrative office. In this process the *valido* had a key role, though by no means everywhere the same role, or even a single role: representative of the aristocratic reaction to the ‘government of secretaries’ (Oxenstierna, Lerma), or expression of a reaction against the restrengthening of the aristocracy at court (Concini); voice of the lesser nobility against the greater (de Luynes), or promoter of a new nobility against the old (Griffenfeld); front for one aristocratic faction against another (Buckingham), or means of cutting through the factionalism of the re-aristocratized councils (Lerma); linkman between the king and the nobility (Carr), or champion of royal authority over the grandes (Olivares, Richelieu).

Perhaps most important, he was, as Asch has pointed out, the instrument employed by the ruler to control the court, the king’s patronage manager.²² The explosion of patronage needed careful management if it was to serve a political purpose, or even if internal conflict within the court was to be avoided. But the patronage-management role of the *valido* also served a demand from below – the establishment of a single allocation queue, as Peck puts it,²³ was in the interests of both patron and client, which is perhaps why Lerma was once described as ‘Protector General and Everyone’s Advocate’.²⁴

The Minister-Favourite and the Country

The *valimiento* is also to be seen as the expression of a new relationship between crown and country, linked with the two key political developments of the end of the sixteenth century: the increased need for the co-operation of the local elites, and the changing structure of power in the localities.

The strains on government and finance in the 1590s were immense, and, if in places there was some abatement after 1600, they returned with a vengeance in the 1620s. Governments were more and more having to seek parliamentary grants and concessionary revenues. Alongside traditional and novel exactions, the fiscality of the first half of the seventeenth century was characterized by concessionary and voluntary taxation, benevolences, *dons gratuits*, *donativos*, alienations and sales, all of which involved negotiation, persuasion and inducement. In these circumstances the co-operation of the localities with royal policy was more necessary than ever. The need to win compliance was a continuous exercise, not least because the political consensus of the late sixteenth century was breaking down and royal policy was getting less wholehearted endorsement.

However, the form of negotiation with the country was determined by the decline of direct aristocratic influence in the localities and by the increasing patrimonialization and venality of office, which increased the autonomy of local political elites, both from the crown and from the local magnate, and resulted in a significant expansion of the *political* nation – as Bacon remarked, ‘nowadays . . . there is no vulgar, but all statesmen’.²⁵

The standard sixteenth-century means of influencing local outcomes, relying on the good offices of the great local magnate, or sending courtiers and royal officials back to their countries as envoys, seem to be increasingly ineffective or inappropriate. In Castile, certainly, I get the impression not only that the grandes were being used less as local trouble-shooters in the cities, but that their intervention was frequently resented by the city oligarchies, and was often counter-productive. This fragmentation of local influence had the effect of multiplying direct contacts between government and locality and therefore making necessary a much more co-ordinated degree of management within the localities themselves, the lubricant for which was the *valido*’s access to the patronage of the crown.²⁶

In Castile this was palpably different from what had been happening in the sixteenth century. That is not to say that in the sixteenth century connections between the country and the court were not important, nor that courtiers did not have local clientage, but they were individual and unsystematic, social not political. Under Philip II there does not seem to have been any coherent policy of extending court influence into the localities; indeed individual attempts to do so might well be blocked by a rival court faction.²⁷ But in the seventeenth century there was a conscious programme of infiltration into the oligarchies of the cities, which was clearly new and which was directly related to the new political importance of the Cortes of Castile from the 1590s. Lerma’s regime sees the first substantial involvement of senior ministers of the crown in the Cortes itself (including Lerma as proctor on two occasions) and the beginnings of a systematic programme of patronage directed at the ruling oligarchies of the cities with a vote in the Cortes. The *valido* was at the centre of a web of patronage and clientage that spread over the entire kingdom of Castile. Lerma himself had offices in eight Cortes cities; Olivares was granted offices in every one of the nineteen cities represented in the Cortes – all served by substitutes of course. I am not aware that there are any parallels to be found among sixteenth-century ministers.²⁸

Mutatis mutandis, this sort of intervention in the localities, which was perhaps only possible with, or at the very least facilitated by, the weakening of magnate power, was a common feature of the *valido*’s *modus operandi*. Court patronage and local clientelism were brought within a single system of control. They were also becoming politicized, for ministerial patronage was capable of a prescriptiveness that the king on his own, entrapped in a rhetoric of ‘service’ too flexible to ensure unquestioning compliance with royal demands, could not legitimately require.

Though kin and dependency ties are important in this, so too is pure patronage. It was patronage more than anything which provided the *valido* with a clientele which generalized his political influence across localities which were previously the separate spheres of influence of individual magnates, a process which, as well as promoting political cohesion, was contributing to the transformation of patronage from a private social relationship to a more prescriptively political one.²⁹

Validos were thus part of a process of a social transformation of power in the localities. The building up of local clienteles reduced the local influence of *les grands*. Brokerage moves down the social scale in the seventeenth century.³⁰ The integration of local elites with the court via the centralized patronage of the *valido* shifted alignments within local society from clan loyalties to associational client relationships, part of a process of centralizing politics, and politicizing them.

The Minister–Favourite and the State

Finally, might it not be possible to see the emergence of the *valido* as a response to what, as a convenient shorthand, we can call ‘The Crisis of the 1590s’? I am thinking here of the observations John Elliott made in his concluding contribution to Peter Clark’s volume, an essay entitled with a pointed weariness, ‘Yet Another Crisis?’³¹ What was different about the principal *validos* of the 1620s was that they were men with a new conviction that something could be done about the ills of government and society, and that they were the men who could do it. The *validos* were reformers, projectors, *arbitristas*. Faced with demands that were stretching the capacities of the state to breaking point, they were to be the means by which the power of the state would be extended. The *valido* was the instrument for the suppression of faction and the unification of the court, for the co-ordination of the machinery of government, the articulation of centre and locality, the mobilization of all the resources of the community for the support of royal policy, the proponent of programmes for the regeneration of the state and the harmonization of kingdoms.³²

Should we see the *valido*, therefore, like the patronage-broker of which he was, at least in part, a particular kind, as specific to a particular phase in the development of the state?³³ In contrast to a Don Alvaro de Luna in the mid-fifteenth century, who could muster what was virtually a private army, the *valido* exercised a power totally dependent on the favour of the prince and on the resources of the state. His power, and the very transience of that power, was itself an assertion of the pre-eminence of the royal grace and an expression of the shift in the balance of authority as well as of resources within the body politic.³⁴ Inevitably – although the political cultures of Spain, England and France differed in this respect³⁵ – the *valimiento* was frequently seen as a subversion of the constitution, an instrument of tyranny, the harbinger

of absolutism. But at the same time the state was facing demands at the limit of its capacities which it was not at a stage to meet without the co-operation of increasingly fragmented local and intermediate powers.³⁶ The *valido* thus had to employ the carrot as much as, and perhaps even more effectively than, the stick. Clientage was compromise; it involved working with existing political structures rather than assaulting their autonomy. Richelieu's handling of the Estates of Brittany is a particularly illuminating illustration of the circumstances in which it was not always advisable to pursue so-called absolutist solutions, and of the mutual benefits, to the crown as well as to the province, to be gained from mutual accommodation.³⁷ In Brittany, as elsewhere, the *valido* was the interface between loyalty to the local community and loyalty to the interests of the state.

Institutionally, the *valido* emerged in the window of transition between a private and a public bureaucracy, between a judicialist and an instrumentalist conception of government, between the *Rechtsstaat* and the *Verwaltungsstaat*, between the *Respublica Christiana* and *raison d'état*. The question that remains is, to what extent was the *valido* to be instrumental in effectuating that transition?

Notes

1. F. Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1963), p. 181.
2. William Doyle, *The Old European Order, 1660–1800* (Oxford, 1978), p. 262: 'The period offers plenty of examples of favourites . . . or adventurers who shook states to their foundations on the strength of personal relationships with rulers' – Law, Alberoni, Squillache, Godoy, Potemkin, Strensee, as well as Tanucci, Pombal and so on; Elizabeth Marwick, 'Favorites in Early Modern Europe: A Recurring Psycho-political Role', *Journal of Psychohistory*, 10 (1983), pp. 463–89.
3. Jean Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne: le problème du ministérialat au XVIIe siècle', *Annales*, 29 (1974), pp. 166–92.
4. For an exceptional analysis of the phenomenon of the early-seventeenth-century favourite, see Francesco Benigno, *L'ombra del Re* (Venice, 1992), esp. pp. ix–xxxv.
5. Antonio Feros Carrasco, 'Gobierno de Corte y Patronazgo Real en el reinado de Felipe III' (tesis de licenciatura, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1986), pp. vi, 23; Simon Adams, 'Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court', in R. Asch and A. Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450–1650* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 265–87, at p. 265; Arlette Jouanna, 'Faveur et favoris: l'exemple des mignons de Henri III', in R. Sauzet, ed., *Henri III et son temps* (Paris, 1989), pp. 155–65, as cited by David Potter, 'Kingship in the Wars of Religion: The Reputation of Henri III of France', *European History Quarterly*, 24 (1995), pp. 485–528, at p. 507.
6. For these categorizations, respectively, Marwick, 'Favorites in Early Modern Europe', p. 465; A. Lloyd Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister', in J. Bergin and L. Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 13–43, at p. 16; Adams, 'Favourites and Factions', p. 272; Antoni Maćzak, 'From Aristocratic Household to Princely Court: Restructuring Patronage in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Asch and Birke, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, pp. 315–27.
7. Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos*, p. 7.
8. Baltasar Alamos y Barrientos, *Discurso político al rey Felipe III al comienzo de su reinado*, ed. Modesto Santos (Barcelona, 1990), p. 92. Antonio Feros, 'Lerma y Olivares: la práctica del valimiento en la primera mitad del seiscientos', in J. H. Elliott and Angel García Sanz, eds, *La España del Conde Duque de Olivares* (Valladolid, 1990), pp. 195–224, at p. 217, and *idem*, 'Gobierno de Corte', pp. 69, 72.

9. Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592–1628* (London, 1981), p. 464; J. Bergin and L. Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age*, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1–11, at p. 2; J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 47; R. A. Stradling, *Philip IV and the Government of Spain, 1621–1665* (Cambridge, 1988).
10. Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis, 1598–1648* (London, 1979), p. 56; Bérenger, ‘Le Problème du ministérial’, p. 166; Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States, 1494–1660* (Oxford, 1991), p. 382, and *idem*, ‘Louis XIII, Richelieu, and the Royal Finances’, in Bergin and Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age*, pp. 99–133, at p. 122; Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, p. 50.
11. A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, The Just* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 107; Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos*, p. 181.
12. Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos*, p. 181, letter of 30 January 1647.
13. Feros, ‘Gobierno de Corte’, pp. 23–4.
14. Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza, *El Secretario del Rey* (1620), facsimile edn (Madrid, 1973), fol. 12v, ‘VM no ha tenido Secretario privado porque los Grandes de España afectos de su servicio toman este cuidado, despachando con su Real persona a boca las consultas y los expedientes del Secretario, con que en la realidad y en la substancia el privado viene a ser el Secretario, pues el ejercicio es el que le hace, y no el nombre.’ Victor Morgan, ‘Some Types of Patronage, Mainly in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England’, in Antoni Mączak, *Klientelsysteme im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1988), pp. 91–115, at p. 111.
15. During the last dozen years of Philip II, the previously single secretariats of the Cámara, Finance and Italy were each split into three, and those of War and the Indies into two. The two secretaries of state after 1586 were nonentities. Escudero lists forty-seven secretarial titles issued in 1516–79, sixty-three in 1584–1621, and seventy-six in 1621–30: José Antonio Escudero, *Los Secretarios del Estado y del Despacho (1474–1724)*, 4 vols (Madrid, 1969), iii, pp. 703–13.
16. See my ‘War and Institutionalization: The Military–Administrative Bureaucracy of Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in I. A. A. Thompson, *Crown and Cortes: Government, Institutions and Representation in Early-Modern Castile* (Aldershot, 1993), ch. 3.
17. Bermúdez de Pedraza, *El Secretario del Rey*, fol. 20v.
18. Neil Cuddy, ‘Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603–1625’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 39 (1989), pp. 107–24, at p. 122: ‘even an established monarch would have found it difficult to purge the bureaucracy, or create new offices in pursuit of policies’. And in a similar vein, Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 415.
19. The other side of the coin is that everywhere the institutionalization of counsel and the formal regulation of council membership and procedure were advocated as an essential barrier to the arbitrariness of the *valido* and tyrannical rule.
20. Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 466–7, 473; Feros, ‘Gobierno de Corte’, p. 93 n. 15.
21. For example, the revenues of the titled nobility in Castile in 1516 were roughly the same as those of the crown; by 1600 they amounted to scarcely more than a third of the king’s revenues, and there were twice as many *títulos* to share them.
22. Ronald Asch, ‘Introduction: Court and Household from the 15th to the 17th Centuries’, in Asch and Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, pp. 1–38, at p. 22.
23. Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London, 1990).
24. Iñigo Ibáñez de Santa Cruz, ‘Discurso crítico contra el gobierno de Felipe II’ (1599), Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 10.635, fols 1–44. Malcolm Smuts, ‘Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I’, in Linda Levy Peck, ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 107 and n. 30.
25. Kevin Sharpe, ‘Crown, Parliament and Locality: Government in Early Stuart England’, *English Historical Review*, 101 (1986), pp. 321–50, at p. 336.
26. John K. Gruenfelder, *Influence in Early Stuart Elections* (Columbus, Ohio, 1981), identifies a new approach to government interference in parliamentary elections after 1614; for similar activity in France at the same time, J. Michael Hayden, *France and the Estates General of 1614* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 7.
27. Santiago Fernández Conti, ‘La Nobleza Cortesana: Don Diego de Cabrera y Bobadilla, Tercer Conde de Chinchón’, in José Martínez Millán, ed., *La Corte de Felipe II* (Madrid, 1994), pp. 229–70, at p. 251: Eraso blocks Chinchón’s attempt to acquire the office of Alférez Mayor of Segovia, 1566.
28. José Martínez Millán, in the ‘Introducción’ to his *La Corte de Felipe II*, pp. 13–35, at p. 24, says Cardinal Espinosa also made an intense effort to control the city councils by getting his clients placed in all of them; but the document he cites refers to the appointment of *corregidores* (royal city

- governors), not the ruling city oligarchs (*regidores*), and the evidence that I have does not suggest that, if there ever was such a policy, it was persevered with.
29. Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 276, 331; Peck, *Court Patronage*, pp. 52, 91, 214; Sharpe, 'Crown, Parliament and Locality', pp. 329–30. And for an earlier period, Nicholas Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Alvaro de Luna* (London, 1986), p. 19: 'Instead of reflecting a confused balance of the different claims and pressures on the king, with appointees beholden to a dozen secondary patrons, the service of the Crown became . . . a coherent vehicle for a single line of policy.'
 30. Arlette Jouanna, *Le Devoir de révolte* (Paris, 1989), pp. 233–4; Sharpe, 'Crown, Parliament and Locality', pp. 330, 343; Peck *Court Patronage*, p. 55. For Castile, I. A. A. Thompson, 'Patronazgo real e integración política en las ciudades castellanas bajo los Austrias', in José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, ed., *Imágenes de la Diversidad: El Mundo Urbano en la Corona de Castilla (S. XVI–XVIII)* (Santander, 1997), pp. 475–96.
 31. Peter Clark, ed., *The European Crisis of the 1590s* (London, 1985), pp. 301–12.
 32. This is not only the case for Richelieu, Olivares and Oxenstierna; even Buckingham was a champion of financial reform: Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 47–8, 49–50; for Lerma, see Feros, 'Gobierno de Corte', pp. 89–90; for Griffenfeld in Denmark and Enslin in Württemberg see the essays by Jespersen and Asch in the present volume (Chapters 17 and 7).
 33. Sharon Kettlering, 'The Historical Development of Political Clientelism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (1988), pp. 419–47, at pp. 432–3; Benigno, *L'Ombr del Re*, p. ix.
 34. This is the argument of James M. Boyden, *The Courtier and the King: Ruy Gómez de Silva, Philip II, and the Court of Spain* (Berkeley, 1995).
 35. See the essays by Feros, Worden and Dubost in this volume (Chapters 13, 11 and 5).
 36. Bergin and Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age*, p. 3.
 37. See K. Dunkley, 'Richelieu's Clients and the Estates of Brittany', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 1 (1981), pp. 1–12.

'Fortune Has Stripped You of Your Splendour':
Favourites and their Fates in Fifteenth- and
Sixteenth-Century Spain

JAMES M. BOYDEN

En route to his retirement at Yuste, the emperor Charles V passed in the autumn of 1556 through the highland village of Pancorbo, north-east of Burgos. The villagers welcomed Charles and his party with joyful pomp, and presented him with a lavish gift. When the welcoming ceremonies drew to a close, the town officials petitioned the emperor to grant them a certain minor jurisdiction. Charles replied by thanking them for their hospitality and gift, but explained that, having renounced his kingdoms, he no longer wielded power or influence over jurisdictional matters. Absorbing this unwelcome news, the town councillors responded that 'if that's so, then we humbly kiss Your Majesty's hands in thanks for your goodwill toward our affairs, and now we'll be taking back our present'.¹

The attractions of this story are several, and for the most part obvious. Now as – most likely – then, it is funny. It portrays the villagers in the half-flattering, half-mocking manner familiar from some of the *comedias* of the time; simultaneously they are shrewd but clumsily calculating, plainspoken but churlish, unawed yet sycophantic. For the man who preserved the anecdote, however, its significance was more serious. In his *Miscelánea*, compiled towards the end of the sixteenth century, Luis Zapata used this tale to illustrate the themes of 'the World's Nature Revealed', and 'Human Disloyalty'. Perhaps surprisingly, condemnation of the villagers' inconstancy is not the sole or even the principal moral pointed by Zapata; instead the entry ends with a comparison of the emperor to a stream that, at flood, shivers the timbers of the greatest vessels, but that in the subsequent dry season is easily forded by 'little animals'.²

This imperial anecdote, then, is presented as a tale of 'how the mighty have fallen'. Everywhere and always, perhaps, there exists a popular appetite for this sort of narrative, although today perhaps the public expects not so much to see the great overturned as to learn that their greatness is a fraud. It has been widely noted, though, that reversals of fortune were favoured topics of early modern literature and philosophy. Writers of the period often seem to utilize biographical narrative merely as a perfunctory set-up for the predictable punchline

of the subject's fall from power, prosperity or grace. Juan de Mariana provides an especially bald example of this approach in his *Historia general de España* when he introduces Bartolomé de Carranza at the time of his elevation to the archiepiscopal see of Toledo. Obviously looking forward to Carranza's lengthy ordeal with the Inquisition, Mariana observes that 'it seems that he rose so high [simply] in order that his fall might be the more severe'.³

This atmosphere is particularly pervasive in the literature of the period concerning *privados*, the favourites of the Spanish kings. The state of *privanza* is generally depicted as inherently unstable, transitory. Favour consumes those upon whom it is bestowed, or, in the words of one sixteenth-century observer: 'Great confidences [between royal master and favourite] end in precipitous downfalls'.⁴ There are a number of reasons for this generalized attitude. One of the most striking will emerge from a brief consideration of the career of Alvaro de Luna, the greatest of Castilian *privados*, at least before the dawn of the seventeenth century (pl. 2). Born in the 1380s, the bastard son of a prominent family and the nephew of the anti-pope Benedict XIII, Alvaro de Luna came to the court of Castile in 1408, and two years later became a page of the child-king Juan II. As so often before and since, special favour – *privanza* – was born in this situation out of the personal service of a young nobleman to a child prince; by 1419, when Juan II came into his majority at age fourteen, Alvaro de Luna was his undisputed favourite.⁵

For the next three decades and more, Don Alvaro remained the king's favourite and was the principal figure in Juan II's government. For his services, he was named Constable of Castile and Master of the Order of Santiago. The king's gifts and his own acquisitiveness made Alvaro de Luna the wealthiest lord in the kingdom, while his political acumen and military skills saved his royal master from domination by the ambitious Infantes of Aragon and the restive nobles of Castile. The wonder of the constable's career was eclipsed only by the stunning horror of its end, for in 1453 Juan II found resolve for one of the few times in his long reign, and ordered the arrest and execution of his long-time favourite. Alvaro de Luna would probably not be particularly consoled by the judgement of modern historians, who praise his efforts on behalf of Juan II for opening the way to royal absolutism in Castile, citing his own arbitrary death sentence as the clinching proof of the newfound powers of the crown.⁶

It is difficult to imagine a more striking illustration of the transitory nature of earthly fortune than the spectacle of the constable's execution in a public square of Valladolid on 2 June 1453. Certainly the event caught the imagination of contemporary poets. 'Look then to that great Constable,' wrote Jorge Manrique, 'the Master whom we knew so deeply favoured by the king / And yet even of him nothing more need be said than that we saw him beheaded. / His limitless treasures, his towns and villages, his power of command / What did they bring him but tears? / What were they to him except sorrows at the leaving?'⁷ More famously, Iñigo López de Mendoza, Marquis of Santillana,

who hated and resented the constable in life as a lowborn upstart, eulogized him with a sneering pun: ‘De tu resplendor io Luna! / te ha privado la fortuna.’ Santillana’s verses combine taunts and curses, at one point insinuating a parallel between Don Alvaro and Lucifer, who was cast down for excessive pride and for coveting his creator’s throne. The poem lingers over images of the inexorable turning of fortune’s wheel, disregarded by the constable in his arrogance. ‘I’m sure you never thought such a turnabout could take place,’ Santillana continues, before tracing a bleak depiction of a lunar eclipse and rendering the cold judgement that ‘you get the reward you deserve’.⁸ In another poem – the ‘Doctrinal de privados’, its lessons all derived from the constable’s perceived failings – Santillana puts the same admission in Don Alvaro’s own mouth. He had enjoyed ‘higher station and greater wealth than was ever before seen in Spain / An abundance undreamt of by any other *privado*’. Even these blessings, however, were unable to stay his ‘raging appetite for gold’; undone by greed and power-hunger, at the end Don Alvaro found himself ‘left with nothing but this scaffold’.⁹

The vivid image of Alvaro de Luna at the execution block dominated literary treatments of *privanza* throughout the early modern period in Spain. According to one scholar, the constable’s ‘personality and tragic fate . . . were so deeply embedded in the national consciousness that any discussion of favoritism – Spanish or foreign, past or contemporary – inevitably returned to him’.¹⁰ Most obviously, an array of poets and playwrights were inspired by the death sentence and execution of Rodrigo Calderón in 1621 to take up once again the theme of courtly glory curtailed on the gallows; predictably, contemporary concerns were cloaked by resort to historical dramatization.¹¹ If Don Alvaro’s fate comprised tragedy, it is difficult today to avoid regarding Don Rodrigo’s as its repetition as farce, since leaving aside their similarly dignified deportment on the scaffold there are few points of similarity between the two figures. But, no matter how criminal Calderón may have been, his end certainly reinforced the contemporary vision of the mutability of a *privado*’s fortune.

For now, though, to return to the constable’s case: some further aspects of his story shed light on the lineaments of *privanza* as they were to be perceived at least through the reign of Philip II. First of all, when we look to the reasons why the constable was brought low in 1453, they reduce themselves primarily to a shift in the three-way relationship between Juan II, Alvaro de Luna and the great Castilian lords. Repeatedly during his career, Don Alvaro through his intrigues and campaigns had preserved the king’s freedom of action in the face of aristocrats who sought to control him. For this, and for his wealth and arrogance, Alvaro de Luna had been roundly hated by most of the higher nobility; three times, their machinations had led to his banishment, and, as Santillana’s verses suggest, many of them celebrated his execution. Juan II, on the other hand, had traditionally shielded his favourite as best he could from the envy and plotting of his high-born enemies. But the constable’s arrest in 1453 arose from a reversal of this conjuncture, with the king making common cause

with the great families of Estúñiga (Zúñiga) and Mendoza to lay hands on his erstwhile favourite.¹²

The reasons for Juan II's change of heart have been variously assessed. Perhaps the most persuasive interpretation is that the king, knowing that he had only a short time to live, wanted to smooth his son Enrique's succession by removing the overmighty constable from the board. (And in fact Juan II survived Alvaro de Luna by less than fourteen months.)¹³ But, while we may never know the king's inner motives or precise calculations, his public explanation was quite explicit. According to Juan II, Don Alvaro's principal crime was that he 'has for a long time held and usurped a chief position near me and in my household and court', and despite having been admonished about his excessive pride and effrontery 'he has persevered in it . . . grasping more power to himself each day, excessively, without temperance or measure, so that there remains to me no room to rule and administer my kingdoms personally, nor to maintain my towns in justice and truth and law . . .'.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, the constable saw matters in another light. While the king alleged usurpation of his royal authority, Don Alvaro responded with a charge of ingratitude, levelled in a tone meant to convey the sadness and resignation of a loyal servant stripped at last of his illusions. Rather than withdraw into a well-deserved retirement after forty-five years of service, he wrote,

I chose . . . to serve as I was in duty bound and as I felt the situation demanded; I deceived myself, for this service has been the cause of my misfortune. How bitter that I should find myself deprived of liberty who more than once have risked life and fortune to preserve your highness's freedom! I am well aware that for my great sins I have angered God, and I will consider it a boon if I can placate his rage through these travails.¹⁵

This appeal to justice was accompanied by an offer of treasure, but neither swayed the king, who was so intent upon Don Alvaro's destruction that he would finally order his execution despite the failure of a hand-picked tribunal to render a clear sentence of death.¹⁶

At the very end, Alvaro de Luna returned to the theme of royal ingratitude. From the scaffold he is said to have called out to one of the household officers of the crown prince Enrique: 'Go to the prince and tell him for me that when the time comes to reward his own servants he ought not to follow the king's example.'¹⁷ This taunt may have hit home; at least Juan II's apologists took pains to reverse the charges of ingratitude and disloyalty. Thus Santillana's litany: 'On the one hand, the inexhaustible largesse of a magnanimous lord / On the other, the damnable ingratitude of a servile nature / Here, the constancy and virtue of the master / There, the arrogant lackey singing his own praises'.¹⁸

Here, then, in the sad end of Alvaro de Luna, we find presaged some of the key elements that would condition the relationships of kings and favourites up to the end of the sixteenth century and to some extent beyond. Inevitably the

privado (and especially a relatively lowborn favourite like Alvaro de Luna) would excite the envy and resentment of the high nobility.¹⁹ This situation could work to the crown's benefit in several ways: first, the *privado*'s political utility might consist in large part in maintaining some distance between these great nobles, their private concerns, and the monarch; secondly, the favourite rather than the monarch would usually attract the bulk of opprobrium for policies antithetical to aristocratic interests (or at least monarchs might hope so);²⁰ finally, the king by siding with the magnates could at any moment bring the favourite to heel or even to ruin.

Of course, jealous aristocrats were not alone in being capable of resenting the influence and pretensions of *privados*. More dangerously, the king might conclude, as Juan II did or at least claimed to have done, that the favourite had usurped powers that were rightfully the monarch's alone. Here the specific example of Alvaro de Luna undoubtedly exerted a cautionary influence on subsequent *privados* – and may provide a partial explanation of the motivations behind the more explicit and legalistic delegation of royal powers that characterized the seventeenth-century *valimientos* beginning with that of the Duke of Lerma.²¹

Moreover, at least in the sixteenth century, *privados* and to some extent their royal masters as well seem to have operated in the expectation that their relationships would be characterized by ingratitude, inconstancy and fickle reversals of favour and fortune. With the trenchant bitterness that was his literary speciality, Antonio Pérez insisted that 'the favour of Princes is False, Feeble, Deadly, the Shadow of Death: Death itself'.²² Meanwhile, maritime metaphors, with their ominous suggestion of the constant danger of shipwreck, were quite common: the court, for example, was equated with a dangerous stretch of water, while another writer referred to royal 'favour as treacherous as the sandbanks of Flanders'.²³ Injustice was the rule, according to Antonio de Guevara, who asserted that 'at court . . . the man of great merit is persecuted'.²⁴ As far as can be judged from the problematic testimony that exists, favourites and courtiers mused openly about the vicissitudes of fortune, casting themselves as long-suffering servants loyally proceeding with their onerous duties despite the inconstancy, envy and perfidy eroding their positions.

As we saw above, Alvaro de Luna was hardly behindhand in striking this attitude. Few of his successors, however, were forced to carry the pose to such lengths – after all, the constable in his final role provided a perfect portrayal of courage, indifference, Christian resignation and ironic bemusement on the scaffold. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that later *privados* largely feigned stoic acceptance in order to lessen the chances that they would have to act it out on such a grisly stage. As so often, Francis Bacon here provides shrewd guidance about the theatre of the court. '[Y]ou shall observe', he wrote, 'that the more deep and sober sort of politic persons, in their greatness, are ever bemoaning themselves what a life they lead, chanting a *quanta patimur*. Not that they feel it so, but only to abate the edge of envy'.²⁵ Guevara made a similar

point. 'At court,' he remarked, 'everyone curses the court, and then they all follow it.'²⁶ But, while we may plausibly doubt that Spanish favourites were philosophic men of constant sorrow, the personal and power relationships inherent in *privanza* and the attitudes respecting it that I have begun to sketch were bound to impede the maintenance of the sort of stable, lengthy, trusting relations between monarchs and favourites that could develop into a truly ministerial mode of government.

To elaborate the point that favourites did not easily become ministers, it may be useful to turn now to a consideration of some aspects of *privanza* during the reign of Philip II (pl. 3), and more broadly to the evolving style of rule exercised by the Prudent King. Philip's first and most durable *privado* was Ruy Gómez de Silva (pl. 4), better known to history as the Prince of Eboli. Ruy Gómez was born around 1516, the second son of middling Portuguese nobles, and came to the court of Castile as a young boy in the entourage of Charles V's bride, the empress Isabel of Portugal. He served the prince (born 1527) in his infancy, and was assigned a minor post in Philip's first household in 1535. Over the next decade, the two formed a close bond, cemented with Ruy Gómez's appointment to a privy household post as *sumiller de corps* in 1548.²⁷ Elsewhere I have studied Ruy Gómez's conquest of political influence, his exercise of a leading role in government in the period of Philip's succession and the opening years of the reign, and his bitter rivalry with the Castilian grandes, captained at court by the Duke of Alba.²⁸ More to the point here, however, is his fall, which unlike that of Alvaro de Luna was gradual, prolonged and only partial.

In brief, what happened was that over the decade of the 1560s Philip and his favourite drew slowly apart. The king seems to have concluded soon after returning to Spain in 1559 that Ruy Gómez's value as a minister was not sufficient to warrant unlimited defence of the *privado* against the insults and allegations of Alba and other aristocrats. Eboli reacted cautiously, by withdrawing from the public prominence that so incited his rivals. He was further devalued in mid-decade by the prosecution for corruption of his closest ally, the secretary Francisco de Eraso, and by the simultaneous emergence of a more efficient rival in the person of Diego de Espinosa. At the same time, he was saddled with supervising the increasingly erratic heir to the throne, Don Carlos, and doubtless was tainted in the king's perception by association with the prince's sad decline. Finally, Ruy Gómez offered Philip blatantly self-interested counsel of compromise with the Dutch rebels. Rather surprisingly, this string of setbacks did not lead to dismissal from court or worse.²⁹

Philip's genuine affection and, more important, Ruy Gómez's extraordinary suavity and uncanny instinct for backing off at the earliest sign of conflict with royal desires combined to preserve Eboli's place near the king if no longer in his intimate confidence. As his governmental power declined, Ruy Gómez devoted

his remaining influence at court to acquiring wealth and a landed estate, and eventually a Castilian ducal title.³⁰

Recognition of the courtly skill of this feat reportedly led even the *privado's* bitter rival, the Duke of Alba, to remark that:

Señor Ruygomez . . . was not one of the greatest Counsellors that there has been, but I acknowledge him . . . as so great a master of that herein [in the king's inner chamber], and of the temper and disposition of Kings, that all the rest of us who pass through here have our heads where we think we are carrying our feet.³¹

Other contemporary appreciations of Eboli's achievements also stress his soft landing. Thus Cabrera de Córdoba, in an elaboration of the maritime metaphor, after characterizing the court as a 'dangerous gulf' eulogized Ruy Gómez as 'the first pilot who, in such huge undertakings, lived and died secure, always choosing the best port'.³² Eboli's protégé Antonio Pérez was presumably contemplating his mentor's prowess and his own failings when he asserted that 'the Favour of *Privados* is no less treacherous than a light Berber horse, and he must be a fine horseman and have a very good seat who would not be dislodged from the saddle or thrown off altogether'.³³

Ruy Gómez's accomplishment in the course of his extended *privanza*, as described by contemporaries and narrated here, amounted to self-preservation and the aggrandizement of his lineage. In this, and from a purely personal point of view, he was infinitely more successful than Alvaro de Luna. On the other hand and from the crown's perspective, though, Eboli can scarcely be seen as an advance over the luckless constable in terms of an evolution of *privanza* into a responsible and effective ministry of state. And it does not seem utterly implausible to postulate a connection between recognition of the bitter fate of Don Alvaro and the strategic backing and trimming of Ruy Gómez. Some evidence exists that Eboli was steeped in the sorrowful language of fortune's cruelty to her one-time favourites. Antonio Pérez depicts him as musing often on the fickle winds of favour, and lamenting that his loyalty to the king keeps him at court long after his service has ceased to bring enjoyment or fulfilment.³⁴ That this ostensible inner pain hardly interfered with his estate-building exertions may lend further credence to the suggestion that the courtly rhetoric of disillusion and stoical resignation was in some cases a stylized form of protective coloration.

But we can hardly be surprised that personal survival and the optimization of fortune's bounty were prime career goals of a royal favourite. Don Alvaro, after all, was in truth the exception, the rare *privado* who, in addition to enriching himself and his friends and family, rendered signal service to the crown's broader interests. His reward emphatically did not encourage emulation, but more importantly the very conditions in which *privanza* typically was born and nurtured were hardly propitious for the production of disinterested statesmen. For, as Antonio Feros has argued, the essence of the relation-

ship between monarch and favourite is friendship, with all its potential vicissitudes.³⁵

In most cases it is difficult to envision these particular friendships as other than irregular and innately dysfunctional. Their origins almost invariably lay in the affection of sheltered and lonely child-princes for unctuously solicitous adolescent or young adult males who were their servants and constant companions. With a bit of adjectival alteration here and there, this sentence can stand as a description of the initial relationships of Juan II with Alvaro de Luna, of Enrique IV with Juan Pacheco, of Philip II with Ruy Gómez de Silva, of Philip III with Lerma and of Philip IV with Olivares. Such peculiar friendships would almost inevitably become strained as the friends grew older. Often, the prince's initial attraction must have been akin to hero-worship of an older, more graceful or more worldly male. In adulthood, though, such heroes of childhood often come to appear pathetic, and may be viewed with distaste because of the association with the very weaknesses to which they once appealed. Moreover, the exaggerated attentiveness that originally attracted the prince's attention to the favourite may have had diminished appeal to an adult monarch with broader experience of flattery. Finally, the inherently dramatic inequality between king and even his most favoured subject had to place strains on friendship, which could only grow more severe as the monarch matured into a sense of his power and prerogatives. No matter how ingratiating the *privado*, wrote Antonio Pérez, and 'although he may love the gratification of his inclinations, the Prince will most often turn his face to the honour of the office'. The result is that monarchs 'are habitually abashed with the passage of time, and with the burden of the public's complaints and those of the greatest estates, and adding their own indictment [are wont] to exonerate themselves by means of the punishment and exclusion of the *Privado*'.³⁶

Returning, then, to our specific case: in parallel with Ruy Gómez's tactical disengagement from the public aspects of *privanza* and the redirection of his energies into private pursuits we may postulate on Philip II's part a gradual process of disillusionment with his long-time favourite. As Ruy Gómez entered middle age, the athleticism and grace that may initially have commended him to Philip were doubtless waning, and in the very years when the king himself was rather belatedly leaving his awkward youth. The most important aspect, however, of this royal farewell to youth was that in the course of the 1560s Philip seems to have emerged from his father's long and daunting shadow. As he gained faith in his own ability to rule, his estimation of the favourite of his youth waned proportionally, helped along by revelations of Ruy Gómez's failings and character flaws. Twenty years earlier, Philip had clung the more tightly to Ruy Gómez in mildly rebellious response to the emperor's directive that he must leave childhood and lighthearted childish companions behind, as he turned his attention to matters of state under the tutelage of older and wiser men.³⁷ The suave and youthful courtier Ruy Gómez had been the inexperienced prince-regent's friend and ally in a situation where he was surrounded

by the stern old advisers of Charles V. But, as king in his own right in the Spain of the 1560s, Philip II must have begun to see the comforting companion of his youth as an ineffectual and self-serving aide in the business of government.

In 1543, Charles V had warned his son not to delegate too much authority to a single person:

Not now, not ever, not to [anyone] else, but instead conduct your business with many [advisers] and don't bind or oblige yourself to any single individual; for although this would allow you a more restful existence, it is nonetheless ill-advised . . . because they will then say – quite likely with reason – that you are governed, and moreover any person in whom such confidence was reposed would swell up with pride and become high and mighty . . . in the end everyone else would become aggrieved and querulous.³⁸

But, even in his latter-day disillusion with Ruy Gómez, Philip II was not yet ready to accept this paternal advice in its entirety. Instead, he replaced Eboli with the churchman Diego de Espinosa, in a *privanza* that now partook more of business than of affection. The emperor's lesson seems to have taken only with the disgrace and death of Espinosa in 1572. The king regretted having entrusted so many of his affairs to the cardinal. 'Perhaps,' he wrote, 'there were good reasons for it then. But experience has shown that it was not a good thing; and although it meant more leisure and less work for me, I do not think it should be allowed to continue.'³⁹

And in fact Philip II never again placed such great political reliance on a *privado*. When he came to pass his accumulated wisdom about ruling to his successor, the king cautioned the future Philip III to 'make use of all, without submitting yourself to anyone . . . but rather hearing out many men and maintaining proper discretion with each'.⁴⁰ The echoes of Charles V's advice are unmistakable. Towards the end of his life, the king feared that the close personal relationships of his youth and early manhood had clouded his monarchical judgement. In full maturity he preferred to know his servants and subjects from written reports, and even his lands were more familiar to him from research than from experience: 'He had full reports of all his provinces, cities, towns, sites, wildernesses, rivers, of their advantages civil and military, their finances, manufactures and tributes: and what he neither strode nor saw was represented to him in pictures'.⁴¹ The king's withdrawal from public view (or *retrainimiento*) in later life, while obviously a product of personal and psychological predilection, was also then a response to his mounting distrust of *privados* (a distrust soon enough exacerbated by the Antonio Pérez affair). He devoted his life to the state papers rather than confide his affairs – and by extension his trust – in another favourite. And, through the familiar process that converts the whim of a forebear into immemorial family custom, from Philip's *retrainimiento* developed the Spanish Habsburg royal style of the 'invisible and inaccessible' king, most

recently examined by Antonio Feros, the reclusive and dignified style which would govern courtly arrangements in the subsequent reigns.⁴²

Philip's withdrawn style has been subjected to a scathing critique by Fernando Bouza Alvarez.⁴³ Without fully subscribing to Bouza's condemnation of the so-called Prudent King, one can certainly identify some problematic results of the new sphinx-like style of monarchy. Ironically, one of these may have been to enhance the possibility that the wills of subsequent Habsburg princes would be captivated by scheming favourites. That contemporaries recognized this danger may be inferred from Juan de Mariana's *Historia general de España*, drafted in the last years of Philip II and revised at the outset of the era of Philip III and the Duke of Lerma. Purporting to explain how Juan II had fallen under the influence of Alvaro de Luna, the Jesuit historian – and theorist of monarchy – asserted:

It is a miserable way to raise a king, leading to the gravest harms, to insist that the lord of all should not move about in public nor be seen by his vassals, to the extent that he does not even recognize the grandes who visit him; it is a shameful thing that they should deprive the Prince of the liberty to speak, to see and to be seen. . . . [Well might he ask] why do you treat me, who was born for toil and exertion, like a capon in the fattening cage?

For Mariana, the inevitable result was that the king would 'forever subordinate himself to the will and command of his courtiers and palace servants'.⁴⁴

Mariana wrote at the dawn of the great age of minister-favourites in the Spanish monarchy, and there is a certain attractiveness to his implication that, rather than biological decline, a cultural legacy bestowed by those whom we once knew as the 'greater' upon the succeeding 'lesser' Habsburgs may account for the pronounced dependence of the latter on favourites. This is not, however, the place for further exploration of the seventeenth-century development of the *valimiento*. Instead I will return in conclusion to my theme of the association of *privanza* with a bleak view of fortune and loyalty, in order to observe that, even in the seventeenth-century golden age of the minister-favourite, the relationships of monarchs and *privados* were no less prone than before to end badly, in regrets, recriminations, expressions of existential gloom, or worse. After all, Lerma, notwithstanding two decades of unparalleled *valimiento*, was exiled from court in 1618, and saw fit to take out the insurance of an ecclesiastical dignity against the eventuality of a more dire fall from favour. Three years later, Rodrigo Calderón re-enacted Alvaro de Luna's appointment with the headsman, reprising the constable's dignity in the face of death even though he had shared few of Don Alvaro's virtues as a *privado*. And even the greatest of the minister-favourites, the Count-Duke of Olivares, had occasion in the disgraced and half-mad exile of his last years to exclaim that the only sure things in life were 'instability and inconstancy and lack of gratitude'.⁴⁵ Among the ranks of *privados*, we would, it seems, be hard pressed to find anyone to reject the famous

description of attendance upon princes as 'a poor richness; an abundance miserable; a highness that falleth; an estate not stable; a surety trembling; and an evil life'.⁴⁶

Notes

1. Luis Zapata, *Varia historia (Miscelánea)*, i, ed. G. C. Horsman (Amsterdam, 1935), pp. 108–9.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Juan de Mariana, *Historia general de España*, in *Obras*, ii, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 31 (Madrid, 1909), p. 393.
4. Antonio Pérez, *Aphorismos de las cartas españolas y latinas de Ant. Perez* (Paris, 1598?), fol. 14r–15v.
5. See the useful chronology in Raymond R. MacCurdy, *The Tragic Fall: Don Alvaro de Luna and Other Favorites in Spanish Golden Age Drama* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1978), pp. 104ff.
6. See most recently and extensively Nicholas Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Alvaro de Luna* (London, 1986) and Isabel Pastor Bodmer, *Grandeza y tragedia de un valido: La muerte de don Alvaro de Luna*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1992).
7. Jorge Manrique (c. 1440–79), 'Coplas por la muerte de su padre', in J. M. Cohen, ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse* (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 61. My translation after Cohen.
8. Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marquis of Santillana (1398–1458), 'Otras coplas del dicho señor marqués sobre el mismo cassó', in Manuel Durán, ed., *Poesías completas*, ii (Madrid, 1980), pp. 177, 182–3.
9. Santillana, 'Doctrinal de privados', in *Poesías completas*, ii, pp. 159, 160.
10. MacCurdy, *Tragic Fall*, p. 109. MacCurdy provides an excellent survey of this theme in the plays of the seventeenth century; his coverage may usefully be supplemented by Doris Havener, 'Some Literary Treatments of Don Alvaro de Luna' (MA thesis, Louisiana State University, 1942).
11. MacCurdy, *Tragic Fall*, ch. 2 and *passim*.
12. See Mariana, *Historia general*, pp. 136–7; Round, *Greatest Man Uncrowned*, chs 2–3.
13. See Round, *Greatest Man Uncrowned*, p. 235. The constable's chronicler suggested that, in ordering Don Alvaro's death, the king effectively killed himself through the effects of sadness and remorse. Juan de Mata Carriazo, ed., *Crónica de don Alvaro de Luna, condestable de Castilla, Maestre de Santiago* (Madrid, 1940), p. 434.
14. Cédula of Juan II, Burgos, 8 April 1453, in *Memorias de don Enrique IV de Castilla*, ii (Madrid, 1835–1913), p. 43.
15. Mariana, *Historia general*, p. 137.
16. For the key document, see 'Noticias relativas a la condenación de don Alvaro de Luna', in *Memorias de Enrique IV*, ii, pp. 74–7.
17. Mariana, *Historia general*, p. 138.
18. Santillana, 'Otras coplas', p. 178.
19. For some general remarks on this phenomenon, see Francisco Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII*, revised edn (Madrid, 1982), pp. 117ff.
20. But on the 'Achilles' heel' of this lightning-rod theory, see Antonio Feros, 'Twin Souls: Monarchs and Favourites in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain', in Richard Kagan and Geoffrey Parker, eds, *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 45.
21. For written delegation, Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos*, pp. 6–7 and apéndice I, p. 157.
22. Pérez, *Aphorismos*, fol. 24v.
23. See Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, *Historia de Felipe II, rey de España* (Madrid, 1876–7), ii, pp. 141–2; and Pérez, *Aphorismos*, fol. 32v.
24. Antonio de Guevara, *Libro primero de las epístolas familiares*, ed. José María de Cossío (Madrid, 1950), i, no. 32 (7 January 1535).
25. Francis Bacon, 'Of Envy', in *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth, 1985), p. 85.
26. Guevara, *Libro primero de las epístolas familiares*, i, no. 32.
27. James Boyden, *The Courtier and the King: Ruy Gómez de Silva, Philip II, and the Court of Spain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995), pp. 7–16.
28. *Ibid.*, chs 3–5.
29. *Ibid.*, chs 5–6, esp. pp. 128–36.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 140–50.

31. Antonio Pérez, 'A un gran Privado', *Cartas de Antonio Pérez* (Paris, 1598?), fol. 73v.
32. Cabrera de Córdoba, *Felipe II*, ii, pp. 141–2.
33. Antonio Pérez to Gil de Mesa (c. 1594–5), *Cartas*, fol. 76v.
34. Quoted in Boyden, *Courtier and King*, pp. 139–40.
35. Feros, 'Twin Souls'.
36. Antonio Pérez, *Cartas*, fol. 72.
37. See Boyden, *Courtier and King*, pp. 17–18. Charles V's instruction to his son, 4 May 1543, is reproduced in Francisco de Laiglesia y Auset, *Estudios históricos (1515–1555)* (Madrid, 1918), i, p. 75.
38. 'Instrucción secreta de 6 de mayo de 1543', in Laiglesia y Auset, *Estudios históricos*, i, p. 84.
39. Quoted in Geoffrey Parker, *Philip II* (Boston, 1978), p. 30.
40. Quoted by Ciriaco Pérez Bustamente, *Felipe III: Semblanza de un monarca y perfiles de una privanza* (Madrid, 1950), p. 41.
41. Baltasar Porreño, *Dichos y hechos del rey D. Felipe II* (1628), ed. Angel González Palencia (Madrid, 1942), pp. 6–7.
42. See Feros, 'Twin Souls', esp. pp. 33ff. Quoted phrase at p. 35.
43. Fernando Bouza Alvarez, 'La majestad de Felipe II: Construcción del mito real', in José Martínez Millán, ed., *La corte de Felipe II* (Madrid, 1994), pp. 37–72.
44. Mariana, *Historia general*, p. 75.
45. Quoted in J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 172.
46. Alain Chartier (*Cural*, early fifteenth century), translated by Caxton, 1484, and quoted in Sydney Anglo, 'The Courtier: The Renaissance and Changing Ideals', in A. G. Dickens, ed., *The Courts of Europe* (London, 1977), p. 35.

3

*'Absolute and Sovereign Mistress of her Grace'?
Queen Elizabeth I and her Favourites, 1581–1592*

PAUL E. J. HAMMER

At the end of 1581, the collapse of her proposed marriage to the Duke of Anjou finally extinguished any hope that Elizabeth I of England might take a husband, let alone produce an heir.¹ Elizabeth was now forty-eight and all hope of a further generation for the Tudor dynasty was ended. Even before this last desperate attempt at matrimony, the theme of some public entertainments for the queen began to hint at a new attitude towards Elizabeth. Since the start of her reign, these displays had consistently and loudly urged the queen to marry. From about August 1578, however, they instead increasingly sought to idealize her virginity.² Advanced at first by opponents of the queen's intended marriage to Anjou, this theme was soon deployed for more positive ends. The result was the growth during the 1580s of a virtual 'cult of Elizabeth', in which the ageing monarch was idealized as the Virgin Queen – a sacred, unmarried female embodiment of England which denied both the passage of time and political reality (pl. 5).³ Portraits of the queen also took on a curiously timeless quality in these years, as pictures of her became subject to official approval and ceased to be painted from life.⁴ With the nation's elite finally defeated in their expectations about a royal husband and child, the queen's image-makers sought to lessen the impact of this blow by denying the reality of their sovereign's ageing through a collective act of artistry and wishful thinking.

If Elizabeth's ageing was effectively overlooked, the same was not true of her leading favourites. In 1581, the queen's oldest and dearest favourite, the Earl of Leicester (pl. 6), was forty-eight or nine, while her other leading favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton (pl. 7), was forty-one. Although both men seemed fit and healthy, Leicester was increasingly anxious about passing his wealth and title to a son. Leicester had once seemed the man most likely to marry the queen – an idea which he may have floated as late as the summer of 1575⁵ – but his hopes were always dashed. By 1578, he could wait no longer and in September of that year he secretly married the Dowager Countess of Essex. The public revelation of this marriage a year later caused Leicester intense political embarrassment

and for some months seemed likely to wreck his relationship with the queen. Elizabeth never forgave his wife (whom she termed a 'she-wolf') and may have held this marriage against Leicester when she treated him harshly for his opposition to the Anjou match during much of 1580. Even so, Leicester was at least able to console himself with the birth of a legitimate son in June 1581.⁶ By contrast, Sir Christopher Hatton remained steadfastly unmarried, placing his immediate political benefit ahead of any dynastic considerations. For him, whether by deliberate choice or otherwise, being a favourite of Elizabeth included avoiding the Virgin Queen's notorious sexual jealousy, even at the expense of his own potential for legitimate procreation.

This essay seeks to explore the issues which confronted Elizabeth, Leicester and Hatton by 1581: notions of ageing, favour and succession. It will examine how Elizabeth interacted with her favourites as she approached and passed her fiftieth year, and how she and her intimates responded to the ambitions of a younger generation of courtiers eager for their own share of royal favour. By the end of the period covered in the essay – the decade following the collapse of the Anjou match – royal favour had been transferred from one generation to another: Elizabeth and her court had moved from the age of Leicester and Hatton to the age of the Earl of Essex. This essay will examine this process, which constitutes both a period of transition in Elizabeth's reliance upon individual favourites and a crucial part of the political history of her reign. In doing so, it will emphasize the theme that, despite the peculiarly personal nature of the queen's relationship with her individual favourites, these bonds must also be seen in the context of her relations with the court as a whole. Obviously enough, most royal favourites were not merely successful individual politicians but men whose presence at court was magnified by family, friends and followers. Such networks are therefore vital to any understanding of the nature of royal favourites. In the case of the Elizabethan court during the 1580s, this point can be made even more strongly. The mixed fortunes of Sir Walter Ralegh suggest that, whereas *choosing* a favourite might be a personal decision by the queen, her ability or willingness to advance her chosen favourite, and the means by which she might do this, could be constrained by the attitudes of her court.

Although the role and significance of female members of the queen's court has begun to attract serious scholarly attention – and rightly so – the focus here will be primarily on the queen's leading male courtiers. This is because only men could play a formal part in the business of government and because I believe that we still do not know enough about leading women at court to make a fully valid assessment of their activities there. Nevertheless, if Dr Charlotte Merton is correct, at least in the courts of Mary and Elizabeth, male favourites always had to reckon with a fair degree of political power among the senior women there.⁷ It will be interesting to see how far this claim can be developed, and how far it was also true of other royal courts during the early modern period.

The starting point for any discussion about Elizabeth I must be her sex. Female princes were not altogether uncommon in the sixteenth century but their task was nevertheless a difficult one. The men who advised and staffed early modern governments were decidedly chauvinistic in their attitudes and believed that a woman's true place was under male control. To some degree, female princes were accorded the status of 'honorary men' by virtue of their royal rank but the prevailing attitudes remained entrenched and found common expression behind the queen's back and at a safe distance from her court. Elizabeth suffered from this prejudice throughout her reign, most notably from her generals, who frequently ignored or misinterpreted her orders.⁸ However, Elizabeth also played upon such chauvinistic attitudes as a deliberate strategy to control her court. As queen, she used the alleged capriciousness of all women to cover her own uncertainty and changes of decision. She demanded that men seeking her favour cast their actions in the mould of courtly love. Those who were most successful at this game won pet-names which were at once affectionate and demeaning – 'eyes', 'mutton' and even, in the case of the royal Duke of Anjou, her 'frog'.⁹ Womanly flirtatiousness also helped to ensure that rewards were distributed among a range of courtiers and that men new to the court might always hope to find royal favour, even if only because the queen sometimes wished to nettle the more established recipients of her largesse.

Although the occasional pricking of great men's pretensions had a personal and often playful element to it, Elizabeth's desire to show favour to a range of men at her court had a clear political rationale. Early in her reign especially, the queen's regime needed to win a broad base of support from within the governing class to rebuild royal influence after the narrowing of power under her predecessors, Edward VI and Mary. Elizabeth also had to reckon with the fact that the man whom she might otherwise have chosen as her sole favourite or even her husband, Sir Robert Dudley (whom she made Earl of Leicester in 1564), was unpalatable to many leading men of her court, as tentative steps in this direction quickly revealed.¹⁰ Above all, Elizabeth's actions were governed by a fear of losing power and personal control. Her nightmare was that her leading male courtiers might form a united front and browbeat this 'mere woman' into accepting their views on such vital issues as her own marriage and the succession. Many female princes of the period succumbed to such pressures but Elizabeth consistently fought against this danger by ensuring plurality, and even occasional friction, among the leading men (and, to some degree, women) of her court.¹¹ The most famous (and misleading) expression of this policy is the oft-quoted comment of Sir Robert Naunton: 'the principal note of her reign will be that she ruled much by faction and parties, which she herself both made, upheld, and weakened as her own great judgment advised.'¹² This account is particularly misleading because it reads the political practices of the 1620s back into an earlier period, conflating Elizabeth's habit of 'divide and rule' among her courtiers with factionalism. As I have argued elsewhere, following Dr Simon Adams, the appearance of open factions at

the Elizabethan court was the product of political crisis and represented a challenge to the queen's control of her court and policy, not a means of securing them.¹³

A more useful characterization of Elizabeth's conduct might be the young Edward Hyde's rephrasing of Naunton's statement: 'that Queen almost her whole reign did with singular and equal demonstrations of grace look upon several persons of most distinct wishes one towards another'.¹⁴ In other words, Elizabeth divided her favour among a variety of competitors precisely in order to avoid the kind of reliance upon one man which was embodied in the Castilian practice of acknowledging a *privado* or *valido*. Although a king might delegate power to a single favourite and still retain his authority, this option seemed neither attractive nor safe to Elizabeth. As a result, she sought to ensure that a variety of men sought and gained varying degrees of favour at her court. Many of these men were little more than a nine-days wonder who gave the queen only brief amusement. The most successful and enduring recipients of royal favour, such as Leicester, Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Thomas Heneage, were true royal favourites in the contemporary sense – men who were recognized by their fellow courtiers as having a special bond with the queen and consequently able to influence her in a variety of patronage and/or policy matters. The wide-ranging and protean influence of such favourites was especially important, for it represented a marked contrast to other officeholders at court whose spheres of competence were delimited by agreed lines of demarcation or the terms of their patents of appointment.

A kind of pattern can be discerned in the careers of Elizabeth's favourites. The first real acknowledgement of their special status came when they gained some office in the royal household, thereby demonstrating that the queen regarded them as permanent fixtures in her court and guaranteeing them access to the inner sanctum of the privy chamber. The most successful and influential of these men ultimately gained a place on the Privy Council. This move formalized their involvement in public affairs and channelled their energies into a body which had strict rules both for the conduct of its business and for precedence among its members. Once they entered the world of policy advice and endless paperwork, these erstwhile rivals tended to develop a sense of corporate responsibility, based upon shared perceptions of the problems and dangers which faced the queen's regime. This experience undoubtedly limited and contained the rivalry among the queen's leading favourites. Ironically, this also gradually made it more difficult for the queen to play these men off against each other. Although she habitually sought consensus among her advisers in matters of policy, Elizabeth also hated losing her freedom to manoeuvre, especially when a consensus began to form around a policy which she did not like.

The work of the council also brought royal favourites into more intimate contact with the queen's leading bureaucrat, Sir William Cecil (pl. 8), who became Baron of Burghley in 1571 and lord treasurer in 1572. Burghley was not

a favourite in the sense of being a man of the court: he saw himself as the queen's faithful old servant, whose relationship with her was based upon trustworthiness and length of service rather than the kind of elaborate romantic courtesies practised by Leicester and Hatton. Nevertheless, Burghley undoubtedly had a very strong personal bond with Elizabeth. He was steward of her private lands before her accession to the throne and, as her secretary of state, subsequently exercised an influence on her policies which rivalled both that of more aristocratic members of the council and that of favourites like Leicester. Leicester and Burghley were often viewed as political opponents – rival poles, as it were, in the queen's elaborate balancing act – and historians have tended to emphasize the contrast between the courtly favourite and the master of paperwork. In reality, as Simon Adams has shown, this contrast can be exaggerated. By the 1570s, the relationship between Leicester and Burghley was one of co-operation, broadly common perceptions and only occasional tensions.¹⁵ Moreover, the old emphasis upon the rivalry between these two men ignores other features of this multipolar court, including the influence of aristocrats like the Earl of Sussex and the growing importance of Hatton and of Burghley's successor as secretary of state, Sir Francis Walsingham.

During the early 1580s, the character of Elizabeth's court began to change. Although he remained paramount in the queen's favour, Leicester's rehabilitation after his marriage was perhaps not fully completed until his young son died in July 1584, aged barely three. This tragedy shook Leicester so profoundly that any residue of bitterness harboured by the queen – who received news of the boy's death from Hatton – was converted into sympathy and perhaps also a stronger, if less romantic, affection for him.¹⁶ In terms of ceremony, the court began to witness ever more elaborate celebrations of the 'cult of Elizabeth'. The leading participants in these displays were not men like Leicester and Hatton but aristocrats young enough to have been the sons of Elizabeth. This younger generation of courtiers also sought to win the queen's favour in the now established manner – playing the role of ardent suitors bent upon wooing their courtly mistress. Such behaviour had been understandable in the 1560s and 1570s, but the growing gap in age between the queen and these suitors gave Elizabeth's court an increasingly contrived, even bizarre, quality by the 1580s and 1590s. This sense of incongruity was all the more powerful because of the sexual charge which was inherent in this mode of behaviour. Earlier in the reign, this had encouraged scandalous tales about lascivious conduct between Elizabeth and Leicester or Hatton, but passing time now made this interpretation of the queen's dealings with her mock suitors seem more and more grotesque.¹⁷ Although wooing by young men appealed to her suitably splendid royal ego, Elizabeth increasingly came to seem ridiculous to her younger courtiers, as they complained in private and ventilated in their poetry.¹⁸ Such feelings finally burst into the open in mid-1598, when the Earl of Essex allegedly remonstrated with the queen that 'her conditions were as crooked as her carcase'.¹⁹

If the style of Elizabeth's court seemed increasingly artificial, even uncomfortable, the striking wealth and influence of Leicester and Hatton, in particular, raised expectations about the special value of royal favour. These expectations were perhaps somewhat inflated because the image of a royal favourite which they presented reflected the culmination of ten or twenty years of intimate service to the queen. Even so, the usual jockeying between ambitious younger courtiers now took place with half an eye to replacing these great favourites whenever they should die or lose the queen's trust. In this quest, two conspicuous failures at court during the early 1580s were Burghley's son-in-law, the Earl of Oxford, and Leicester's eldest nephew, Sir Philip Sidney. Ironically and perhaps significantly, the most successful new suitor for royal favour was a complete outsider, Sir Walter Ralegh (pl. 9).

Although the romantic story of Ralegh laying his cloak in the mud seems to be apocryphal, his rise was hardly less extraordinary. Like Hatton before him, Ralegh lacked influential family or friends to assist his rise to political prominence. In this sense, they shared the distinction of being the only self-made men at Elizabeth's court – or, rather, favourites raised entirely by the queen's own efforts. However, where Hatton's rise during the 1560s and 1570s took more than a decade,²⁰ Ralegh aspired to the status of a favourite with startling swiftness. While Hatton always sought to seem a bridge-builder at court and the friend of all those with power there, Ralegh often seemed proud and overbearing. Initially a follower of the Earl of Oxford, Ralegh abandoned him for military service in Ireland. From this most unlikely and distant post, he gained royal attention during 1580 and 1581 by carrying back letters from the lord deputy and making oral reports to the queen. Ordinarily, Ireland was the Elizabethan equivalent of Siberia but, at this juncture, the Desmond Rebellion gave news from there a genuine urgency. During his private audiences with Elizabeth, Ralegh ventured to offer his own opinions on Irish affairs, even though they contradicted the written advice given by his superior. Ralegh's views struck a chord with the queen and allowed her to contest the counsel of her alleged experts – a situation which she often seemed to relish because it forced her advisers to argue matters of policy on her terms rather than their own. As contacts between them increased, Ralegh's accomplished behaviour and formidable personality soon attracted broader interest from the queen.²¹

Having caught the royal ear and eye, Ralegh proved remarkably adept at retaining and strengthening his precarious hold on favour. Although at first nominally a client of Leicester (who probably got him his Irish command),²² he soon parted company with his erstwhile patron. By early 1582, Elizabeth informed the lord deputy that she wished Ralegh to retain his command in Ireland, even though he would remain at court.²³ Beginning in May 1583, she gave Ralegh a succession of lucrative grants, some of them even cutting across other rewards previously given to old hands like Lord Hunsdon, her closest male cousin.²⁴ This conspicuous demonstration of royal largesse equipped

Ralegh with the financial resources which he needed to sustain himself in suitable splendour as a companion of the queen but also won him growing enmity from others at court. To some degree, this actually aided him because it meant that Elizabeth was loath to lessen her support since this would be seen as bowing to pressure from her own courtiers. Ralegh also played upon his weak political position, sometimes using poetry to express his insecurity, thereby implicitly demanding some concrete sign of reassurance from the queen.²⁵

By mid-1585, Ralegh was on bad terms with Leicester, in particular. Around this time, the queen sought to fill several important courtly offices which had been left vacant by deaths among her senior noblemen. According to one report received by the former Spanish ambassador, these promotions were to have included Leicester's appointment as lord steward. However, Leicester refused to surrender his current post as master of the queen's horse, which he had held since the start of the reign, and his promotion was cancelled.²⁶ Stories passed on to Spanish agents often constitute a very poor source for events at Elizabeth's court, but other information in this report seems to be broadly corroborated elsewhere.²⁷ If the report about Leicester is accurate, it raises the possibility that he refused to surrender his office at least partly in order to prevent it being given to Ralegh, who lacked a suitable household post. It is also conceivable that Leicester wished to keep the mastership of the horse for his own stepson, the Earl of Essex (pl. 10), who now loomed as Leicester's best hope for a political – if not biological – heir. Certainly, it was at this juncture that Leicester chose to bring Essex to court. After some delays, Essex finally joined Leicester's entourage about the start of September.²⁸ However, the young earl's arrival at court was barely noticed amid the frantic activity which accompanied Elizabeth's grudging and long-delayed decision to intervene in support of the Dutch rebels against Philip II of Spain. This act not only destroyed the central plank of her foreign policy over the preceding twenty years but initiated the transformation of her government from a peacetime to a wartime regime. This had profound effects upon a country which, for a generation, had enjoyed low taxes and a relatively undemanding central government.

The outbreak of open hostilities made Elizabeth's task of asserting her will upon her regime all the more difficult, for it encouraged dreams of martial glory and exhibitions of machismo among her aristocratic soldiers. Elizabeth's problems were immediately and spectacularly demonstrated by the furious rebukes which she directed at the Earl of Leicester, who went to the Low Countries as commander-in-chief in December 1585. Elizabeth's bitter complaints about Leicester's conduct as a general provided many opportunities for attacks against him (both real and imagined), and the relationship between the queen and her chief favourite briefly oscillated between the extremes of royal wrath and reassurance. Leicester especially blamed Ralegh, who he believed was poisoning the queen against him in his absence. Elizabeth herself, perhaps rather naively, sought to assure Leicester that this was untrue.²⁹ However, her own outbursts of anger against her absent favourite encouraged other members of the Privy

Council to rally in Leicester's support, out of solidarity with their colleague and, above all, because they saw no political alternative to continuing his command. The war in the Low Countries was a struggle for national and religious survival, and neither Raleigh nor anyone else could afford to be seen to jeopardize its success. As a result, Raleigh's ability to capitalize on Leicester's absence was sharply limited.

Leicester returned to court at the end of 1586, preceded by the freshly knighted Earl of Essex and the body of Sir Philip Sidney, whose death in battle created a bow-wave of sympathy and Protestant solidarity. In Essex, who had spent the last year undergoing an apprenticeship in military command, Leicester now had an eager and well-equipped rival to set up against Raleigh. What followed seems like a concerted campaign to establish Essex in the queen's affections, trading upon his new reputation as a war hero, his personal charm and the youthfulness which he so vigorously displayed in jousting. As with Raleigh before him, Elizabeth seems to have been quickly impressed by this new adornment to her court, opening the way for bitter rivalry between Essex and Raleigh.

Like most princes perhaps, Elizabeth was essentially reactive to the initiatives of others and hence her control of affairs was often erratic. She was also prone to being manipulated by those who knew her well, especially on certain sensitive issues. Perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of these limitations was the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in early 1587. This brought an end to what Professor Collinson has dubbed 'the Elizabethan exclusion crisis',³⁰ but it also fleetingly turned her nightmare of losing control into a reality: despite her explicit order to the contrary, the Privy Council as a body decided to proceed against Mary before the queen could intervene to stop them. Elizabeth singled out Burghley and Hatton for special blame in this affair, whereas Leicester was able to wring the lord stewardship from the queen and convince her that Essex should take his place as master of the horse.³¹ Even before this arrangement was approved, Leicester briefed his stepson on the substantial financial benefits that would accrue to him as master of the horse, which constituted a sweet bonus to the office's politically invaluable requirement of close attendance upon the sovereign.³²

Despite her fury over the death of Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth soon appointed Hatton as lord chancellor. This decision was quite unexpected and dismayed many lawyers. More significantly, it created a unique concentration of political power in a triumvirate of great officers of state, with Hatton, Burghley and Leicester as, respectively, lord chancellor, lord treasurer and lord steward. This also meant that the two senior favourites, Hatton and Leicester, were now increasingly occupied with administrative matters – just like Burghley – and no longer able to spend long hours with the queen. As a result, the rivalry between Raleigh and Essex for royal favour became more direct and obvious, although Leicester's influence served to constrain Raleigh somewhat and to embolden Essex. At one point, in July 1587, Essex even berated the queen for continuing

to support Raleigh, questioning whether he could ‘give myself over to the service of a mistress that was in awe of such a man’.³³

It seems quite extraordinary that a young courtier who aspired to royal favour should engage in such a shouting match with his sovereign. It seems even more extraordinary that, despite also storming out of the court in fury, Essex suffered no punishment for his actions. Indeed, he was back in the queen’s presence within days. Undoubtedly, the queen’s host at the time, the Countess of Warwick, had something to do with this. Yet Essex himself was no ordinary young courtier. Turning twenty-one in November 1586, he was the scion of an old aristocratic family and the son of a man who had won favour at court in the 1560s and early 1570s. Succeeding as a minor, Essex was educated under Lord Burghley and soon also became the stepson of Leicester. Through his mother, he had a number of other influential allies at court. These powerful connections made it very difficult for Elizabeth to punish him, or (perhaps) even to resist his attractions as a frequent companion. For his own part, Essex had very considerable talents and personal charm, as well as a remarkable ability to inspire affection in others – including the queen. ‘When she is abroade,’ boasted one of his servants in mid-1587, ‘noboddy [is] neere her but my lord of Essex. At night my lord is at cardes or one game or another with her that he cometh not to his owne lodginge tyll the birdes singe in the morninge.’³⁴

The meteoric rise of Essex into royal favour was powerfully backed and, to some degree, planned by his stepfather. Leicester’s sudden death in September 1588 therefore created both a crisis and an opportunity for Essex. With Leicester dead, Essex lost the man who could best advise him on how to shape his actions, but his only serious rivals for royal favour were now Hatton, who was nearly fifty and was friendly towards him, and Raleigh. Absent from court for some months because of Leicester’s hostility towards him, Raleigh must have made similar calculations. When he returned to court in late 1588, the rivalry with Essex gained a new level of intensity, even desperation. On one occasion, Elizabeth apparently had to prevent violence between them.³⁵ Nevertheless, Essex challenged Raleigh to a duel shortly afterwards. The Privy Council hastily intervened to stop it but also sought to conceal the affair from the queen.³⁶ Duelling had been seen before around the fringes of the court – Raleigh himself had been imprisoned twice within a month for duelling in 1580³⁷ – but the period of his struggle for supremacy with Essex was perhaps the first time that this behaviour penetrated to the heart of the court. In mid-1587, Raleigh came close to fighting Robert Carey, one of Lord Hunsdon’s sons, while Essex actually fought a duel against Sir Charles Blount, perhaps a few months later.³⁸ Although this violence did not have such fatal effects as when duels tore apart the inner circle of Henri III of France ten years before,³⁹ the atmosphere at Elizabeth’s court was clearly becoming more and more hot-blooded.

Even before Leicester’s death, Elizabeth had used ‘all . . . ways’ to calm her court, and even to try and make Essex and Raleigh become friends.⁴⁰ Although

she occasionally resorted to furious indignation, her standard tactics revolved around conspicuous displays of royal favour: rewarding Essex when he pleased her, rewarding Raleigh when he pleased her or when Essex had not, and rewarding other men, such as Sir Charles Blount, when both Essex and Raleigh had displeased her. However, by the end of 1588, Elizabeth's methods of control were breaking down. Despite verbal expressions of royal fury, she was unwilling, or unable, to take more serious action. This might be connected to the lingering effects of Leicester's death, which was a shocking reminder of mortality for the queen: to take tough action, such as expulsion from court, would force her to endure losing yet another of her most intimate companions, compounding her sense of loss. Looking at the antics of this younger generation of courtiers, she also seems to have felt unthreatened, and even indulgent towards them, seeing them less as the grown men they were than as adolescents who required guidance.⁴¹ Whatever the reason, Elizabeth had an extraordinary record of forgiveness towards intimates who offended her, despite the explosive anger of her initial reaction to their sins. Perhaps because she lacked children and close family, and because she appreciated the power of forgiveness, Elizabeth always clung desperately to those who were most familiar – in stark contrast to her father, who had readily sacrificed even the oldest of friends.

When Essex ignored her explicit command and joined the naval expedition launched against Spain and Portugal in early 1589, the queen responded with fury against the earl – 'all his hopes of advancement had like to bee strangled almost in the very cradle', as Sir Henry Wotton later put it⁴² – and a gold chain for Raleigh. Yet, within six weeks of his return, Essex was able to regain her favour so fully that Raleigh found it advisable to visit his estates in Ireland.⁴³ Although he now lacked Leicester's powerful advocacy, Essex had established a curiously powerful bond with the queen and was also 'mightelie backt by the greatest in opposition to Sir Walter Ralegh, who had offended manie and was maligned of most'.⁴⁴ This weight of support in his favour proved to be a constant force in Essex's rise. When his secret marriage to Sir Philip Sidney's widow was revealed in late 1590 and on several occasions when his conduct as general of the queen's forces in Normandy during the second half of 1591 moved her to threaten him with dire consequences, Elizabeth's royal anger was carefully softened by senior courtiers, before Essex himself completed the process of rehabilitation by speaking to her in person. In late 1591, Elizabeth complained to Sir Robert Cecil that Hatton 'hath ever cockered the earle and would not suffer her to chasten him'.⁴⁵ On another occasion, Hatton gave the queen a jewel with the request that she send it to the absent Essex to reassure him of her continuing favour.⁴⁶

Such powerful support – and apparent affection – for his rival made it very difficult for Raleigh to take lasting advantage of Essex's periods of vulnerability. Although Raleigh sought to capitalize on the earl's every slip, Essex had gained a psychological superiority over him by late 1589 which even Elizabeth herself

had to recognize. Moreover, each time Essex recovered from a bout of disfavour, his hold upon the queen – and the reputation which he had with other courtiers – seemed to grow stronger. Raleigh also still lacked a household office to buttress his position. Although there had been talk of him becoming captain of the queen's guard when Hatton was appointed lord chancellor,⁴⁷ Hatton had declined to surrender the position. It was not until after Hatton's death in November 1591 that Raleigh finally became captain of the guard. Like Leicester before him, Hatton may well have held on to his household post partly to deny it to Raleigh.

By the time Hatton died, the political significance of this breakthrough was greatly diminished, for Essex's ascendancy was already well established. Furthermore, like Leicester and Essex before him (but unlike Hatton), Raleigh now succumbed to a secret marriage in order to fulfil his own dynastic needs.⁴⁸ This major new point of vulnerability encouraged him to seek a rapprochement with Essex, presumably on the latter's terms. True to his promise, Essex not only did not expose Raleigh but even stood as godfather to Raleigh's son in April 1592. However, news of the child's birth soon reached Elizabeth and her wrath effectively crippled Raleigh's career. Unlike other royal favourites, not only had Raleigh had the temerity to marry one of the queen's maids of honour but both he and his wife clearly tried to deceive the queen about their relationship even after the birth of their first child. As A. L. Rowse suggests, it was probably this imposture, rather than the marriage itself, which saw Raleigh banned from the court and sequestered from his captaincy of the guard until Essex brokered his return five years later.⁴⁹

With Raleigh's demise, Essex was confirmed as the queen's only real favourite in the 1590s. This is not to say that Elizabeth ceased her policy of also offering royal favour to other men, especially when she wished to remind Essex of her power or to rebuke him for some reason. However, no man dominated the court in the way Essex did and many of his would-be rivals, such as Sir Charles Blount and the Earl of Southampton, soon became his friends and followers. Others, such as Henry Brooke (who succeeded his father as Lord Cobham in 1597), were harried and abused as Raleigh had been. Yet the dominance of Essex was to some extent illusory. Although he won greater grants for himself than any other man in Elizabeth's reign, these were primarily intended as recompense for the vast sums of his own money which he spent on royal service. By contrast, he won little more than minor royal patronage for his followers. Unlike his stepfather, he proved unable to intervene decisively in some key areas of policy, such as the growing official campaign against Protestant nonconformity.

Essex was also unlike Leicester and Elizabeth's other previous favourites in more fundamental ways. Above all, he was an aristocrat, who had been brought up with elevated notions of public service and of his own status. This may have contributed to his support among other courtiers, especially in comparison with an outsider like Raleigh, but it also made him less amenable than other favourites

to courtly politics. Essex never received any pet-name from the queen other than Robin (the familiar form of Robert) and most of his surviving poems and letters to the queen complain about the injuries which she has allegedly done to his honour and dignity. He also soon came to dislike life at court and the daily attendance which his post as master of the horse entailed. When the pressures seemed too great to bear any longer, he sometimes secretly departed from the court or hid himself away in 'sudden recesses'.

For Essex, royal favour was not an end in itself but merely a means to the greater goal of securing delegated authority from the queen, especially in matters of war and foreign policy. Ultimately, he believed that he must pursue certain policies for the benefit of the realm, regardless of whether the queen herself was actually prepared to endorse them. His attitude can be gauged from the letter which wrote to Henri IV of France on surrendering his command in Normandy at the start of 1592: 'I am very ashamed that we English have so soon quitted Your Majesty's service. . . . As to myself . . . I hope Your Majesty believes that a nobleman, having given his faith to a prince with so much affection as I have often shown, will not be inconstant in his profession nor fail of his word.'⁵⁰ A few years later, Essex expressed his view of Elizabeth's conduct of policy even more bluntly: 'I know I shall never do her service butt against her will'.⁵¹ These are hardly the sentiments of a typical favourite and powerfully demonstrate how far he had outgrown his youthful image as the queen's eager partner at cards.

Essex's ambition to dominate policy inevitably led him to focus on winning a seat on the Privy Council, which was dominated after the deaths of Leicester and Hatton by Lord Burghley. As the earl's former guardian, Burghley had long been a supporter of Essex, whom he saw as a natural ally for his own son, Robert Cecil (pls 18 and 21). However, Essex's political ambitions began to strain this bond because they imperilled Cecil's future. During 1591, these problems were solved by a compromise which Burghley and Hatton seem to have jointly urged upon the queen: Cecil gained a place on the Privy Council and Essex the military command in Normandy. Yet Hatton's death and Essex's newfound ambition 'to intend matters of state' pointed to inevitable conflict in the years to come, especially after the earl gained a seat on the Council in early 1593. The story of this clash and how it poisoned the last decade of Elizabeth's reign has been discussed elsewhere.⁵² For the present, however, a few points might be emphasized by way of conclusion.

Perhaps most obviously, the increasing rivalry between Essex and the Cecils helped to destroy the strong base of courtly support which had characterized the earl's rise to power. As the passing years removed key supporters like Walsingham, Hatton, Heneage and Hunsdon, Essex's own aggressiveness alienated men who rose to fill their places, such as Buckhurst, Cobham and Howard of Effingham. Moreover, unlike Leicester and now Robert Cecil, Essex failed to create a network of effective support among the women of the privy chamber.⁵³ In effect, as the decade progressed, Essex became ever more isolated and

dependent upon his favour with the queen. Ironically, this made his position increasingly like Raleigh's in the 1580s.

Secondly, the rivalry between Essex and the Cecils in the 1590s was an indication not only of the earl's drive for political influence but also of how great and pervasive was the power which Lord Burghley had built up during his long years of royal service. As the last of the 1580s triumvirate, Burghley retained a seniority and authority which commanded wide respect, even from Essex, until his death in August 1598. When Burghley pretended to retire from royal service in 1591, Elizabeth simply refused to let her 'Sir Spirit' go.⁵⁴ Thirteen years older than the queen, he became almost a kind of surrogate uncle to her – grave, loyal and increasingly curmudgeonly. In some senses, Burghley might almost be called a minister-favourite, for his long and close personal relationship with the queen was combined with an unprecedented collection of offices, including those of lord treasurer, master of the court of wards and (until July 1596) acting secretary of state. However, Burghley himself clearly distinguished his own position from that of a courtly favourite like Essex. The validity of this distinction, which was both deliberately self-effacing and self-serving, would require a lengthy discussion in itself. Nevertheless, even if Burghley was not a minister-favourite, the victory of his son in 1601 (which cost Essex his life) created the conditions for Sir Robert Cecil to become precisely such a figure. After this, Elizabeth had no more courtly favourites in the mould of Leicester, Hatton or Essex. Although Raleigh lived to see his great rival executed, neither he nor anyone else could match Cecil's influence in the last years of Elizabeth's reign.

Finally, what do events in the 1580s suggest about the interrelationship between Elizabeth and her leading male favourites? Sir Robert Naunton, whose writings have been so influential upon subsequent views of Elizabeth and her reign, claimed that 'she was absolute and sovereign mistress of her grace and that those to whom she distributed her favours were never more than tenants at will and stood on no better ground than her princely pleasure and their own good behaviour'.⁵⁵ To a degree, this is true. Most royal offices, for example, were bestowed upon their holders only 'during the queen's pleasure' and some key posts were granted without any patent at all. However, events in the 1580s suggest that Naunton's image of an all-powerful Elizabeth in 'absolute and sovereign' control of her court is unrealistic. Since Naunton wrote with more than half an eye to events in the 1620s, this judgement is perhaps not surprising.⁵⁶

The rise of Essex and his struggle with Raleigh demonstrate that the queen was not always fully in control of her royal favour. At the very least, she was sometimes prepared to let others make demands upon it in a remarkably insistent and aggressive manner. Even when her commands were flagrantly ignored, as in the case of Essex's involvement in the Portugal expedition, she also proved unable, or unwilling, to punish the offending party in any serious way. In part, this may be a reflection of Elizabeth's own personality and circum-

stances. It may also be a demonstration of what it actually meant to be a royal favourite – men who could do things that other subjects could not dare and yet still be forgiven for their actions. However, this essay has shown that Elizabeth's various dealings with her favourites must also be seen in the context of her relationship with that intimate little community which comprised her court, and especially the one or two dozen men and women who comprised its most influential members. It is only in this wider human context that the complexities of Elizabeth's relations with her individual favourites can be fully understood.

Notes

1. S. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London and New York, 1996), ch. 7; W. T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572–1588* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 243–81; *idem*, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1993), ch. 16; M. Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574–1581' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989), *passim*.
2. S. Doran, 'Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561–1581', *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), pp. 270–1.
3. See, for example, R. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1977); J. Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth: Studies in Elizabethan and Renaissance Culture* (Woodbridge and Totowa, NJ, 1980); P. Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London and New York, 1989); J. N. King, 'Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990), pp. 30–74.
4. S. P. Cerasano and M. Wynne-Davies, 'From Myself, My Other Self I Turned', in Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, eds, *Gloriana's Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance* (Hemel Hempstead, 1992), p. 12, and the sources cited there.
5. Doran, 'Juno versus Diana', p. 266.
6. S. Adams, 'The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. III. The Countess of Leicester's Collection', *Archives*, 23 (1996), p. 3.
7. C. Merton, '"The Forgotten Crowd of Common Beauties": The Women Who Served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, 1553–1603' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1992), *passim*. A less confident view of the role of women at court is presented by P. Wright, 'A Change in Direction: The Ramifications of a Female Household, 1558–1603', in D. Starkey, ed., *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 147–72.
8. C. Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Harlow, 1988), pp. 125ff.
9. Leicester was Elizabeth's 'eyes', while Hatton was variously called her 'mutton', 'lids' or 'bellweather'.
10. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, ch. 3; A. Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1991), pp. 111ff.; S. Adams, 'Queen Elizabeth's Eyes at Court: The Earl of Leicester', in D. Starkey, ed., *Rivals in Power: Lives and Letters of the Great Tudor Dynasties* (London, 1990), p. 157.
11. See, for example, P. E. J. Hammer, 'Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex', in J. Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 76–7.
12. Sir Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta regalia or observations on Queen Elizabeth, her times and favourites*, ed. J. S. Cerovski (Washington, London and Toronto, 1985), p. 41.
13. Hammer, 'Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex', *passim*. Cf. S. Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party: English Politics, 1550–1603', *History Today*, 32 (December 1982), pp. 33–9; *idem*, 'Eliza Enthroned? The Court and its Politics', in C. Haigh, ed., *Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, 1984), pp. 55–77.
14. 'The difference and disparity between the estates and conditions of George, duke of Buckingham, and Robert, earl of Essex', printed in *Reliquiae Wottoniae: or a collection of lives, letters [etc.] . . . by . . . Sir Henry Wotton*, 4th edn (London, 1685), p. 188.
15. S. Adams, 'Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court', in R. G. Asch and A. M. Birke, eds,

- Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c.1450–1650* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 283–7; *idem*, ‘Eliza Enthroned?’, p. 63.
16. D. Wilson, *Sweet Robin: A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1533–1588* (London, 1981), p. 244; A. Kendall, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester* (London, 1980), pp. 198–9.
 17. For allegations about Elizabeth’s sexuality, see C. Levin, ‘The Heart and Stomach of a King’: *Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 1994), ch. 4.
 18. See, for example, K. Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (London, 1991), pp. 16–18, 146–8.
 19. *Dictionary of National Biography*, sub. ‘Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex’.
 20. A. G. Vines, *Neither Fire Nor Steel: Sir Christopher Hatton* (Chicago, 1978), pp. xiii–xv and *passim*; MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy*, pp. 441, 448–55; W. J. Tighe, ‘The Gentlemen Pensioners in Elizabethan Politics and Government’ (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984), p. 389.
 21. D. C. Peck, ‘Raleigh, Sidney, Oxford and the Catholics, 1579’, *Notes and Queries*, 223 (1978), pp. 427–30; E. Edwards, *The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, 2 vols (London, 1868), i, pp. 37ff.; P. Lefranc, *Sir Walter Raleigh écrivain* (Paris, 1968), pp. 28–9; S. W. May, *Sir Walter Raleigh* (Boston, 1989), pp. 3–6.
 22. Edwards, *Raleigh*, i, p. 43; *ibid.*, ii, pp. 17–18; May, *Raleigh*, p. 4.
 23. Edwards, *Raleigh*, i, p. 46.
 24. Public Record Office, State Papers (hereafter PRO, SP) 46/20, fol. 229v. For grants to Raleigh, see J. H. Adamson and H. F. Folland, *The Shepherd of the Ocean: An Account of Sir Walter Raleigh and his Times* (Boston, 1969), pp. 100–3.
 25. See, for example, S. W. May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and their Contexts* (Columbia, Miss., 1991), pp. 119–22, 318–21.
 26. *Calendar of Letters and State Papers, Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*, iii, ed. M. A. S. Hume (London, 1896), pp. 537–8 (hereafter CSPSpan).
 27. See, for example, R. W. Kenny, *Elizabeth’s Admiral: The Political Career of Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, 1536–1624* (Baltimore, 1970), pp. 25ff.; PRO, SP 12/178, fol. 24r.
 28. Longleat, Devereux Ms. 5, fol. 69r; Christ Church, Oxford, Evelyn Ms. 285b, unfol., entry for 7, 8 and 20 September 1585. I am grateful to the Marquess of Bath for permission to cite from the papers at Longleat. The date of Essex’s arrival at court is conventionally, but wrongly, placed almost a year earlier.
 29. Edwards, *Raleigh*, ii, pp. 33–4.
 30. P. Collinson, ‘The Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis and the Elizabethan Polity’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1994), pp. 51–92.
 31. John Stow, *The annales of England . . . until this present yeere 1601* (London, 1601), p. 1243. Modern commentators erroneously date Leicester’s promotion to 1584 or 1585.
 32. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC (hereafter FSL), Ms. L.a.39. This is printed in W. B. Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex, in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I, 1540–1646*, 2 vols (London, 1853), i, p. 185.
 33. Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter BLO), Tanner Ms. 76, fol. 29v (printed in Devereux, i, p. 188).
 34. FSL, L.a.39 (printed in Devereux, i, pp. 185–6).
 35. CSPSpan, iv, p. 504.
 36. PRO, SP 12/219, fol. 115r.
 37. Edwards, *Raleigh*, i, p. 50; Adamson and Folland, *Shepherd of the Ocean*, p. 46.
 38. British Library (hereafter BL), Lansdowne Ms. 96, fol. 69r; F. M. Jones, *Mountjoy: 1563–1606: The Last Elizabethan Deputy* (Dublin and London, 1958), pp. 23, 187–8.
 39. F. J. Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 260–1.
 40. BLO, Tanner Ms. 76, fol. 29v (printed in Devereux, i, p. 188).
 41. For example, she rebuked Essex as a ‘rasshe & temerarious youthe’ even as late as January 1594 (Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 650, fol. 26r). See also her riposte to Sir Robert Cecil in February 1603; E. Jenkins, *Elizabeth the Great* (London, 1958), p. 323.
 42. Sir Henry Wotton, *A parallel betweene Robert late earle of Essex and George late duke of Buckingham* (London, 1641), p. 3.
 43. Edwards, *Raleigh*, ii, p. 41.
 44. BL, Egerton Ms. 2026, fol. 32r.
 45. University College London, Ogden Ms. 7/41, fol. 19r. ‘To cocker’ means to pamper or coddle.
 46. *Ibid.*, fol. 34v.

47. BL, Lansdowne Ms. 96, fol. 69r. Modern commentators have universally (but erroneously) assumed that Ralegh did replace Hatton in 1587.
48. Arthur Throckmorton's diary entry suggests Ralegh married in early or mid-November 1591: A. L. Rowse, *Ralegh and the Throckmortons* (London, 1962), p. 160. Cf. P. Lefranc, 'La Date du Mariage de Sir Walter Ralegh: un document inédit', *Etudes anglaises*, 9 (1956), pp. 193–211.
49. Rowse, *Ralegh and the Throckmortons*, p. 161.
50. E. M. Tenison, *Elizabethan England*, 12 vols in 13 (Leamington Spa, 1933–61), viii, pp. 573–4.
51. Hammer, 'Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex', pp. 79–80.
52. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 72ff; W. T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588–1603* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 472ff.
53. Merton, 'The Forgotten Crowd of Common Beauties', ch. 6.
54. BL, Reserved Photocopy 2895.
55. *Fragmenta regalia*, p. 42.
56. Adams, 'Favourites and Factions', pp. 281–3.

4

Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth-Century English Court

LINDA LEVY PECK

In 1636 a Dutch broadside used the powerful image of the sleeping prince and his corrupt favourite to rouse the English to war against Spain. While the English fleet lies at anchor at Dover, Charles I dozes in the chair of state. Louis XIII tries to wake Charles to defend the Palatinate but ‘De Engelsche gespaniolezeerde Favorit’ fends him off, supported by the Spanish ambassador offering a trunk filled with gold plate (pl. 11).¹ The print situates the royal favourite both in the structure of the early modern court and in the politics of the Thirty Years War.

The dominance of Cardinal Richelieu, the Count-Duke of Olivares and the Duke of Buckingham (pls 34–40) in seventeenth-century European court politics forced many contemporaries and later historians to analyse the reasons for their hold on power. In his seminal article on the minister–favourite in the seventeenth century, Jean Bérenger emphasized structural changes in the seventeenth-century European state to explain the political control wielded by Richelieu.² Most recently, A. Lloyd Moote has argued that the conjuncture of a weak king, state-building and warfare provides the context for the minister–favourite across early modern Europe.

Yet James VI and I (1603–25) (pl. 19) was *not* a weak king and Britain was at peace from 1604 to 1618. Therefore, in this essay I wish to complicate Bérenger’s and Moote’s model. Several areas of structural change in the early seventeenth-century English court affected the power of the favourite beyond the conjuncture of a weak king and warfare. The centralization and diversification of royal bounty, in particular the increase in monopolies, manufacturing and licensing, extended court favour into everyday life. In addition, the creation of multiple kingdoms and colonies abroad widened the stage for the favourite. Furthermore, the favourite’s control and marketing of royal favour generated a language of complaint that went beyond the traditional terms of abuse. In part this was due to the issues of intimacy and display that Bérenger and Moote omit from their analysis of the role of the favourite in the early modern state.³

We also need to enquire whether the French model proposed by Bérenger and Moote should be applied to Britain in the first half of the seventeenth century. For the historiographical use of the term ‘minister–favourite’ to distinguish those who exercised important control over policy from the personal favourites of the monarch needs to be interrogated.⁴ How favourites are named – *mignons*, *privados*, *validos*, minister–favourites – is not only an analytical tool but also an ideological construction, one that indicates the cluster of positive and negative attributes ascribed to them by contemporaries and later historians. Indeed, somewhat different historiographies of the favourite have emerged from the differing structures of the medieval and early modern British, French and Spanish states.⁵ Perhaps because of Spain’s more elaborate conciliar structure and secretariat⁶ Philip III ordered in 1612 that the will of the Duke of Lerma should be obeyed as if it were his own, power never enjoyed by Richelieu or Buckingham.

Characteristic of the favourite is the monopoly of royal favour, real or imagined, based on the personal relationship between the king and the favourite.⁷ Favourites were, of course, well-known components of court societies, acknowledged in the contemporary advice literature of kings such as Charles V, Philip II and James VI and I, their trajectory dutifully documented in the correspondence of foreign ambassadors and writers of domestic newsletters.⁸

Piers Gaveston, favourite to Edward II in the 1320s, lived on well into the seventeenth century, galvanized by the new print culture, in a literature of complaint. Plays and tracts about Gaveston were reprinted at moments of political tension in both England and France.⁹ Sir Robert Naunton, looking back to the Elizabethan court in the 1630s, wrote:

Her ministers and instruments of state . . . were favourites and not minions, such as acted more by her own princely rules and judgement than by their own will and appetites . . . for we find no Gaveston, Vere or Spencer to have swayed alone during forty-four years.¹⁰

‘The Kingly Cocke’ (see pl. 11), the broadside with which this essay began, illustrates the role of the Duke of Buckingham, the Stuarts’ greatest favourite. There are, however, significant differences between the Dutch and English versions of the print. Dorothy George argues that the Dutch print alludes to Sir Francis Cottington, formerly English ambassador to Spain, but the English version labels the favourite as the Duke of Buckingham. Moreover, George notes that the English version of the Spanish ambassador’s speech refers, mistakenly, not to Charles but to James. This confusion of identity of both king and favourite demonstrates, I would argue, that James and Buckingham, the king devoted to peace and the favourite devoted to entertainment and display, were appropriated as emotive icons into the 1630s. Thus ‘the English Favorit’ gives a more elaborate speech in the English than in the Dutch version, stressing his

concentration on consumption and display, corruption by Spanish gold and disdain for war, saying to Louis XIII:

Holla, French King, who taught you to be so rude,
So near our King who sleepes thus to intrude?

...
Tis better dance, be merrie, jovial still,
With Spanish pistollets our purses fill,
Better with pictures gaie to feed our sight
Than naked corpses gor'd with blood in fight
In hunting spend our time than all in vaine
With losse of men and monie warre with Spaine.¹¹

Buckingham had been assassinated eight years before, but the cluster of attributes ascribed to him by the broadside (and by other contemporary literature), his intimacy with the king, consumption, display, corruption and leanings towards Spain continued to resonate in contemporary propaganda.

'Our Purses Fill': The Expansion of Royal Bounty'

What was new in the narrative of the rise and fall of the favourite in the seventeenth century? Structurally, the minister-favourite who oversaw the dispensation of crown patronage emerged in England out of the centralization of the state and the secularization of church property in the sixteenth century that allowed successive Tudor monarchs to re-endow the crown itself and create the court as the centre for favour. From the reign of Henry VIII, the crown used statute and proclamation to regulate the use of land, capital and labour, and to control the prices and terms of trade, of both imports and exports.

At the same time, Renaissance prescriptive literature increasingly stressed the importance of liberality as a central attribute of monarchy.¹² When James VI of Scotland became King of England in 1603 he found himself monarch of a multiple kingdom of England, Scotland and Ireland with a much larger clientele clamouring for patronage and the imperative to increase his bounty. Patronage relationships, which permeated the society, were the means by which the crown rewarded local elites in whose hands local government rested.

I have argued elsewhere that the early seventeenth century saw an expansion in royal bounty in response to the pressure of demand from the increasing numbers of those who thought themselves entitled to royal favour. Lloyd Moote notes a similar phenomenon in France, suggesting that 'Richelieu's generation of fortune-seeking nobles of sword and robe extraction . . . were more frantic in their quest for favour than the tamed nobility of Louis XIV's Versailles'.¹³ If the English population doubled between 1541 and 1641, the numbers of those who could consider themselves 'gentle' grew even more

dramatically. And they owned an increasing share of landed wealth due to the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries as well as royal land sales to finance war.¹⁴ The expanding number of justices of the peace in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries suggests the growing numbers of gentry whose support the crown needed as local governors and who, in turn, brought pressure on court patronage relationships to gain access to land and economic privileges, such as licences and customs farms. In particular the demand for offices, regarded by judicial decision as private property, expanded in response not only to the state's need but to the demands of growing numbers of the political elite.¹⁵

Why did James deliberately create a monopoly of favour? In *Basilikon Doron* James VI and I had warned his son Prince Henry not to:

use one in all things, lest he waxe proude, and be envied by his fellowes. . . . Acquaint your selfe so with all the honest men of your Barrons and Gentlemen, and be in your giving accesse so open and affable to every ranke of honest persons . . . to make their owne suites to you themselves, and not to employ the great Lordes their intercessors; for intercession to Saints is Papistrie.¹⁶

In the 1590s when he wrote *Basilikon Doron* James was concerned with the overweening power of the Scottish nobility that he had recently tamed. Nevertheless, in the 1620s the strength of Buckingham's control over the king was such that contemporaries described Buckingham as a good angel, and even a saint, as he served as a broker between the petitioner and the king.¹⁷

King James deliberately chose to place the monopoly of favour in the hands of a single favourite between 1612 and 1628 because of the increase in royal bounty. James' own personal inclination, experience and even perhaps emulation of foreign practice, I would argue, led him to place the distribution of his bounty in the hands first of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset (pl. 12), and then of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, each of whom he created so as to be dependent only on himself. Somerset and Buckingham played different roles from that of Esme Stuart, James' French cousin, in Scotland because the economy and political structures over which they exercised control were strikingly different. In Scotland Esme Stuart's role as personal favourite countered the influence of the nobility and the kirk.¹⁸ In the new British imperium Somerset and Buckingham oversaw the dispensation of royal bounty on a much larger scale and a much larger canvas. While favourites continued to receive pensions and lands from the crown they now were also rewarded with monopolies and the brokerage of the sale of titles and offices.¹⁹

James I first met the young Scot Robert Carr after he was injured at a royal tournament. By 1610 Carr's importance was noted by other courtiers, who emphasized the personal intimacy between him and the prince.

Robert Carr is now most likely to win the Prince's affection. . . . The Prince leaneth on his arm, pinches his cheek, smoothes his ruffled garment. . . . We are almost worn out in our endeavors to keep pace with this fellow in his duty and labour to gain favour, but all in vain; where it endeth I cannot guess, but honours are talked of speedily for him.²⁰

By 1613 the Scottish knight had become Viscount Rochester and by 1614 the Earl of Somerset.

After the death of Salisbury in 1612 King James chose to do without a principal secretary of state, reasserting his own power by relying on the favourite, Carr, as his secretary. James recalled that he placed the monopoly of patronage in Carr's hands deliberately: 'ye have deserved more trust and confidence of me than ever man did: in secrecy above all flesh, in feeling and unpartial respect, as well to my honour in every degree as to my profit'.²¹

Carr attended the king and conveyed his instructions to the lord privy seal, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton. Indeed, between 1611 and 1613 the Howards, led by Northampton and Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, the lord treasurer, worked consistently to attach the favourite firmly to themselves. Northampton described Carr as the 'primum mobile of our court, by whose motion all the other spheres must move, or else stand still; the bright sun of our firmament, at whose splendour . . . all our marigolds of the court open or shut'. Seekers of office were told to contact Carr and Northampton; and Northampton wrote to one candidate for the secretary of state: 'I am very glad to hear of the good correspondence between you and noble Rochester and make no doubt but it will be fortunate to you in the end of the banquet.'

Carr controlled royal patronage in conjunction with his allies the Howards. For example in 1611 when the title of baronet was created for sale, Cecil, Northampton, Carr and others helped to select the grantees. The power the king entrusted to Carr extended beyond the bedchamber and Carr played a role in the parliamentary sessions of 1610–11 and 1614. King James himself acknowledged the political reach of Carr and the Howards. 'Do not all court graces and place come through your office as Chamberlain, and rewards through your father-in-law's that is Treasurer? Do not ye two, as it were, hedge in all the Court with a manner of necessity to depend upon you?'²²

After his fall, Carr recalled his power. At the death of John Holles, Earl of Clare, Somerset told Gervase Holles:

I was once upon the top, when I was able to confer favours, and I did so to some (though I must say to my Lord of Clare I never did one considerable courtesy; yet I must tell you had I stood he had risen) but in my calamity and when I was underfoot (whether I looke upon your nation or my owne country-men that I had deserved well of) I found not one faithfull freind but my Lord of Clare.²³

Nevertheless Carr never enjoyed the extensive control of patronage and policy enjoyed by the Duke of Buckingham, who succeeded him in the king's favour in 1615.²⁴

While King James used Buckingham, as he did Carr, to filter petitions, Roger Lockyer notes the intensity of the king's dependence on the new favourite. Thus James recognized Buckingham's 'continued attendance upon my service, your daily employments in the same, and the incessant swarm of suitors importunately hanging upon you without discretion or distinction of times'.²⁵ Buckingham was the only English or Scottish favourite to achieve the power of the great continental minister-favourites, Cardinal Richelieu and the Count-Duke of Olivares.

The issue of the favourite was much on the minds of their contemporaries when Sir Francis Bacon (pl. 31), then attorney general, wrote to Buckingham in 1616 that 'it is no new thing for Kings and Princes to have their *privadoes*, their favourites, their friends'.²⁶ But Bacon was writing to Buckingham before the age of Richelieu and Olivares. His use of the term *privado* suggests that he had in mind Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma, who in 1616 was still favourite, even if in decline, to Philip III. Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to England, claimed that James I had said of Lerma that no king in the world ever had such a minister (pl. 33).²⁷ The Howards and their clients were Spanish pensioners. Northampton sent Lerma a jewel via Gondomar. Indeed it is possible that James patterned the favourite's monopoly on the model offered by Lerma as the king centralized bounty in the hands of Somerset in the household, and his allies the Howards on the Privy Council; and later refused to name a secretary of state after the death of Salisbury.²⁸

Lerma may also have served as the model for both Carr and Buckingham. Display was an essential feature of the performance of almost every favourite. But why did Somerset and Buckingham collect Italian Renaissance, Mannerist and Baroque painting? It was not unusual for earlier ministers to have important collections made up of tapestries, jewels and portraits of the great. Wolsey and Leicester come immediately to mind.²⁹ But the consummate collector of the period was the Duke of Lerma, whom Sarah Schroth calls 'the first large-scale aristocratic collector in Spain'.³⁰

The inventory taken at Somerset's arrest in 1615 documents not only his gilded wardrobe but also his important art collection (pl. 13). Daniel Nys and Sir Dudley Carleton began to put together collections for Somerset the same year.³¹ Who was the model? Surely the Duke of Lerma. Schroth points out that Buckingham visited Lerma's collection in 1623 and suggests that later royal favourites, in particular the Duke of Buckingham and Cardinal Richelieu, followed the pattern established by Lerma.³²

Bacon's advice to Buckingham also offers important comment on what was new about the emergence of the minister-favourite in the seventeenth century; why the position appeared; how power was grasped, sustained and lost. Bacon

described the increased span of the seventeenth-century favourite's control, ranging from law, matters of state, diplomacy and war to foreign plantations, colonies and trade.

Bacon's very practical counsel to Buckingham focused on how to give favour on the king's behalf and thereby control the essential flow of patronage that linked the crown and its elites and the centre and localities.³³ It also reflects Sir Henry Wotton's statement that Buckingham was 'illiterate'.³⁴ Reflecting practice under the Cecilian regime (and specifically that of the Earl of Dorset), Bacon told Buckingham to insist that important petitions be put in writing and to have his secretary appoint a day for their answer. Secondly, he advised Buckingham to spend an hour or two a day sorting the petitions (Bacon noted that this would not be too hard to do because Buckingham's secretary could 'draw lines under the matter'). Buckingham should then refer these to specialists, not just his private friends. By spending another hour or two a week perusing the petitions and opinions of the referees, 'within a short time you shall be able to judge of the fidelities of those you trust and return answers to petitions of all natures as an oracle'.

Like Lerma, Somerset and later Richelieu, Buckingham did not attend the Privy Council often. As Somerset was advised 'to set such a sharp edge upon your Lordship's favour as may cut off impediments',³⁵ so Buckingham demanded fidelity from his clients and, like Richelieu, singular fidelity at that. At the beginning of the new reign in 1625 Buckingham's personal ascendancy was transferred from James VI and I to Charles I, and one courtier wrote to another that 'if you saw the fashion of his treating of suitors (whereof he is as full as ever), and with what elevation he comports himself with the greatest . . . you would say he hath gained le hault bout and that he knows himself fixed past jeopardy of relapsing'.³⁶ Again like Richelieu and Olivares, Buckingham and his allies fashioned plans to reform royal administration, specifically the household, the navy and the Treasury.³⁷ In the 1620s, Buckingham controlled an administration that tried to restructure the finances and military strength of the early modern British state.

Although James began to create new peers from the beginning of the reign, further expansion coincided with Buckingham's rise in 1615. In Britain the sale of titles was a means to raise money in the absence of parliamentary support or of a *paulette*, the French tax on offices. Between 1615 and 1628 the king created forty-five more peers and the peerage came to total 126, more than double the size of Elizabeth's peerage. The size of the Irish and Scottish nobility increased too. The sale of titles was handled by Buckingham and his agents. Sir John Holles, a disappointed client of Somerset's, bought first a barony and then an earldom. His kinsman Gervase Holles described why:

For this dignity he payd the then favourite (the Duke of Buckingham) ten thousand poundes sterling. For after the entrance of King James the sale of honours was become a trade at Court; and whilst that Duke lived scarce any man acquired any honour but such as were either his kindred or had the fortune (or

misfortune) to marry with his kindred or mistresses, or paid a round summe of mony for it. . . . I have heard the Earle of Clare . . . often inveigh bitterly against it, and he would usually call it temporall simony. I remember I once tooke the liberty (hearing him so earnest upon that subject) to aske him why he would purchase himselfe seeing he condemned the King for selling. He answered ‘that he observed merit to be no medium to an honorary reward, that he saw divers persons who he thought deserved it as little as he (either in their persons or estates) by that meanes leap over his head, and therefore seeing the market open and finding his purse not unfurnished for it he was perswaded to ware his mony as other men had done’.³⁸

The favourite was situated in a culture of exchange that permeated early modern society in which gift-giving sat uneasily beside the market. Creating a market for titles and offices was an allocative device that addressed the frenetic clamour for favour. Nevertheless, the sale of titles was one of the charges brought against Buckingham in the parliament of 1626 where one of his chief accusers was the ungrateful Earl of Clare.

Most importantly, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a changed framework for the scope of the favourite because of the state’s increasing regulation of the economy, the development of projects designed to diversify the economy, and the privatization of power in the hands of informal agents of the state. The crown, concerned to promote employment and economic growth in order to prevent disorder, established policies both to discourage imports and to encourage home industries, a policy known today as import substitution. The term ‘monopoly’ denoted a variety of activities, including privileges granted by the sovereign for new inventions and exclusive trade in some commodity.

This expansion of government regulations and monopolies shaped a pattern of behaviour known as rent-seeking that exploited government regulation ‘as if it were part of the market sphere’.³⁹ Rent-seeking was a policy encouraged in sixteenth-century European prescriptive literature in order to avoid taxing the commons. In the supposititious *Advice of Charles V to Philip II* which circulated in late sixteenth-century Europe, Charles V advised: ‘When occasion is offered rather to sett hand to the sale of offices, and rents, then to beate your heade about any newe kinds of aggrievance to the people.’⁴⁰

In the early seventeenth century, monopolies were increasingly organized by the favourite – first by Carr and then by Buckingham. Beginning in the 1580s, patents had been granted not only to establish new industries but also to raise moneys for the crown and to reward courtiers. An especially large number of patents were granted in the period between 1610 and 1620, between the failure of the Great Contract and the meeting of the parliament of 1621 which strongly attacked monopolies. By 1621 the distribution of monopolies as bounty had become as crucial to the crown as the encouragement of home industry. Yet the favourites merely implemented royal policy.⁴¹ Rent-seeking behaviour continued to characterize both petitioners and the crown

even in the absence of the minister-favourite so long as mercantilist policies persisted.

Along with monopolies emerged the privatization of law and order. The judges reluctantly agreed that the crown could reward private individuals for the prosecution of penal statutes after the king had received forfeiture under the law. Despite promises to the contrary in *The Book of Bounty*, the king's proclamation in 1610 that he would limit the distribution of favour, the crown began to farm its own judicial functions on a larger scale. Whether with monopolies or with the farming of the enforcement of penal statutes, such grants under Queen Elizabeth and James were increasingly accorded to the political elite. In Britain colonial ventures of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries expanded the reach of the favourite. Thus Leicester insisted that his battery works included the patent for Ireland; Essex made knights on the battlefield in Ireland; Somerset and his allies helped to shape the planters for Ulster; and Buckingham's clients such as Francis Blundell organized the sale of the Irish baronetcy for the duke.

Patronage networks spanned the multiple kingdoms of early modern states. Sharon Kettering argues that Cardinal Richelieu crafted networks that integrated the metropolis and the provinces, allying provincial leaders by making them his clients, creating clienteles dependent on himself, taking away clients from great nobles.⁴² John Elliott describes how Olivares used his patronage in the multiple monarchy of the Spanish Habsburgs. Though Buckingham certainly tried to assert his power over provincial governors he was less successful, as the failure of the Forced Loan demonstrated. Patronage worked as a means of integration when other issues were less important than the benefits bestowed. But the complaint of corruption that emanated from the venal practices of the early modern monarchy was destabilizing politically. In 1626 the House of Commons tried to impeach Buckingham. Charles I dissolved parliament rather than allow the removal of the favourite. For the king the administrative role of the seventeenth-century favourite was only part of the story.

Gender and the Court: Family, Sex and Marriage

Bacon underlined the familial and personal aspect of the minister-favourite long before the House of Commons tried to impeach Buckingham for, among other things, promoting his relatives, a charge also levelled against Richelieu and Olivares.⁴³ Bacon wrote, 'For the affairs of Court, you are much better able to instruct yours than any man else can. . . . In the disposing of the offices and affairs of Court, the King hath a latitude for his affection, which in matters touching the public, he must deny to himself where he is more properly *Paterfamilias*; in the other *Pater Patriae*'.⁴⁴ That powerful combination of court, family and state was the domain of the seventeenth-century minister-favourite.

Early modern favourites differed in their age, function, previous connections at court, social origin and control over royal bounty. Thus the Duke of Lerma was a father figure to Philip III; the youthful Earl of Essex was presented to Elizabeth by his uncle the Earl of Leicester, her contemporary and greatest favourite. In a psychological study of the favourite, Elizabeth Marwick drew attention to the paternal and sibling models of the relationship of favourite to monarch.⁴⁵ Both Leicester and Essex had military pretensions. Henry Howard, an Essex adherent, wrote, ‘the time serveth now most fitly for expeditions of war which no man understands amounghe the councell in respect of the . . . sloth and rest of peace or if any did in former times, discontinuance and ease have cancelled it’.⁴⁶ Richelieu and Olivares oversaw the Thirty Years War. In contrast, Buckingham, fashioned in the form of a king who favoured peace, only saw service under Charles I at the Isle of Ré.⁴⁷ Buckingham effectively controlled patronage in the second half of James’ reign while Essex, who jeopardized his position at court by going off on expeditions, was able to garner few favours for his followers.⁴⁸

Where favourites resembled one another was on the matter of intimacy.⁴⁹ Indeed, intimacy was the key to the power of the favourite, whether the poetic ‘lovers’ of Queen Elizabeth, the physical lovers of James I or the friends of Charles I. Thus the power of the favourite was situated in the king’s privy chamber or, in the case of a queen regnant, in the household.⁵⁰ Often the favourite’s power was signalled by the possession of an important household office. If Richelieu was controller of the household of Marie de Médicis and Olivares was groom of the stole, in England the Earl of Essex and the Duke of Buckingham were masters of the horse and Robert Carr was gentleman of the bedchamber. Whether drawn from the nobility, like the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Essex, Cardinal Richelieu and the Count-Duke of Olivares, or younger sons of gentry like George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, or ‘foreigners’ like Concini and Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, the key to the power of the royal favourite was the perception that he had unique access to the monarch and to the allocation of royal bounty.

Buckingham was seen by contemporaries as the creation of James I. As Sir Henry Wotton, a client to both Essex and Buckingham, wrote:

the Duke of Buckingham had another kind of Germination; and surely had he been a Plant, he would have been reckoned the *Spontes Nascentes*, for he sprang without any help, by a kind of congenial composure (as we may term it) to the likeness of our late Sovereign and Master of ever blessed memory who taking him into his regard, taught him more and more to please himself, and moulded him (as it were) Platonically to his own *Idea*; delighting first in the choice of materials, because he found him susceptible of good form, and afterwards by degrees, as great Architects use to do, in the workmanship of his Regal hand. . . After he had hardened and polished him about ten years in the School of Observance (for so a Court is) and in the furnace of trial about himself (for he

was a King could peruse men as well as books) he made him the Associate of the heir apparent.⁵¹

The erotic aspect of Jacobean life has received less notice than it should from historians. The power of the favourite was inscribed on the king's two bodies: on the monarch himself and on the body politic. Simon Adams points out that Leicester's *Commonwealth* attacked not only his 'absolute reign' in court but also 'his spectacular sexual appetites'.⁵² Having prevented the French match,

this tyrant for his own private lucre (fearing lest hereby his ambition might be restrained and his treachery revealed) . . . gave out . . . that he was assured to her Majesty and consequently that all other princes must give over their suits for him. . . . Neither holdeth he any rule in his lust besides only the motion and suggestion of his own sensuality. Kindred, affinity, or any other band of consanguinity, religion, nor honesty taketh no place in his outrageous appetite. . . . given to procure love in others by conjuring, sorcery, and other such means . . . by the Italian ointment procured not many years past by his surgeon . . . whereby . . . he is able to move his flesh at all times, for keeping of his credit, howsoever his inability be otherwise for performance. . . . I am ashamed to have made mention of so base filthiness.⁵³

Such language was found not only in contemporary propaganda against Leicester. The erotic aspect of kings' relationships with their favourites is shown most strikingly in the Leaguer complaint literature about Henri III's *mignons* which used vivid accusations of sodomy to delegitimize the ruler.⁵⁴ Courtiers too were explicit. Northampton, who cemented the alliance between Carr and Frances Howard, wrote to the favourite: 'think not that I can find pain in that which gives me greatest pleasure which proceeds out of your pen and flows from your mind . . . though it were but what which a man takes in cracking a sweet nut to taste the kernel or but like the pain my Lady Frances shall feel when the sweet stream follows'.⁵⁵

At the same time the court of James I was perhaps the most uxorious court in England until that of Queen Victoria. Unlike Queen Elizabeth, King James encouraged the marriage of his courtiers, notably the Essex and Cecil groups, and, later, the marriage of both his and the queen's favourites, going so far as to force his bishops to declare the married Frances Howard a virgin, so that she could marry Somerset. Queen Anne sought a major role in the making and breaking of her husband's favourites. She pleaded with James to send Somerset away, a contemporary wrote, going so far as to threaten to return to Denmark. Of Buckingham she wrote, 'the king will teach him to despise and hardly entreat us all, that he may seem to be beholden to none but himself'. When the Howards attempted to replace the disgraced Somerset with another, the queen blocked him and favoured the rise of Buckingham.⁵⁶

James' letters to Buckingham demonstrate the overlapping of family, sex and marriage in the seventeenth-century court. He wrote to Buckingham in the hope that:

we may make at this Christmas a new marriage ever to be kept hereafter . . . as I desire only to live in this world for your sake, and that I had rather live banished in any part of the earth with you than live a sorrowful widow's life without you. And so God bless you, my sweet child and wife, and grant that ye may ever be a comfort to your dear dad and husband.⁵⁷

Reconsidering the Paradigm

How useful is the French paradigm? In order to support the French model of minister-favourite, Bérenger and Moote both suggest that Archbishop Laud (pl. 69) and Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (pl. 70), became minister-favourites after the death of Buckingham. In fact, neither Laud nor Wentworth can be considered minister-favourites since neither controlled 'the court'. As lord deputy of Ireland from 1632 to 1640, Wentworth spent most of his time after 1633 in the environs of Dublin. He did however insist on controlling Irish patronage and profiting from Irish monopolies.⁵⁸ He persuaded Charles I to agree 'that the places in the Deputy's gift, as well of the civil as the martial list, be left freely to his dispose; and that his Majesty will be graciously pleased not to pass to any upon suit made unto him here [in England]'.⁵⁹ Despite Laud's hold on the king's conscience he does not appear to have tried to control Charles' court patronage. Instead, after the death of Buckingham, whose influence spanned both court and state, the scope of the favourites retreated to the royal households of King Charles and Henrietta Maria, with power diffused among courtiers such as Hamilton and Holland who held positions in the household, in combination with leading officials such as Laud, Wentworth and Weston in church and state.⁶⁰

Further, even great favourites were not hegemonic. The power of Richelieu and Olivares was initially rooted in the queen and king's households.⁶¹ So too other great Tudor ministers had clients in the household even as they sought to control the Privy Council.⁶² The need to control both was understood by seventeenth-century monarchs, even those with great favourites. Thus Philip III, who had made Lerma his *valido*, insisted that Gondomar have confidants in the English Privy Council as well as the household. Contemporaries understood the importance of both foci of power. No one was able to span both after the death of Buckingham.

In conclusion, what was the significance of the emergence of the minister-favourite? Situated in the structure of the early modern state, the minister-favourite dealt with increasing pressure from clients on the patronage system. In addition, the favourite as collector and impresario of courtly entertainments celebrated the power of the king. Finally, the seventeenth-century favourite was

the focus of a literature of complaint, the English equivalent of the *Mazarinades*, pamphlets attacking Cardinal Mazarin, or, closer in time, those attacking Cardinal Richelieu.

In England, the language of the favourite that emerged in the fourteenth century was applied to the minister-favourites in the seventeenth century.⁶³ Many contemporaries understood the monarch's needs for friends he could trust to act as a buffer between the crown and the great nobility and as filters for petitions. At the same time the traditional attack on the rise of baseborn upstarts who gave the monarch evil counsel had a long shelf-life. It extended even to such unlikely characters as Judge Jeffreys, James II's hanging judge, called 'the unfortunate favourite' in a tract of 1690, and to colonial governors at the time of Bacon's rebellion in 1674 who were accused of having low-born favourites.⁶⁴

In particular, the reaction against the favourite was repeatedly demonstrated in the attack on monopolies in 1601, 1621 and 1624 and the unsuccessful attempt to impeach Buckingham in 1626. Elizabeth had said during the famous debate on monopolies in 1601:

yet did I never put my pen to any grant but upon pretext and semblance made me, that was for the good and avail of my subjects generally, though a private profit to some of my ancient servants, who have deserved well; but that my grants shall be made grievances to my people, and oppressions, to be privileged under color of our patents, our princely dignity shall not suffer it.⁶⁵

During the impeachment proceedings, Buckingham echoed her. In his reply we hear the voice of the seventeenth-century favourite. Buckingham responded:

He may without blame, receive and retain that which the liberal and bountiful hand of his master has freely conferred on him; and it is not without precedents both in ancient and modern times that one man, eminent in the esteem of his sovereign, has at one time held as great and as many offices. But when it shall be discerned that he shall falsify or corruptly use those places . . . or that the public shall suffer thereby . . . he will readily lay down at his royal feet not only his place and offices but his whole fortunes and his life to do him service.

Although Bacon had advised in 1616 that one aspect of the role of favourite was to fall from power to prevent political damage to the king, this counsel was ignored by both Buckingham and Charles.⁶⁶ In 1642, however, Charles I had to promise an outraged assembly to give up his favourites: 'the Prince may not make use of this high and perpetual power to the hurt of those for whose good he hath it, and make use of the name of public necessity for the gain of his private favourites'.⁶⁷

By 1659 a paradigmatic shift had taken place in both the position and analysis

of minister-favourites, one that focused less on the court and more on the state, and explicitly linked the position of minister-favourite to the state's control of money, arms and thereby loyalty. Thus William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, urged his pupil Charles II on the eve of his restoration to the English throne to emulate Cardinal Richelieu:

The Cardinal De Richelieu was the wisest and greatest statesman. . . . hee had butt two thinges, which hee did all, with all, which was money and Armes, saying if the money would not doe, the Armes would, and if the Armes fayled, the money would, and if They were singly to weake, Being Joyned they would Effecte moste thinges in this world for they are very few above the price of money.⁶⁸

It is significant that Newcastle advised Charles II not to have a Richelieu but to be a Richelieu. Buckingham was no Richelieu. But, if not Buckingham, then who? The Civil War and Protectorate devastated the court system. But there was a contemporary British statesman who was singularly successful with arms and money. We might speculate whether Oliver Cromwell, in fact, was not a Richelieu, a minister who most successfully put together arms and money and whose name for obvious reasons Newcastle does not mention. But then we are left with the question of whether it is possible to have a minister-favourite in the absence of a king. To pose the question helps to make the point that, while favourites played important roles in court society, they were possibly no more than epiphenomena in state formation.

Notes

1. British Museum, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires* i (London, 1978), #133.
2. Jean Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne: le problème du ministéariat au XVIIe siècle', *Annales*, 29 (1974), pp. 166–92. See also A. Lloyd Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister: A Comparative Study of the Favourite in Early Seventeenth-Century Politics', in Joseph Bergin and Laurence Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 23–5.
3. See Louis Montrose, 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery', *Representations*, 33 (1991), pp. 1–2.
4. Moote categorizes favourites as personal, political and minister-favourites: 'Richelieu as Chief Minister', p. 16. See also Roger Lockyer, 'An English Valido? Buckingham and James I', in Richard Ollard and Pamela Tudor-Craig, eds, *For Veronica Wedgwood These* (London, 1986), pp. 45–58, and Antonio Feros, 'Twin Souls: Monarchs and Favourites in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain', in Richard L. Kagan and G. Parker, eds, *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 27–47.
5. See for instance Francisco Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1963); J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984); Bergin and Brockliss, eds, *Richelieu and his Age*; Lockyer, 'An English Valido? Buckingham and James I', pp. 45–58.
6. On Spanish governmental structures see J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716* (London, 1963).
7. See Bérenger, 'Pour une enquête européenne', and Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister'. For a discussion of patronage see L. L. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London, 1990).
8. Karl Brandt, *The Emperor Charles V*, trans. C. V. Wedgwood (London, 1949), pp. 488, 490. Yale University, Beinecke Library, Osborne b. 31: Karl V, 'The summe of diverse directions of

- Government which Charles 5th lefte unto his sonne Philip the II K of Spaine' (see also British Library (hereafter BL), King's Ms. 166): 'Every man needs advice, and so I ask you to make Don Juan de Zuniga your watch and your alarm in all things. . . Sleep is often sweet and an alarum is commonly a nuisance; therefore remember that he acts only out of devotion and duty to me, and be grateful to him' (p. 488).
9. Michael Drayton, *Piers Gaveston Earle of Cornwall, His Life, Death and Fortune* (London, 1594?); E.F., *The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II, King of England, and Lord of Ireland with the Rise and Fall of his Great Favorites Gaveston and the Spencers Written by E.F. in the year of 1627* (London, 1680), Henry Viscount Falkland, *The History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II with Choice Political Observations On Him and His Unhappy Favorites, Gaveston & Spencer* (London, 1680), reprinted as *The Parallel or the History of . . . Edward the Second* (London, 1689). *L'histoire ou Fable de Pierre de Gaveston* (Paris, 1588), cited in Joseph Cady, 'The "Masculine Love" of the "Princes of Sodom", Practicing the Art of Ganymede at Henri III's Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and his Mignons in Pierre de L'Estoile's *Mémoires-Journaux*', in Konrad Eisenbichler and Jacqueline Murray, eds, *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* (Toronto, 1996), p. 140. For the translation of French complaint literature into English see for instance *The Character of an Ill-Court Favorite: Representing the Mischiefs that flow from Ministers of State when they are more great than good, the arts they use to seduce their masters, and the unhappiness of Princes, that are curs'd with such destructive servants* (London, 1601).
 10. Quoted in Simon Adams, 'Favourites and Factious at the Elizabethan Court', in Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450–1650* (Oxford, 1991), p. 281.
 11. British Museum, Prints and Drawings: 'The Kingly Cocke', 1636 (Dorothy George #133).
 12. See L. L. Peck, 'For a King not to be Bountiful Were a Fault', *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), pp. 31–61.
 13. See Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*. Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister', p. 26.
 14. Christopher Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England, 1500–1700*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1984), i, pp. 2, 142–58.
 15. James had the Scottish parliament pass a statute establishing procedures to insulate him from clients. The *Book of Bounty* (1610) excluded grants that were illegal or 'are fitt to be wholly to our owne use until our estate be repaired', including the benefits of penal law, royal land, leases and rents, leases in reversion, pensions and freedom from customs duties. Royal officials also considered 'a French ordinance concerning certain petitions and suits'. Were the king to make such grants, the secretary of state was not to expedite and the chancellor and keeper of the seals not to grant them. See Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, pp. 36–8.
 16. *The Political Works of James I*, ed. C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 25, 33, 50.
 17. See L. L. Peck, 'Benefits, Brokers and Beneficiaries: The Culture of Exchange in Seventeenth-Century England', in Bonnelyn Young Kunze and Dwight D. Brautigam, eds, *Court, Country and Culture* (Rochester, 1992), pp. 109–28. In retrospect, such language was also applied to Somerset by Anthony Weldon: 'Lord, how the great men flocked them to see him, and to offer to his shrine in such abundance.' Robert Ashton, ed., *James I by his Contemporaries* (London, 1969), p. 118.
 18. James Melville wrote in his diary: 'That year arrived Monsieur d'Obignie from France, with instructions and devices from the House of Guise, and with many French fashions and toys; and in effect, with a plain course of Papistry, to subvert the estate of the Kirk new planted both with true doctrine and discipline.' Quoted in Ashton, ed., *James I by his Contemporaries*, pp. 115–17. 'Put never a forrainer, in any principall office of estate: for that will never faile to stir up sedition and envie in the countrymen's hearts, both against you and him: But (as I said before) if God provide you with more countries then this; choose the borne-men of every countrey, to bee your cheif counsellors therein.' *Political Works of James I*, ed. McIlwain, p. 32.
 19. Similarly, Richelieu enjoyed not only the liberality of Marie de Médicis and Louis XIII but also the benefits of state regulation, specifically provincial governorships, participation in the tax farms and rentes of a variety of types. See Joseph Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (New Haven, 1985), *passim*.
 20. Thomas Birch, *The Court and Times of James I*, 2 vols (London, 1849), i, pp. 390–7, Lord Thomas Howard to Sir John Harrington, *Nugae Antiquae*, 2 vols (London, 1804), i, pp. 390–7.
 21. G. P. V. Akrigg, ed., *Letters of James I* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 339–40.
 22. *Ibid.*, pp. 339–40.
 23. Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family, 1493–1656*, Camden Society, 3rd series, 55 (1937), p. 113.

24. See Maurice Lee, *Great Britain's Solomon* (Champaign–Urbana, 1990), pp. 233–60; Peter Seddon, 'Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 4 (1970), pp. 46–68.
25. Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592–1628* (London and New York, 1981), pp. 55, 28.
26. James Spedding, ed., *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, 7 vols (London, 1861–74), vi, p. 14. Bacon discusses favourites in his *Essays* on 'Ambition', 'Fame', 'Friendship' and 'Envy'. 'Filthy privado' is also used in *Leicester's Commonwealth* to describe Leicester's servant who helped convince Eric of Denmark that the queen was assured to Leicester. *Leicester's Commonwealth*, ed. D. C. Peck (Athens, Ohio, 1985), p. 80.
27. Public Record Office, State Papers 31/12/34, fol. 114, 5 October 1613. Gondomar's correspondence with Philip III and the Duke of Lerma underscores the power of the Howards and of Somerset, who were Spanish pensioners, and later notes the moment of Somerset's fall and Buckingham's rise.
28. On Lerma see Patrick Williams, 'Lerma, Old Castile and the Travels of Philip III of Spain', *History*, 73 (1988), pp. 379–97; 'Lerma, 1618: Dismissal or Retirement', *European History Quarterly*, 15 (1989), pp. 307–32; Antonio Feros, 'The King's Favorite, the Duke of Lerma: Power, Wealth and Court Culture during the Reign of Philip III of Spain, 1598–1621' (PhD thesis, The Johns Hopkins University, 1994).
29. See, for example, Tom Campbell, 'Cardinal Wolsey's Tapestry Collection', *Antiquaries Journal*, 76 (1996), pp. 73–137.
30. Sarah Schroth, 'The Private Picture Collection of the Duke of Lerma' (PhD thesis, New York University, 1990), pp. 4, 99–100.
31. On Carr see Peter Seddon, 'Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 14 (1970), pp. 46–68; A. R. Braumüller, 'Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset as Collector and Patron', in L. L. Peck, ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 230–50. Timothy Wilks, 'The Picture Collection of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset (c. 1587–1645), Reconsidered', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 1 (1989), pp. 167–77.
32. Sarah Schroth, 'Private Picture Collection of the Duke of Lerma', pp. 4, 99–100.
33. For recent work on patronage see Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*; Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford, 1986); A. Maćzak, ed., *Klientelsysteme im Europa der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1988).
34. Sir Henry Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, 3rd edn (London, 1672), p. 173.
35. BL, Cotton Ms. Titus C VI, fol. 110, Northampton to Carr, before November 1613.
36. Quoted in Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 169.
37. See Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, pp. 106–33.
38. Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family, 1493–1656*, p. 99. Seven years later he paid another £5,000 to become an earl. Later he was a leader in the effort to impeach Buckingham in the House of Lords. See Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, pp. 190–6.
39. Rents provide profits above costs because of property rights. See Robert Ekelund and Robert Tollison, *Mercantilism as a Rent-Seeking Society: Economic Regulation in its Historical Perspective* (College Station, 1981).
40. Yale University, Beinecke Library, Osborne b 31: Karl V, 'The summe of diverse directions of Government which Charles 5th lefte unto his sonne Philip the II K. of Spaine'.
41. Ronald G. Asch, 'The Revival of Monopolies: Court and Patronage during the Personal Rule of Charles I, 1629–1640', in Asch and Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, pp. 357–92.
42. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients*, p. 209. In analysing the clientelism of Cardinal Richelieu, Sharon Kettering writes that 'The politicization of great noble clienteles accelerated in response to the state building efforts of Richelieu, Mazarin, Colbert, and other royal ministers, who created and used extensive ministerial clienteles to help govern distant provinces' (p. 159).
43. On the promotion of relations by French favourites see Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister', p. 28.
44. Spedding, ed., *Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, vi, p. 24.
45. Elizabeth Marwick, 'Favorites in Early Modern Europe: A Recurring Psychopolitical Role', *Journal of Psychohistory*, 10 (1983), pp. 463–89.
46. Durham University Library, Howard Ms. 2, fol. 119. 'The necessarie use of such a person in this time. . . . The Councell of the state waxinge olde . . . which dulleth and abateth oftentimes the edge of the most pregnant witts.'
47. See Wotton, 'Of Sir Robert Devereux, Earle of Essex and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Some Observations by Way of Parallel in the Time of Their Estates of Favour', *Reliquiae*

Wottonianae; BL, Egerton Ms. 2026, fol. 32: 'that it is exceeding dangerous to a favourite to be long absent from his Prince'.

48. See *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, pp. 161–83, and L. I.. Peck, 'Peers, Patronage and the Politics of History', in John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 87–108.
49. See David Starkey, 'Representation through Intimacy', in I. Lewis, ed., *Symbols and Sentiments* (London, 1977), pp. 187–224.
50. See Moote, 'Richelieu as Chief Minister,' p. 23.
51. *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, p. 164.
52. Adams, 'Favourites at the Elizabethan Court', in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility*, p. 271.
53. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth*, pp. 78–89: 'there are not . . . two noblewomen about her Majesty . . . whom he hath not solicited by potent ways; neither contented with this place of honor, he hath descended to seek pasture among the waiting gentlewomen of her Majesty's great Chamber whereof my Lord is nothing squeamish for satisfying of his lust but can be content . . . to gather up crumbs when he is hungry, even in the very laundry itself or other place of baser quality' (pp. 88–9).
54. Joseph Cady argues, *pace* Foucault, that homosexuality was defined clearly if critically in those pamphlets and was not a later historical invention. See Cady, 'The "Masculine Love" of the "Princes of Sodom"'. It might also be suggested that such complaint literature also secularized criticism of the church in the works, for instance, of John Ponet and John Bale attacking the 'buggerly' of monasticism. See Donald R. Kelley, 'Elizabethan Political Thought', in J. G. A. Pocock, ed., *The Varieties of British Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 58. See also Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London, 1982).
55. Cambridge University Library, MSS DD 3, 63, fols 54, 35, 36v–37v. Referring to her first husband as 'my Lord the gelding' he wrote to the favourite: 'If my Lord would draw his sword in defence of a good prick it were worth his pains but never make such a poor pudding's apology.'
56. See Leeds Barroll, 'The Court of the First Stuart Queen', in Peck, ed., *Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, pp. 191–208; quoted in Ashton, ed., *James I by his Contemporaries*, pp. 119–20, 127.
57. Quoted in Alvin Kernan, *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 9, 118, December 1623. Glyn Redworth notes that at much the same time Charles I wrote to Gondomar as his 'pimp' during the Spanish marriage negotiations but whether such usage was due to his poor Spanish he delicately refuses to decide: Glyn Redworth, 'Of Pimps and Princes: Three Unpublished Letters from James I and the Prince of Wales Relating to the Spanish Match', *Historical Journal*, 37 (1994), pp. 401–9.
58. Hugh Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633–1641* (Manchester, 1959); J. F. Merritt, ed., *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621–1641* (Cambridge, 1996).
59. Quoted in Paul Hardacre, 'Patronage and Purchase in the Irish Standing Army Under Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1632–1640', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 67 (1989), p. 42.
60. See for instance Kevin Sharpe, 'The Image of Virtue: The Court and Household of Charles I, 1625–1642', in David Starkey, ed., *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 226–60.
61. See Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*.
62. See Starkey, ed., *English Court*.
63. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, pp. 173–81.
64. The tract applies all the usual language about ambition, rising above one's birth and flattery to Judge Jeffreys, a leading judge in the reign of James II who had no personal relationship with the king. Bacon's 'Declaration of the People' in 1674 attacked the imposing of taxes 'upon specious pretences of Publick works for the advancement of private Favourites and other sinister ends'. Such favourites had experienced 'the sudden Rise of their Estates compared with the Quality in which they first entered this Country'. Quoted in Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery—American Freedom* (New York, 1975). I am grateful to Terry Schneider and Richard Bushman for these citations.
65. Quoted in Harold G. Fox, *Monopolies and Patents* (Toronto, 1946), p. 92n.
66. House of Lords Record Office Manuscript Journal of the House of Lords, p. 657, 8 June 1626, Yale Center for Parliamentary History transcript, pp. 930–1.
67. See Richard L. Bushman, *The King and the People* (Williamsburg, 1985), p. 99n.
68. Thomas Slaughter, ed., *Ideology and Politics on the Eve of the Restoration: Newcastle's Advice to Charles II* (Philadelphia, 1984), p. 57.

5

*Between Mignons and Principal Ministers:
Concini, 1610–1617*

J.-F. DUBOST

Concino Concini (pl. 14) is a most peculiar and original example of a court favourite. Though it is not easy to define the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century understanding of the term favourite succinctly, we can use words written at the end of the 1610s – exactly the era when Concini was a favourite – depicting Albert de Gondi, the duc de Retz, and the favourite of Charles IX:

The aforementioned Albert . . . formerly master of the royal wardrobe . . . has, with his keen understanding and his wise conduct, ingratiated himself with the king. Consequently he has reached the kingdom's most honourable offices and set up an illustrious House, possessed of considerable means and well connected. . . . His unfailingly wise and agreeable conduct, avoiding ceremony and ostentation, yet remaining virtuous and courageous, has enabled him, through valour and patience, to overcome all opposition and setbacks.¹

Friendship with the prince, closeness to his person, courtesy and delicacy in social relations – following Castiglione's precepts – provided the basis for Albert's fortune and the founding of his dynasty. Concini's career scarcely fits such a pattern. His assassination on 24 April 1617 ruled out the founding of an aristocratic dynasty; the patronage he enjoyed was not that of the king, who neither liked nor valued him, but only that of the queen mother; and if Concini's lifestyle was that of a free-spending cavalier, he remained a poor courtier, unable to avoid the pitfall of 'ostentation'. Yet for all this Concini managed to make his mark in the political life of the 1610s, to the extent that contemporaries are unanimous in their recognition that he came to exercise considerable – even inordinate – power.

But it is difficult to define the realms of Concini's power. Indeed, two diverging interpretations are to be found among historians. The first, based largely on Sully's memoirs, and recently restated by Hélène Duccini's biography, contends that Concini wielded considerable political power from as early as 1610.² The second, to be found in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-

century works of J. Nouillac, Berthold Zeller and F. Hayem, acknowledges the Florentine's influence at court and among Marie de Médicis' entourage, but stresses that this served his own personal advancement before evolving, belatedly, into real political influence.³ These differing readings prompt a reconsideration of Concini's career.

Maintaining that Concini had political power as early as 1610 is excessive. Rather, it is clear that his power, not fully established at the start of the regency in 1610, developed in three major stages. Between 1610 and 1614, Concini and his wife Leonora concentrated on amassing their fortune, and on acquiring land and office through Leonora's close relationship with the queen: as one of Leonora's entourage stated, 'the queen mother never bestowed any gifts or favours without first seeking the counsel of the marshal's wife' (pl. 15).⁴ Leonora's influence over the queen meant financial reward for the Concinis. Above all, control over the assignment of office in the royal households and in the *parlements*, and over the appointment of bishops, was a means of financial gain. Wealth in turn helped to consolidate social status, in Concini's case, epitomized by the acquisition of the marquisate of Ancre in 1610 and of a marshal's baton in 1613. But throughout this phase power remained in the hands of the minister Villeroy.

The second phase was one of broadening influence for Concini. From 1614 to 1616, he made his first interventions in politics, supporting the Spanish marriages and then the rebel princes to restore or maintain civil order. The turning point is 1615, a change reflected in the increase in criticism of Concini in contemporary pamphlets.⁵ This change is linked to the proclamation of the king's majority in 1614: once Marie de Médicis was confirmed as head of the government (pl. 16), the Concinis were in a position to intervene in the political sphere.

Dating from the Peace of Loudun in 1616, the third phase saw Concini play a full part in the political direction of the kingdom. Here, Leonora and her husband inspired a radical change in general policy. Initially favourable to concessions to the princes (the Loudun settlement had cost the state the equivalent of a year's budget in various bequests and gifts), they subsequently promoted a diametrically opposed policy that sought to reinforce royal authority. As a consequence the Prince de Condé was imprisoned on 1 September 1616, and, after the dismissal of Henri IV's old ministers, a young and 'strong' ministry was constituted with Barbin as finance minister, Mangot as keeper of the seals and Richelieu (pls 26 and 47–57) as foreign minister. These changes reflect Concini's political leanings and convictions. As the son and nephew of the absolutist ministers of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, he readily adopted an authoritarian attitude. Did his conduct in 1616 reveal a Machiavellian cunning? Did he first press for peace the better to impose his own authoritarian approach afterwards? It seems more probable that he simply let himself be swept along by the course of events. But to his contemporaries and to the princes, his sudden change appeared as a failure to keep his word.

The means Concini used to secure his influence and facilitate his access to

power, expanded in similar fashion. Proximity to the royal person was essential here and was made possible by the possession of court offices. Initially, the favourite was Leonora Galigai. As the queen's lady-in-waiting since 1601, she held a position which brought her into direct daily contact with her mistress. Concini himself only became the queen's first *maître d'hôtel* in 1605. He then became her first equerry in 1608 and was finally the king's first chamberlain from 1610 to 1617. Despite its importance, this last office failed to bring Concini open access to the favour of the king, a very different situation from that of Olivares in Spain, where the latter's role as *sumiller de corps* certainly brought royal favour. Meanwhile, proximity was also secured through accommodation at the Louvre: first a chamber adjoining the queen's for Leonora, then in 1612 a house directly adjacent to the Louvre beside the Seine. From 1615, the Concinis lived exclusively in this new house, abandoning their sumptuous residence on the rue de Tournon. This relocation to the Louvre coincided exactly with the extension of Concini's political power.

Keeping close to the royal person enabled Concini to influence government appointments. In the early stages of the regency, the Concinis gave special attention to the posts of *intendants* of finance, and managed to secure the appointments of two of their most loyal clients, the physician Noël Duret in 1610 and the lawyer Louis Dollé in 1612. All the evidence indicates that in the first years of the regency the Concinis were far keener to further their personal fortune than to deal in high politics: appointed counsellor of state with a seat on the Council of finances late in 1610, and with his own placemen in the central administration of finances, Concini was now well positioned to protect his own financial interests.

With the formation of a new ministry in November 1616 Concini's standing changed radically. No one doubted that Barbin, Mangot and Richelieu were Concini's creatures. As the nuncio Bentivoglio wrote: 'The marshal also spoke to me of these three new ministers as his own men, and showed great pleasure at my praise of Mangot and Luçon, whom I had already visited, and told me that I was to esteem Barbin still more, since he could be the master of the other two in important matters.'⁶ They were Concini's creatures since they owed him their rise, and their relatively modest social status meant that they were nothing without him. Here a striking parallel may be observed between Concini's choices and those made by Richelieu when he became principal minister and ruled with the help of his own creatures. Concini directed the affairs of the realm through the intermediary of these ministers, situating himself outside the institutional framework the better to control the wheels of state.⁷

Ministers received their instructions by letter, or through visits to and from the marshal. To take a specific example, after several weeks of fruitless negotiations over the Grisons the Venetian ambassadors made a direct approach to the maréchal d'Ancre. The very next day, they met with an answer from the secretary of state, Richelieu, confirming that he had ironed out all the difficulties, as he told them: 'yesterday the maréchal d'Ancre came to see me, spoke warmly of your mission and instructed me to do everything possible to help

you'.⁸ As for Mangot, the keeper of the seals, he simply asked Concini to provide ready-made copies of the documents he was due to send out, a practice his colleagues came to imitate.⁹ Unquestionably, Concini's power had evolved considerably since the start of the regency.

However this power did not develop consistently. There were phases of semi-disgrace because of Concini's involvement in court intrigues and because of his tactical alliances with various princes and factions.¹⁰ This shows that, for several years, he was just one among many on the political scene. Unlike his successor de Luynes (pl. 17), he was far from having a clear ascendancy over the other *grands* from an early stage. This ambiguous, fragile position corresponded to a well-established pattern where the favourite had to take account of princes, other favourites and the members of the incumbent government. This situation, seen under Charles IX and Henri III, was still applicable to Concini's position at court where, until November 1616, he sometimes had to rely on the princes of the blood and sometimes on the Guises. Thus in Concini's time rival aristocratic clans continued to use the favourite in their political games, whereas later the favourite's political pre-eminence would be more clearly established, placing him above such issues.

A further archaic feature of Concini's power is the importance given to non-governmental responsibilities. He was involved in provincial administration, in Picardy in 1611 and Normandy in 1616, and in the army as a marshal (from 1613), although fondly cherishing the hope of rising to the rank of constable, a promotion which de Luynes was to secure after him.

But Concini's power also featured new aspects that had a promising future ahead of them. First, the favourite became a standard conduit for the distribution of royal graces and favours. Provided the princes remained included in these decisions, and were able to combine their influence with Concini's, they tolerated the favourite's role. Guise was well-disposed towards the Florentine because he himself was also favoured by the queen regent as one of her main advisers and supporters. Ultimately, the relationship between the two men became embittered, once Concini's position became too strong and threatened to end Guise's effective participation in government affairs, undermining his network of patronage. What the other grandes found intolerable was the position of an unavoidable intermediary which Concini had attained by the start of 1617. This was not the first time that a monopoly of royal favour was held to be intolerable. In 1588, for example, – under pressure from public opinion and from the nobility – Henri III was forced to get rid of d'Epernon, who had become the king's chief *mignon* after the death of the duc de Joyeuse in 1587.

Furthermore, Concini's persistent attachment to the discourse of authority did nothing to improve his relations with the other grandes. His aim in political affairs was for 'power and authority always to rest with the king'.¹¹ He was at one with his ministers, Mangot and particularly Richelieu, who was already intimating that some heads should roll like that of Lesdiguières in Dauphiné, who took his instructions from the Council too lightly.¹² The authoritarianism with

which government was carried out aroused shock and condemnation, sentiments which found an echo in the despatches of the Venetian and Florentine diplomats. Such a style of government was said to be inconsistent with the French tradition, a pertinent criticism, and, in fact, a thinly disguised accusation of failure to respect the unwritten constitution of the realm. As the secretary of the Tuscan ambassador wrote, 'The French have come to believe that the queen mother will gradually adopt the Spanish style of government in this kingdom.'¹³

This attack was founded on the regular presence of the Spanish ambassador, the Duke of Monteleón, in the meetings of the Council. Spain had become France's main foreign support since traditional allies (England, the Protestant princes) had shied away, threatening to support the princes. But this attack also showed that Castile and its bureaucratic government were held to represent the antithesis of the limited form of monarchy considered appropriate for France. The issue at stake now appears clearly. Concini stood accused of encouraging the forging of a modern state in the 'Spanish style', sacrificing in the process 'the ancient customs of the kingdom' which catered for the claims of the princes and tolerated their displays of independence. As an authoritarian favourite, Concini was determined to impose this new style, by force if necessary.

To illustrate these views we must retrace our steps for a moment. From the moment he became lieutenant general in Picardy (1611), Concini embarked upon a strategy of fortifying the areas assigned to him: in Amiens the fortress posed a direct threat to the town and its inhabitants. This method of imposing royal authority influenced other initiatives after Concini's death – in Montpellier (1622), Marseille (the fortress of Saint-Nicolas in 1660) and in Bordeaux (the castle of Trompette in 1675). In the building of these fortresses, Concini called upon the finest specialists of his time, the Italian engineers who had served the Spaniards in Flanders. Pompeo Frangipani, Apollon Dougnano and Giuseppe Gamurrini soon made their appearance at court, all being employed by the marshal between 1615 and 1617. Furthermore, as a marshal of France, Concini owned his own regiment. After Condé's arrest, he strengthened his forces by recruiting both from abroad (from Liège) and from within France, which led to the creation of the Normandy regiment. His aim was to establish a permanent royal army worthy of the name, constantly at arms and ready to operate at the first sign of trouble.¹⁴ Diplomats were much impressed by this new method and disturbed by its effectiveness. As one Tuscan diplomat noted, troubles used to persist because the king's troops were never ready in time, but now all that had changed.¹⁵ Again, the lesson did not go unheeded, as Richelieu's reminder to Louis XIII in 1624 demonstrated:

to control the *grands* under that royal authority which is the mainstay of the State, it is necessary . . . to increase the fund for the upkeep of the militia in order to keep the kingdom armed with adequate forces . . . it being impossible that his

Majesty . . . be obeyed . . . without maintaining a powerful force which will hold everyone to his duty out of fear of swift punishment.¹⁶

Whether in 1617 or in 1624, the discourse is identical: force is fundamental to the triumph of the absolutist state.¹⁷

Should we be surprised by Concini's final downfall? The major weakness of his power was that he was the favourite of the queen mother rather than the king – obviously an essential point, though not, in itself, enough to account for his fall. Since contemporaries kept comparing the situation with Spain, we shall do the same. Olivares' accession to power in 1622 was justified by the defence of a cause (the reform of the state and *limpieza de manos*) and it relied on the support of an aristocratic clan.¹⁸ Concini's position lacked both these dimensions. In 1617, the intent of the Concini ministry was to implement the triumph of royal authority, but public opinion only saw self-interest in the marshal's actions. As for reform of the state, there was no reference to this, an omission which allowed de Luynes and his team to exploit this theme the better to distinguish themselves from the previous government.

As a foreigner newly arrived in the kingdom, did Concini succeed in establishing a solid network of aristocratic patronage around which to base his power? Contrary to the evidence found in pamphlets written largely after his death, Concini was far from being an isolated, universally hated figure among the nobility. In Picardy, for instance, seat of the marquisate of Ancre, he headed a prosperous clientele, hence his determination to retain his post as lieutenant general of the province.¹⁹ Nor was he isolated in Normandy, thanks to his relationship with the uncle of the duc de Montmorency, the marquis de Portes, whose sister, the abbesse de Caen, used her influence in the province to Concini's advantage.²⁰

Yet, though Concini was far from lacking aristocratic support, it was still quite restricted. There are several reasons for this. First, because of his use of bribes. There was nothing unusual in this practice and some of the greatest fortunes of the *ancien régime* were built on bribes. But in Concini's case it was seen to be scandalous in that it benefited foreigners. Strong xenophobia marked the early seventeenth century, and the elite, still far from possessing a cosmopolitan outlook, was no exception. Furthermore, it was unclear what special services could justify such enrichment by royal favour. Most of all, while the Conciniis elevated bribery to an art form, they practised it so widely that they ended up alienating a great many of their victims, whether courtiers, members of sovereign courts, bishops or even close friends such as Barbin. Because the patronage of the Conciniis came only at an extortionate price, the relations they developed among the nobility and other leading groups lacked that vital emotional dimension which converts a dependent relationship into genuine patronage. On top of this, some of those who chose to assist the Florentine favourites spent years waiting in vain for their reward.²¹ Thus we find Concini surrounded by all too many ill-rewarded servants, too many embittered financiers and too many nobles alarmed at the venality of a system of protection

carried on at their expense. All these factors ruled out genuine loyalty in the service of the Florentine and stood in the way of the formation of a powerful network. The only remedy to the situation was for the Concinis to weld themselves to an existing aristocratic clan by marrying Marie Concini into a great family of the realm. Her death in January 1617 had dramatic consequences for the favourite.

Finally, the decision to remove Concini must be placed in the context of the crisis ignited in January 1617 by the start of a fresh civil war. As secretary of state Richelieu explained, in two pamphlets, that what was at stake was the triumph or defeat of royal authority.²²

Concini's unpopularity was general. All witnesses agree. This began to rebound on Marie de Médicis and threatened ultimately to affect the monarchy. The danger was such that, in February 1617, Louis XIII himself did not dare to leave the Louvre to visit the Saint-Germain fair.²³ The rebellious princes resorted to the old ploy of keeping their options open, claiming that the king was ill-advised whilst thinking otherwise. At this point the royal government found itself in the exceptional position of being unanimously opposed. As the nuncio said of the ministers, 'these few men form a party opposed by another party, the whole kingdom'.²⁴

The great weight of opinion and the king's well-known antipathy towards the marshal reassured the princes that their actions were legitimate, even if Concini's ministers were acting in the name of the king. Thanks to the military preparations to which we have referred, the princes' revolt had all but been put down by April. But this must not lead us to neglect its importance. In February 1617 France was on the point of lurching into rebellion, as the majority of governors and lieutenant generals declared themselves hostile to the ministers. In the spring of 1617, even if victory was a few rounds of cannon fire away, the major risk was that there would be a deep, lasting breach between the monarchy and the *grands*, and thus between the monarchy and the nobility. All things considered, Louis XIII did not want such a triumph for royal authority.

Initially concerned to exploit his wife's special relationship with the queen, Concini came to exercise a genuine monopoly of royal favour. Politically, the brief experience of the Concini ministry was characterized by the primacy given to force as a means to secure the triumph of royal authority, a policy defended by ministers devoted to their patron, whose creatures they remained. Concentrated into a few months, this constituted the essence of Concini's programme and of the measures developed over the course of the seventeenth century to consolidate the absolute authority of the sovereign power. But in 1617 this was to ask for too much too soon, as the early seventeenth century was still imbued with the ideal of limited monarchy.

Concini's failure as a favourite was palpable: his patronage of the nobility remained incomplete and ultimately ineffective; and, driven by an aristocratic ethos of consumption and ostentation, he inspired almost unanimous disapproval on four counts. First, he disobeyed the recommendation of Justus Lipsius – recalled by Antonio Feros (Chapter 13 below) – to avoid the display

of riches gained from the king or by his consent. Second, his expenditure did not seem appropriate – to take up one of the key terms of the seventeenth century stressed by Orest Ranum (Chapter 9 below) – to his social stature or his origins. And third, the wealth which underpinned this expenditure had been built up in a manner that was, if not immoral, at least dubious. Finally, in his addresses to the king, Concini was unable to find the right words or the right tone, and, as Sir John Elliott has pointed out (Chapter 8 below) such things were vital. Quite the reverse, his arrogant and authoritarian behaviour seemed to debase the royal majesty. In short, Concini came to epitomize what a favourite should not be.

Notes

1. J. Gassot, *Sommaire mémorial*, ed. P. Champion (Paris, 1934), pp. 65–7.
2. H. Duccini, *Concini: grandeur et misère du favori de Marie de Médicis* (Paris, 1991).
3. J. Nouailiac, *Villeroy, secrétaire d'Etat et ministre de Charles IX, Henri III et Henri IV, 1543–1610* (Paris, 1908); F. Hayem, *Le Maréchal d'Ancre et Léonora Galigai* (Paris, 1910); B. Zeller, *La Minorité de Louis XIII: Marie de Médicis et Villeroy* (Paris, 1897); W. Monter's appraisal of Concini in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960), xxvii, pp. 725–30, takes the same stance.
4. Deposition of Lizza in Hayem, *Le Maréchal d'Ancre*, p. 310.
5. H. Duccini, *Une 'campagne de presse' sous Louis XIII: l'affaire Concini (1614–1617)*, *Histoire sociale, sensibilités collectives et mentalités, Mélanges offerts à Robert Mandrou* (Paris, 1985), pp. 292–301.
6. G. Bentivoglio, *Lettere*, ed. Stefani, 4 vols (Florence, 1863–7), i, p. 32, letter of 17 January 1617.
7. 'He manipulates his ministers as he pleases. Since he appointed them they are entirely under his control'. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (hereafter BN), Ms. ital. 1770, fol. 237, 13 January 1617.
8. BN Ms. ital. 1770, fol. 240, 13 January 1617.
9. Florence, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASF), Carte strozziane I 55, fol. 512.
10. Good examples of the changing nature of favour can be found in the works already cited by Hayem and Nouailiac, and in P. Chevallier's *Louis XIII* (Paris, 1979).
11. Quoted by F. Pouy, *Concini, maréchal d'Ancre, son gouvernement en Picardie, 1611–1617* (Amiens, 1885), p. 136.
12. BN Ms. ital. 1770, fol. 196, 20 December 1616.
13. ASF, Carte strozziane I 55, fol. 522.
14. BN Ms. ital. 1770, fol. 39.
15. ASF, Mediceo 6008, fols 22–3.
16. Memoir of 1624, 'A remedy to the most pressing disorders', in *Les Papiers de Richelieu*, ed. P. Grillon, 6 vols to date (Paris, 1975–), i, p. 141.
17. Initiatives such as the creation of a council of war and the proliferation of police measures in Paris had the same purpose.
18. J. H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven and London, 1986).
19. Deposition of Montaubert in Hayem, *Le Maréchal d'Ancre*, p. 264.
20. In 1616, Portes was able to raise 'twelve companies of over twelve hundred men . . . through his sister the abbess of Caen, who employed several wealthy and eminent persons to take charge of the companies': Fontenay-Mareuil, *Mémoires*, ed. Michaud and Poujoulat, *Nouvelle Collection de mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France*, 2nd series (Paris, 1837), v, p. 90.
21. In addition Concini's reluctance to support the Italians in France (such as the financier Philippe Gondi), alienated the strong Italian networks in the kingdom.
22. *Réponse au manifeste publié par les perturbateurs de l'État* (Paris, 1617), and *Déclaration du roi sur le nouveau sujet des nouveaux remuevements de son royaume* (Paris, 1617).
23. ASF, Carte strozziane I 55, fols 571^v.
24. Bentivoglio, *Lettere*, i, p. 44, 27 January 1617.

Part Two
Favourites in Office

6

*Can a Bureaucrat Be a Favourite?
Robert Cecil and the Strategies of Power*

PAULINE CROFT

The English language creates the problem, for it would be absurd to argue that Robert Cecil (pl. 18) was a favourite in the same sense as Piers Gaveston or Robert Dudley or George Villiers. Yet he might more persuasively be regarded during the years of his pre-eminence as a *valido*, the English equivalent of Eboli or Lerma or Olivares in Spain, or a minister-favourite like Richelieu in France. Favour in such cases could be defined first by the holding of great power, more power (though not necessarily supreme power) than that of any other minister serving the monarch. Secondly, favour demanded a bond of friendship, with easy access and a degree of personal familiarity, between king and minister. Both these criteria also imply a position of considerable trust, in which the sustained support of the monarch could be relied on by the minister. How does Robert Cecil fit this formula?

There can be no doubt that Cecil enjoyed great favour, since he had an extraordinarily successful career, at the highest level of power politics, under two very different monarchs, Elizabeth I (pl. 5) and James VI and I (pl. 19). However, he rose from the top, for his early success was built on the achievements of his father Lord Burghley (pls 8 and 21), who trained the boy up with relentless determination and pushed him forward in his own declining years. The correspondence between father and son shows just how intensive and relentless that bureaucratic upbringing was; 'son Robert' was subjected to endless pressurizing and hectoring, with orders for the prompt execution of secretarial business and an insistence on immediate replies that would keep his absent father in touch with every development at court. 'I looke before I slepe to heare from you, how far her Majesty do allow of my simple opinion for the Irland causes,' wrote Burghley from his great house at Theobalds in December 1593.¹ However, Burghley's efforts at promotion would have been to no avail if Cecil had not possessed the ability to benefit from them. The decision to mould his younger son for a brilliant career rather than his elder son Thomas was based on a shrewd assessment of their relative capabilities. Thomas was to become an outspoken member of the Elizabethan House of Commons and subsequently a

competent lord president of the Council of the North, but no amount of paternal effort would have got him much further.²

Robert Cecil was only twenty-eight, remarkably young, when he joined the Privy Council in August 1591. During Burghley's increasingly frequent periods of weariness and ill-health, Cecil handled the innumerable letters and suits connected with foreign policy. After much manoeuvring, in 1596 he obtained the principal secretaryship of state for which he had already served an arduous apprenticeship.³ Burghley's strategy was vindicated. The father had created the opportunity but the son had demonstrated his capacity and his value to the queen by his willingness to undertake a heavy workload. In 1597 Cecil consolidated his position by obtaining the prestigious and lucrative chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. Then came Burghley's death in August 1598. His enemies hoped that, without paternal support, Cecil's career would fade, but in May 1599 he was sworn master of the Court of Wards. The court controlled a vast range of patronage both in London and in the counties, as well as considerable potential power over the major landed families of England. By appointing Cecil, Elizabeth decisively signalled that she was convinced of his worth and ability. However, the Wards was not a sinecure but an onerous task adding to the endless paperwork he already undertook. Three months later, in August 1599, Cecil could not even be spared for a few summer days away.⁴

By the age of thirty-six Cecil had achieved a major career under one sovereign, although the queen's extreme parsimony in her later years limited the financial rewards that might have been expected from his position. He also enjoyed great royal favour, and Elizabeth's public praise of him, in jesting and affectionate terms, made it clear that there was a personal relationship, not least because she had been genuinely devoted for forty years to his father. Elizabeth called Cecil her elf and her sprite, but more cruelly from his earliest days in her service she also used what Cecil described as 'her sporting name of pygmy'. He found her allusion to his deformity distressing and made a discreet protest, although similar sneers were to pursue him throughout his life and beyond the grave.⁵

Whatever Elizabeth called him, Cecil was perfectly willing to deploy courtly skills, not merely bureaucratic grind, in the pursuit of advancement. Unlike Burghley, he entered into the lover-like style that the ageing queen required. Describing Elizabeth as God's 'celestiall Creature, who please the out of Angellyke grace, to pardone and allowe my carefull and zealous desires', he told her in 1592, 'I can please none because I thirst only to please one.'⁶ In the summer of 1602 Elizabeth skittishly seized from the young Lady Derby, Cecil's niece, a jewelled miniature probably by Hilliard. Finding it to be of her principal secretary, she pinned it at first to her shoe and later to her elbow-sleeve. Commemorating the incident, Cecil wrote a poem to Elizabeth, which he also had set to music. Describing himself as 'a servant of Diana', 'that Angelicke Queen', he declared he was resolved to die at her feet where she had placed the jewel. Perhaps more revealingly, the poem adds, 'She at her elbow wore it, to

signify that hee / To serve her at her elbowe, doth ever love to bee.' Even in poetry, the emphasis was on assiduous service as well as courtly attendance.⁷

However willingly Cecil played this game, he could not win it. The great favourite had been the Earl of Essex, and one observer contrasted the two of them as 'the pygmy' and 'Hercules'.⁸ Cecil's short stature and curved spine must have seemed all the more unimpressive when contrasted with the physical glamour of the tall and martial Essex (pl. 10).⁹ Lacking the appearance of a court favourite, he had to compensate in other ways, and he chose to continue as the workaholic that Burghley had created. Well aware that Elizabeth was using him as a counterbalance to ensure that Essex did not dominate her court or council, Cecil attempted to avoid conflict wherever possible. It was only after the first trial of Essex in June 1600 that he moved into open opposition. The final drama, Essex's rising in London in February 1601 and his execution two weeks later after a second trial, demonstrated the vulnerability and precariousness of a favourite's position once royal affection had cooled. In both his flamboyance and his desperation, Essex was a world away from Robert Cecil. The trauma of these events must have reinforced the latter's conviction that his safest place was in the grey world of administration. In his capacity to handle immense amounts of paperwork lay his best hope of indispensability. 'God knoweth I labour like a Pack horse, and know that if success be nought it wilbe scorn to me,' he wrote to his friend Sir George Carew in Ireland, seven months after Essex's execution.¹⁰ Similarly Sir Henry Wotton, reflecting years later on court favourites, concluded that Cecil had 'no other advantage as the earl of Essex and others had in person, to justify him in an ordinary estimation, but by eminent services'.¹¹

In May 1601 Cecil joined the inner circle of those corresponding secretly with James VI of Scotland. After the death of Essex, his former confidant, the king needed to reconcile himself to Cecil, who was already worrying over the problems created by the queen's obduracy in not naming an heir. Yet, even if a smooth succession were accomplished, there was no security of position into the next reign. Cecil enjoyed power and favour largely by virtue of the principal secretaryship. In the order established by the Act of Precedence of 1539, the principal secretaryship had been one of the great offices of state, but it was demoted after Thomas Cromwell's fall in 1540. Nevertheless, under Elizabeth it revived to become one of the three or four most powerful positions in the Privy Council.¹² A good secretary required the combined skills of a minister, a senior civil servant and a courtier; he was probably the privy councillor who saw the queen most regularly and success depended on the personal rapport between sovereign and servant.

Cecil's own treatise on the secretaryship strikingly compares the secret counsels between the prince and the secretary to 'the mutual affections of two lovers, undiscovered to their friends'. When those matters are subsequently revealed in council discussion, 'it is like the conference of parents, and solemnisation of marriage'. If this close relationship soured, the position would become

untenable, or as Cecil put it, ‘A suspicion of a Secretary is both a trial and condemnation, and a judgment.’ Even more sombre is his comment, ‘the state of a secretary is dreadful if he serve not a constant prince’. Although the tract was probably composed for the incoming King James, it did not exaggerate the power and precariousness of the position, but rather reflected an Elizabethan consensus. Nicholas Faunt, writing in 1592, also emphasized the secretary’s ‘special loue and affeccion hee beareth towards his Master’ and ‘his masters reciprocall loue borne vnto him’. Such intimacy, as established with Elizabeth in so idiosyncratic an office, might not transfer to the new regime. As the intelligencer Thomas Phelippes shrewdly commented as early as August 1591, ‘the Secretary’s place . . . is dangerous in the declination of a reign and in a doubtful succession’. James was not accustomed to anything similar in Scotland.¹³

Nor could Cecil rely on any general support. There are plenty of hints in the secret correspondence that those most deeply involved in it, although committed to a Stuart succession, did not trust one another. Cecil knew perfectly well what poisonous rumours circulated about him – that he plotted to become king by marrying Arbella Stuart, or that he favoured the Infanta-Archduchess Isabella, as Essex had alleged – and he must have feared that James’ trust was already being corroded, despite the numerous compliments in the king’s letters from Scotland. Rumours that he had made earlier attempts to thwart James’ accession by arranging a marriage between Arabella and the son of the Prince of Parma were still circulating in May 1603, and there was a widespread expectation that James would take his revenge for the execution of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, by demoting Burghley’s son.¹⁴

On a personal as well as a political level, Cecil needed to look to his future. Although Burghley had made substantial provision for him, in 1598 the bulk of the family lands and the title inevitably went to Thomas. After 1601, as the succession pressed ever more on his mind, Cecil threw himself into a fury of land speculation, becoming one of the half-dozen largest purchasers of crown estates then flooding on to the market to fund the escalating costs of the Irish campaign. Besides spending around £30,000 in 1601–2, Cecil borrowed heavily from London aldermen at 10 per cent to snap up prime crown properties. In addition, by October 1602 he was writing to Sir George Carew to invite him to visit the room especially arranged for him in what he proudly described as ‘my new house (called Cecil House)’, next to the Savoy on the Thames river-front.¹⁵ This central position give him a high political profile in the capital and asserted his place and status among the aristocratic owners of great town houses.¹⁶ If all went well under James, that place and status would continue, and the London house would be his main residence.

But if it did not go well? Cecil’s other aim seems to have been to build up a great country estate to which he could retire if his political career ended. If he should fall from favour after the queen’s death, he could live a secluded life as a very substantial landowner, enjoying the country activities of hawking and

gardening which he loved but could rarely pursue. Even worse, if there should be some political disaster, if he were imprisoned or even perhaps executed as the crown passed to another claimant, then his gains from office, embodied in a landed estate, stood a much better chance of passing to his two children than would a hoard of cash or jewels. All the landed acquisitions were normally held by agents and servants on Cecil's behalf. This was a common legal stratagem, but, as Lawrence Stone points out, land conveyed to trustees for uses was fairly immune from confiscation and would offer a degree of protection for his family. On the proclamation of Queen Jane Grey in 1553, William Cecil had at once made conveyance away of his lands, part of his goods, his leases and even his raiment. Cecil must often have heard his father speak of that earlier succession crisis.¹⁷ Awareness of the malleability of fortune at the end of an era is very clear in this orgy of land accumulation.

Despite these fears, in March 1603 the succession went with amazing smoothness, largely thanks to the enormous amount of work and planning that Cecil had devoted to it. Writing in April to Sir Thomas Parry, the ambassador in Paris, he still could scarcely believe it. 'We are now so strangely and unexpectedly made the spectacle of happiness and felicity, in enjoying so quietly and peaceably of such a prince,' he exclaimed, well aware that Parry would spread the word about England's domestic stability. Others felt the same way; Lord Kinloss thought it had been a divine miracle.¹⁸ James' debt of gratitude was great, and on his journey south from Edinburgh he made it known that he intended to keep Cecil on as principal secretary. 'He said', reported Cecil's brother from York, 'he heard you were but a little man, but he would shortly load your shoulders with business.'¹⁹

Yet James also made it clear that it was to a group of English councillors, not to Cecil alone, that he felt a deep obligation, praising 'the wisdom, providence and policy of our dearest friends' and promising 'condign renumeration'.²⁰ The king was intent on widening the circle of Englishmen with access to power. Lord Henry Howard was promoted to the Privy Council and the earldom of Northampton, while Lord Thomas Howard became a privy councillor, lord chamberlain and Earl of Suffolk. Lord Mountjoy, conqueror of Tyrone in Ireland, became Earl of Devonshire. Southampton was immediately released from the Tower, where he had been imprisoned since Essex's revolt; his earldom was restored in July 1603, when he also received the Garter. The Earl of Northumberland, usually regarded as the spokesman for loyal crypto-papists and out of favour with Elizabeth, also became a privy councillor.

In May 1603, Cecil received his reward. He was created Baron Cecil of Essendon, and he also kept the mastership of the Wards, although only after a period of indecision in which the king apparently considered granting it elsewhere.²¹ The promotions showered on others, however, indicated that James valued ancient nobility rather more than 'mere penclerks', as the Cecils' enemies had long since called them. Cecil had to wait until 1605 for the earldom of Salisbury, and a further year for the Garter. Although he could reflect that

his father had never achieved an earldom and had waited fourteen years for Elizabeth to make him a Knight of St George, the rewards bestowed on him in the first year of James' reign were not outstandingly generous.

From 1603 onward, Cecil had to learn a new routine if he was to maintain his grip on power. There was a real possibility that James might quickly tire of him, especially as he had brought his own Scottish advisers with him.²² He must accommodate to a monarch with a very different style, and the flexibility with which he accomplished this change of routine demonstrated an aspect of his talents which helps explain his success in steadily increasing his control over Jacobean political business. Already, before the accession, James' praise of Cecil had been couched in terms of his efforts, 'those daily so honorable, judicious and painful labours for the furtherance of my greatest hopes'. Once again the way ahead was clear; as the king had jested at York, Cecil's shoulders would have to prove worthy of a weight of business.²³

English historians no longer despise James I. As early as 1584, foreign observers had condemned him for laziness and for too much time spent hunting; but the king was also prepared to commit considerable effort, particularly to diplomacy and religious policy.²⁴ Cecil's diplomatic labours, especially the extensive negotiations surrounding the peace with Spain in 1604, brought him into close contact with James and they forged a strong and enduring working relationship. The king showed his appreciation of his principal secretary's efforts. In August 1606, when Cecil kept to his town house for a day in a 'distemper' after a bitter dispute with the Spanish ambassador over the suspects in the Gunpowder Plot, James paid him a personal visit. He told Cecil to take better care of his well-being, 'for if he should once fail there were no more safe hunting for the King of England'. This signal mark of favour embittered Northampton, who had been near death's door for a week without any royal visitors.²⁵ The alliance continued, for it was the consensus of ambassadorial opinion right through to Cecil's death in 1612 that the duo of the king and the principal secretary shaped foreign policy between them, with little input from other councillors. As late as November 1611, with Cecil already seriously ill, when the ambassador of Savoy arrived to discuss the possibility of a match for Prince Henry, he immediately had an hour's private conference with the king, and another hour with Cecil.²⁶

Another factor which accentuated Cecil's position was James' rapidly increasing distaste for London. He was often absent, on his endless sorties to Theobalds, to Farnham, to Bagshot, and above all to his beloved Royston. When the Privy Council assembled at Whitehall the void was very apparent, since the council chamber faced the king's bedchamber. As those who themselves had lodgings at court were expected to be regular attenders at the Privy Council, the message was reinforced; they were there but the king was not.²⁷

The situation emerges with particular clarity in the correspondence of the Venetian ambassador. In October 1607, just back from a lengthy summer progress, James stayed only a few hours in London before heading for Royston.

He came to London again on 15 November, intending to leave the next day, but was detained by an attack of colic; he was at once surrounded by the whole diplomatic corps all insisting on audience. The king returned to Royston to write his book on the oath of allegiance, attacking Father Persons; although expected back in London he spent most of Christmas at Theobalds. On 30 December he came to the city for a day, then rode off to Hampton Court. On one occasion the desperate ambassador tried to talk to him while the royal foot was already in the stirrup. James himself compared his visits to London to a flash of lightning.²⁸ Envoys of all states frequently had great difficulty in speaking to the king, and his absences caused widespread annoyance. Cecil protested about these peripatetic habits and deplored the inconvenience that they caused for himself and others.²⁹

Despite these appearances, James kept a firm control on the general direction of foreign policy; but ambassadors trying to deal with specific items of business struggled vainly to attract the royal attention. Not surprisingly they turned with relief to a highly regarded, apparently omnicompetent secretary of state. The king's chosen style of life thus served to enhance Cecil's importance. Ambassadors came to rely on him, not only as their go-between with the distant king, but often also as the source of decisions. James did nothing to counteract this impression, going so far as to say to the Venetian ambassador in 1605, 'Speak to my secretary; he is better informed than I am, for I only know what is told me.'³⁰ His comment reveals the degree of delegation of conspicuous control over a central area of royal decision-making, and goes a long way to supporting the contention that Cecil enjoyed a uniquely favoured position. The same Venetian ambassador, commenting on Cecil's elevation to the Order of the Garter in May 1606, provided a carefully nuanced assessment. 'No-one seeks but to win his favour. It is thought that his power will last, for it is based not so much on the grace of His Majesty, as on an excellent prudence and ability which secures for him the universal opinion that he is worthy of his great authority and good fortune.'³¹ The uncertainties over Cecil's position that had been apparent in 1603 had vanished by 1606.

The most striking proof of Cecil's success under James was to come in 1608. After the death of Lord Treasurer Dorset, Cecil took over the urgent task of attempting to reform the royal finances, while retaining the principal secretaryship and the Wards. Far from dwindling into a subordinate role after James' accession, Cecil had seen off the challenge from the Scots and other English competitors to emerge with an unprecedented trio of great offices. The new appointment occasioned some comment, since the secretaryship and the treasurership were each regarded as labours demanding a man's whole attention. James let it be known that he held Cecil's abilities sufficient to enable him to fill both posts.³² Arguably after 1606, certainly after 1608, Cecil might be regarded as the equivalent of Lerma or Richelieu, a great minister who by virtue of enjoying his sovereign's confidence had acquired control over the central bureaucracy of the state.

Although James' inability to live within his means could not be remedied, as lord treasurer Cecil proved far more effective than his predecessor in controlling disbursements. The 'Book of Bounty' which Cecil and Sir Julius Caesar drafted in 1608 established a weekly hearing for suitors, and in 1610 Cecil made further proposals for tightening up procedure. On occasion, pensions granted directly by the king were stayed by Cecil at the receipt. Most importantly, he established a system of prioritizing payments, and the letters which flooded in from merchants and contractors seeking long-delayed settlements of royal bills acknowledged his powers. As late as summer 1611, when he was already seriously ill, he continued his detailed supervision of the regular expenditures. Faced with an account of monthly court expenses, he appended a trenchant memo, 'Pay ye navy £500.' Caesar, writing in August with a lengthy list of matters for Cecil's attention, sent him 'a note of those payments now most pressing (of which it may please your lordship to express which shalbe first paid, of the next moneys which we shall receive)'. Cecil also retained firm control over the Court of Wards. In spring 1612 he journeyed to Bath in a last unavailing effort to regain his health, but left very precise instructions regarding the business which the court might conduct in his absence.³³

The immense administrative and financial power wielded by Cecil unequivocally demonstrated James' exceptional trust in him. The deployment of a distinctive style of language, from monarch to minister and vice versa, was a more unusual manifestation of favour. Where the courtship style had been required by Elizabeth, a new mode was essential in addressing a male monarch. Under James the vocabulary changed but the note of intimacy continued. The pre-eminent example is the appellation 'little beagle', sometimes 'my little cankered beagle', applied to Cecil by a hunting-crazy king. It was not the only label; James loved extravagant language and also called Cecil 'my little fool' as well as 'Tom Derry' (the dwarf), 'parrotmonger' and 'monkeymonger'. As with Elizabeth's 'pygmy', these epithets privately enraged Cecil. It cannot be denied that they embody a degree of both cruelty and condescension, as well as intimacy.³⁴ However, they were not inaccurate, since Cecil avidly collected animal rarities, sending a servant to the East Indies for them, and also frequently gave them to the royal family as presents.³⁵ James employed similarly jocular language to the three or four members of the inner circle of the Privy Council. He wrote to Cecil, Northampton and Suffolk as 'a trinity of knaves'; he twitted Suffolk about his overweight and Northampton, 'your fellow hound', about his 'black' countenance. The language indicates a personal relationship, embodied in rough humour, between the king and a handful of senior councillors who were seen as predominantly in his favour. Others just as senior, such as Ellesmere and Dorset, were addressed with formality by James. Cecil felt bound to respond. His early letters to the king attempt a bucolic style very different from the businesslike, cool tone of his other correspondence. In March 1604, he wrote 'from Theobalds this fryday where a pack of Brettons have presumed to drink a helth to ye king of Brittany'.³⁶ Cecil was willing to use

language with chameleon-like adaptability as a means of ensuring not merely continued administrative power but a place in the royal inner circle.

Another aspect of adaptation can be seen in Cecil's conspicuous consumption, in sharp contrast with the threadbare later years of Elizabeth. King James and Queen Anne were almost obsessive purchasers of jewels, and Cecil in 1603 bought himself an enormous diamond ring weighing 53 carats, to keep up appearances at court. He bought more diamonds and a gold chain to the value of £1,257 from the royal jeweller Sir John Spilman. Similarly the procession he arranged for himself when he was given the Garter in 1606 was outstandingly elaborate.³⁷ Most noteworthy was the bountiful hospitality he lavished on the royal family. Burghley had left Robert Cecil his great house at Theobalds, where he had staged immensely costly entertainments for Elizabeth. Theobalds was regarded by contemporaries such as the poet Sir John Harington, who was moved to quote Ariosto after a visit, as 'paradise'. James paid his first visit in May 1603, staying for four nights on his long progress down to London from Edinburgh.³⁸ It was not long before the locals were prohibited from passing through the park, where they disturbed the game and hindered the king's sport. At Theobalds in June 1606 Cecil received James and Anne for four days, along with Anne's brother the King of Denmark. He was 'overwhelmed in preparations', but despite his efforts the elegant entertainment in English and Latin devised by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones degenerated into a Bacchic rout.³⁹ This social disaster did not stop the flood of Cecilian hospitality. When James insisted on exchanging the semi-derelict royal manor of Hatfield for Theobalds, Cecil responded by mounting a grand entertainment. The king, the queen, the Prince of Wales and the visiting Duke of Lorraine were given dinner in the gallery before a masque by Ben Jonson. Banquets, jousts and hunting parties followed, to celebrate the exchange and demonstrate that Cecil held no animosity at losing the family home that Burghley had left him.⁴⁰

Until the completion of Hatfield House (pl. 20) in 1611, Cecil had no grand country estate where he could entertain the royal family. To compensate for what might have been a major disadvantage, he devised receptions for them in London. On assuming the lord treasurership, he invited the royal family and the court to a sumptuous banquet. Shortly afterwards he again entertained the king, who viewed the Garter processions of the earls of Dunbar and Montgomery from the vantage point of Salisbury House.⁴¹ Then, in April 1609, the king, the queen, Prince Henry, Princess Elizabeth and Prince Charles all came to the extravagant and fantastical opening of the new exchange that Cecil had built in the Strand. He had chivvied his servants and the tenants of the shops so that it would be ready in time. In a display of ceremonial giving, suitably appropriate and lavish presents were handed to the royal family as Cecil showed them around. The king himself named the exchange 'Britain's Burse'.⁴²

Meanwhile, at Hatfield House separate sets of apartments were constructed to enable both the king and the queen to visit at the same time, an expensive architectural statement of confidence in future royal favour. In the summer of

1611, as soon as the house was ready, James viewed Hatfield and, while on progress from Salisbury, visited Cecil's much smaller house, Cranborne Manor in Dorset, which was well placed for hunting on Cranborne Chase. These two visits were an important sign of continued royal support in the difficult year after the failure of Cecil's Great Contract in parliament. Considerable efforts were made to prepare the ornamental east garden at Hatfield, with its centrepiece of a great cistern with artificial rocks and a painted statue of Neptune. The elaborate water display was intended as a highlight of the king's visit.⁴³ Once again the combination of personal attendance and generous hospitality marked out Cecil's efforts to remain in the innermost circle of power. Attention was also devoted to Prince Henry, notably in the magnificent ceremony devised by Cecil to mark his parliamentary installation in 1610 as Prince of Wales. Cecil signalled that he was a supporter of the Stuart dynasty, not simply of the king. Investing time and effort that might assure the favour of the next monarch reflected his hard-won experience of making the successful but nerve-wracking earlier transition from Elizabeth to James.⁴⁴

There is no difficulty in demonstrating that Cecil was a great minister. His determined efforts to remain within royal favour are also evident. Does all this entitle him to be regarded as a minister-favourite in the French or Spanish mould? In many ways the similarities are striking. Cecil profited from favour on a grand scale. In his last two years, 1610 to 1612, he was receiving at least £25,000 per year, when the greatest landed income in the country was more of the order of £8,000 per year.⁴⁵ Like Richelieu, he placed his family in the highest ranks of the aristocracy. Like Lerma or Olivares, after 1608 there could be no doubt of his pre-eminence in the king's councils. Yet reservations remain.

First, although Cecil held great power, it is clear that the Privy Council continued as an active and functioning body in the early years of James' reign. There was an inner circle of five or six men, including Cecil, and he adapted not only to working with the king himself, but also to working with them. Above all he managed an effective relationship with Northampton, whom he had little cause to trust and who revealed after Cecil's death how much he had hated him.⁴⁶ Cecil also had to adapt to the Scottish bedchambermen, who remained the king's companions of choice, and to the Earl of Dunbar, to whom James delegated powers in Scotland that were effectively vice-regal. Dunbar and Cecil warily recognized each other as great potentates in their different political spheres and extended elaborate courtesies to one another in their careful management of the king. Dunbar was thought of as a 'Favourite' and shrewd observers perceived his support as one of the central pillars of Cecil's importance.⁴⁷ So, although Cecil was the most powerful of James' English councillors, particularly after 1608, he still found it necessary to negotiate and manoeuvre for the support of others. It may well be that this suited him. By training under Burghley and by his own observation of the meteor-rise and fall of Essex, he tended to distrust solitary eminence. Already in 1603 he reproved

Sir Thomas Parry, ambassador to France, for the assumption that he alone could communicate with the king. 'You abridg both your owne liberty and cast an envy upon me of sole dealing in such things which I am very loath to beare,' he wrote back. In particular, he told Parry not to try to prevent Scotsmen writing direct to James, and made great efforts to reconcile Englishmen and Scots at James' court. These techniques, along with his studied courtesy to members of the older aristocratic families and his refusal to pursue those who defamed him on stage or in libels, were part of a strategy which Bacon called 'abating the edge of envy'.⁴⁸

Secondly, English usage obstinately continued to deploy the word 'favourite' for a different style of relationship. Neither the word nor the concept of the *valido* ever took hold. 'Grandee' appears to have come into English in 1589, while Lord Chancellor Dunfermline wrote to Cecil with pleasure in 1605 on the rebuff of the Earl of Huntly, remarking that it would be a lesson to the great Scots 'ydalgos'. Buckingham, himself labelled a grandee, had his own 'privadoes'. By contrast, the language of *valimiento* never Anglicized itself.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, during his ascendancy Cecil proved adept in ensuring that those who were 'favourites' in the English sense did not achieve political influence. Elizabeth's personal favourites had also been men of political substance – Leicester, Hatton, even Essex.⁵⁰ Until 1612, James' were not. Contemporaries regarded the twenty-year-old Sir Philip Herbert, later Earl of Montgomery, as 'prime favourite of his majesty'. In Cecil's lifetime, Montgomery (who was married to Cecil's niece, Susan de Vere) did not achieve major office, and there is no evidence that he craved it. As Clarendon remarked, he claimed only to understand dogs and horses very well. Among the Scots, the light-weight Lord Hay was regarded as a particular favourite of James.

The transition began with Sir Robert Carr (pl. 12), who replaced Montgomery; in February 1609 he was described as 'now the specially graced man'. Undoubtedly a sexual favourite, he was elevated by James to the peerage in 1611, and took his seat on the Privy Council in April 1612. Cecil clearly feared the political ambitions of Carr, who was himself under the influence of the duplicitous and cunning Sir Thomas Overbury. Cecil tried both to ingratiate himself with the rising favourite and to summon the support of Prince Henry against him. It seems noteworthy, however, that it was only as Cecil himself fell victim to increasingly severe illness that James moved to promote Carr to political power. In his perceptive discussion of James' favourites in both Scotland and England, Maurice Lee Jr points out that, from the disgrace of the Master of Gray in 1587 to Cecil's death in 1612, 'none of the handsome young men of whom the king was fond – and they were plentiful – had any political influence'. Carr was the precursor of Buckingham and of an entirely different style of governance by James. Sir Roger Wilbraham, writing in 1615 just as Carr's career was beginning to unravel, described him as 'the most potent favourite in my tyme'.⁵¹ Herbert and Hay, Carr and Buckingham were favourites in a sense that Englishmen knew Cecil was not. It was only foreign

observers such as the Venetian ambassador, familiar with a different and arguably more subtle concept of royal favour, who applied the term to him.

Thirdly, even if in several respects Cecil can be seen as the equivalent of a *valido*, his time was too short for him to compare with Lerma or Olivares. After 1603 he successfully rebuilt, to even greater heights, a career that might have been under threat; but it was only after 1608, with the lord treasurership, that his position became truly exceptional. Although the old assumption that he fell from favour after 1610 is exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the collapse of the Great Contract was a serious blow to his position. He might well have recovered, if fatal illness had not overtaken him by 1612, but his period of unique pre-eminence lasted only two or at most three years.⁵² Cecil's career was a series of struggles to overcome the hurdles placed in his way; he was a very successful swimmer in rough seas rather than a powerful favourite above challenge.

Lastly, despite all his deployment of the skills of the courtier, Cecil's power rested predominantly as it had always done on his bureaucratic abilities, his willingness to be a packhorse. His rewards were immense but so was the effort he devoted to the service of the crown.⁵³ Significantly, the portraits of him follow the dour and restrained style set by Burghley, and the fictional portrait of father and son together holding the same insignia of office makes the deliberate continuity explicit (pl. 21).⁵⁴ Like Burghley, Cecil dressed in rich fabrics, but sombrely. Only the Garter portraits of father and son break out into vivid colour. Clad in black, holding the white staff of office, standing by a table with papers and the secretary's seal, sometimes with a small bell to summon a messenger to take the urgently penned missive, Cecil in his portraits projected an image of arduous bureaucratic labour that was worlds apart from the lavishly costumed display of Essex or Carr or Buckingham, those peacocks of sartorial brilliance. Even in the great Somerset House portrait his position as 'gran secretario del rey' is emphasized by the pewter inkpot, quill and paper in front of him, although in reality he was by far the most frequent speaker in the 1604 negotiations, not merely their recorder.⁵⁵

The unprecedented combination of great positions after 1608 forms the strongest argument for seeing Cecil as a minister-favourite, but it created a crushing workload. In 1612 after Cecil's death his closest associate Sir Walter Cope wrote a defence of his late master, wrestling with the most common criticism of him. 'But what are the greatest imputations that this unthankful time doth lay upon this noble lord? First, that he undertook three great offices, and in a general distraction left them all ill executed.'⁵⁶ Cope rebutted the allegation, and the vast archive that Robert Cecil left behind is testimony to the enormous effort that he put into the tasks that faced him. But the charge carries weight. Faced with James' blithe confidence in his omnicompetent abilities, Cecil had little choice but to soldier on. Lacking the effortless charm and glamour of Essex or Carr, or the ancient nobility of the Howards, his bid for favour depended as always on those 'eminent services' that contemporaries like Sir Henry Wotton admired but did not warm to.

For all the bonhomie of the royal letters, Cecil's relationship with James was never entirely easy; it seems to have been at its best in their joint supervision of foreign policy. Both were grown men, highly experienced in the handling of power when they first met at York in April 1603. Cecil was a mere three years older than the king. There could not be that avuncular relationship of guidance and tutelage that Lerma and Olivares, or Richelieu and Mazarin, brought to the young monarchs in their charge. Cecil could never presume on favour and was always ultra-sensitive to any hint of coldness on the king's part, often to James' amusement.⁵⁷ So Cecil was a great minister certainly, a minister who enjoyed remarkable royal favour and an astonishing harvest of the fruits of office. But a minister-favourite? To English ears at least, the term will not really fit, although the comparison with the great Spanish *validos* has some merit.

Ironically, however, there was one brief moment when Cecil apparently played the role. In 1628, Wentworth remarked of Buckingham after his assassination that 'it is said at Court there is none now to impute our faults unto'. Faults were certainly imputed to Cecil, as the outpouring of venomous libels in the summer of 1612 testifies. It was also noted that, despite the pleas of the Cecil family and retainers, the king did nothing to defend his late minister and rebuke the libellers. The hatred of Cecil that was apparent immediately after his death echoes the hatred aroused by Leicester and prefigures that which poured out in 1628. If one aspect of the traditional function of the favourite was to serve as political whipping-boy, then for the three months after his death, Cecil came closer than he had done in life to serving James I as a favourite.⁵⁸

Notes

1. Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, 2 vols (London, 1838), i, p. 428. Wright printed only a selection of these letters, of which over a hundred survive, mostly in holograph, in Cambridge University Library, MSS Ee. 3-56, in the State Papers Domestic at the Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) and in the Cecil MSS at Hatfield House.
2. P. W. Hasler, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, 3 vols (London, 1981). He was relieved of his presidency in obscure circumstances probably related to the accession of James in 1603. Cecil MSS, Hatfield House, 100/49. I am grateful to the Marquess of Salisbury for permission to cite this and other Cecil manuscripts.
3. *Historical Manuscripts Commission: Calendar of the MSS of... the Marquis of Salisbury... at Hatfield House* (hereafter HMC Salisbury), iv, p. 623.
4. *The Sidney Papers: letters and memorials of state... collected by Arthur Collins*, 2 vols (London, 1746), ii, pp. 117-19.
5. PRO, State Papers (hereafter SP) 15/30/80. There were worse epithets from his enemies. Antonio Perez referred to Cecil as 'microgibus' when writing to Essex: Gustav Ungerer, *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England: The Correspondence of Antonio Perez's Exile*, 2 vols (London, 1974), i, p. 336. See also Pauline Croft, 'The Reputation of Robert Cecil', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 1 (1991), pp. 43-69.
6. HMC Salisbury, iv, p. 632.
7. Katherine Duncan-Jones, "'Preserved Dainties': Late Elizabethan Poems by Sir Robert Cecil and the Earl of Clanricarde", *Bodleian Library Record*, 14 (1992), pp. 136-44.
8. E. M. Tenison, *Elizabethan England, Being the History of This Country in Relation to All Foreign Princes, from Original MSS.*, 12 vols (Leamington Spa, 1958), xi, p. 392.

9. Cecil's curved spine, although often attributed to an accident in babyhood, was almost certainly hereditary scoliosis. Both his mother Lady Burghley and his daughter Frances (the future Lady Clifford) suffered from it. In his formal portraits it is barely evident, but this was probably painterly tact, since even contemporary admirers such as Sir Robert Naunton described him as a little, crooked person. *Fragmenta Regalia: or, observations on the late queen Elizabeth, her times and favourites* (London, 1824), p. 137. The hump is clearly visible in the sketch of him walking in Elizabeth's funeral procession, British Library (hereafter BL), Additional Ms. 35, 324.
10. *Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew*, ed. John Maclean (Camden Society, 1884), p. 26.
11. Sir Henry Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (London, 1651), p. 7.
12. David Kynaston, *The Secretary of State* (Lavenham, 1978), pp. 30–69; David Starkey, ed., *Rivals in Power: Lives and Letters of the Great Tudor Dynasties* (London, 1990), p. 70. Mindful of the formal ranking, in Elizabeth's funeral procession, Cecil walked between Sir John Fortescue, chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Edward Wootton, controller of the household. John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (London, 1823), iii, pp. 620–6.
13. Cecil's treatise, entitled 'On the state and dignity of a secretary's place with the care and peril thereof' (printed in *Somers Tracts*, 2nd edn, 13 vols (London, 1748–52), v, pp. 552–54, from PRO, SP 14/69/62, and BL, Harley 805 and 354). There are no surviving drafts among Cecil's papers which would allow the treatise to be dated, though it may relate to James' reorganization of the Privy Council in May 1603. Charles Hughes, 'Nicholas Faunt's Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate and etc., 1592', *English Historical Review*, 20 (1905), pp. 499–508; PRO, SP 14/230/159.
14. PRO, SP 14/279/72. For Lord Henry Howard's duplicities, and the treachery of Lady Kildare against Cecil (though married to his brother-in-law Lord Cobham), D. D. Hailes, *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI King of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1766), esp. pp. 19–22. *Calendar of State Papers Venetian* (hereafter *Cal. SP Ven.*), 1603–1607, pp. 41, 515.
15. *Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew*, p. 144.
16. The renamed Salisbury House was large enough for Cecil in 1610 to invite the House of Lords to adjourn with him to it. Elizabeth Read Foster, *Proceedings in Parliament 1610*, 2 vols (New Haven and London, 1966), i, p. 19.
17. Lawrence Stone, *Family and Fortune: Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 36–7; Starkey, ed., *Rivals in Power*, p. 252.
18. BL, Cotton Caligula E.x.fol. 217; *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1603–1607, p. 47.
19. Cecil MSS 99/88, 4 April 1603, Lord Burghley to Cecil.
20. *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. G. P. V. Ackrigg (London, 1984), p. 208.
21. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* (hereafter *Cal. SP Dom.*), 1603–1610, p. 8; *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1603–1607, p. 41.
22. The case made by Neil Cuddy, although overstated, is broadly convincing: 'The Revival of the Entourage: The Bedchamber of James I, 1603–1625', in David Starkey, ed., *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 173–225.
23. *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, p. 184.
24. *Calendar of Papers State Scotland*, vii, p. 274.
25. PRO, SP 14/23/10.
26. *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. N. E. McClure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), i, p. 313.
27. BL, Add. MSS 34324 fol. 238; Pauline Croft, 'Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court', in Linda Levy Peck, ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 136–9. For the rapid rise in expenditure on the royal hunting lodges after 1603, Howard Colvin, *The History of the King's Works, 1485–1660* (London, 1983), iv, pt 2, esp. under Royston, Thetford, Ampthill, Bagshot, Newmarket and Eltham.
28. *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1607–1610, pp. 46, 59–60, 67, 71, 73–4, 82, 87, 92, 95–6, 106, 115–16; *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, p. 242.
29. *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, pp. 220–1. *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1603–1607, p. 353.
30. This was on a technical question of cargo restitution, but similar commercial matters were central concerns of both Anglo-Spanish and Anglo-Venetian diplomacy in the first decade of the reign: *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1603–1607, p. 297.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 353–4.
32. *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1607–1610, p. 131.
33. Pauline Croft, 'A Collection of Several Speeches and Treatises of the Late Lord Treasurer Cecil', *Camden Miscellany*, 29 (1987), pp. 249, 254–9; PRO, SP 14/65/41, 60, 65; SP 14/66/43; H. A. Bell,

- An Introduction to the History and Records of the Court of Wards and Liveries* (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 18–19.
34. PRO, SP 14/15/105. *Illustrations of British History . . . selected from the mss. of the noble families of Howard, Talbot and Cecil*, ed. Edmund Lodge, 3 vols (London, 1838), iii, p. 262; Cecil MSS 228/30a; Lois Potter, 'The Politics of Language in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 34 (1995), pp. 536–42.
35. *Calendar of State Papers Colonial East Indies*, 1513–1616, p. 146.
36. *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, pp. 221, 257, 300; PRO, SP 14/13/16.
37. *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1603–1610, p. 60; Cecil MSS 140/200; Croft, 'Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court', p. 140.
38. Cecil MSS 93/117; John Nicholls, *The Progresses . . . of King James I*, 4 vols (London, 1828), i, pp. 135–40.
39. *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1603–1610, p. 138; Nicholls, *Progresses . . . of King James*, ii, pp. 70–4.
40. Nicholls, *Progresses . . . of King James*, ii, pp. 128–31. By contrast Bacon lost the favour of Buckingham when he protested, at the latter's attempt to take York Place, that he would not yield the house where his father had died: David Wootten, 'Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend' (p. 198, below).
41. 'Their majesties put off their departure for Greenwich to attend it': *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1607–1610, pp. 133, 137.
42. Cecil MSS P. 2233. *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1607–1610, p. 269.
43. Stone, *Family and Fortune*, p. 89.
44. Pauline Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry Prince of Wales', *Historical Research*, 65 (1992), pp. 179–93.
45. Stone, *Family and Fortune*, p. 27.
46. Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton* (London, 1982), esp. pp. 78–87; PRO, SP 14/71/3 and 16.
47. Cecil MSS 125/47, 128/168; *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, p. 262; *Cal. SP Ven.*, 1607–1610, p. 131.
48. PRO, SP 78/50 fol. 83r; Thomas Heywood, *An apology for Actors* (1612), discussed in B. N. de Luna, *Jonson's Romish Plot: A Study of 'Catiline' and its Historical Context* (Oxford, 1967), p. 25; Francis Bacon: *The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth, 1985), p. 85.
49. Linda Levy Peck, 'The Mentality of a Jacobean Grandee', in Peck, ed., *Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, p. 148; Cecil MSS 190/66.
50. For the range of Elizabethan usage, Evelyn Plummer Read and Conyers Read, eds, *Elizabeth of England: Certain Observations . . . by John Clapham* (Philadelphia, London and Oxford, 1951). Clapham was a long-standing Cecil servant.
51. *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, pp. 311–12. Maurice Lee Jr, *Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in his Three Kingdoms* (Urbana and Chicago, 1991), pp. 240–1; *The Diary of Sir Roger Wilbraham*, Camden Miscellany, 10 (1902), p. 115.
52. On 7 December 1611, Sir Julius Caesar assumed the central duty of the lord treasurer, receiving the weekly certificates from the officers of the Receipt: L. M. Hill, *Bench and Bureaucracy: The Public Career of Sir Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 184.
53. As pointed out by Joel Hurstfield, *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (London, 1973), pp. 187–92.
54. Erna Auerbach and C. Kingsley Adams, *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House* (London, 1971), p. 127. I am grateful to Lady Cranborne for showing me this painting at Cranborne Manor.
55. Roy Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 2 vols (London, 1969), i, p. 351; ii, plates 50–61, 536–41.
56. Sir Walter Cope, *An Apology for the Late Lord Treasurer Sir Robert Cecil*, originally circulated in ms. and printed in *Collectanea Curiosa*, ed. J. Gutch, 2 vols (Oxford, 1781), i, p. 122.
57. *Letters of James VI and I*, ed. Ackrigg, pp. 311–12.
58. Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham*, 1592–1628 (London, 1981), p. 473; Croft, 'The Reputation of Robert Cecil', pp. 63–6.

Corruption and Punishment? The Rise and Fall of Matthäus Enzlin (1556–1613), Lawyer and Favourite

RONALD G. ASCH

Bureaucracy or Personal Rule: Württemberg in the 1590s

In 1620 a treatise entitled *Sejanus seu de praepotentibus regum ac principum ministris commonefactio* was published in Strasburg. It dealt with the rise and fall of favourites and with remedies against both. The author of this little book was an Austrian nobleman, Georg Acacius Enenkel von Hoheneck, and his reflections were clearly inspired by the fall of one of the best-known favourites of the period, Cardinal Klesl in 1618.¹ For Enenkel, Klesl's fate was just one example of the fate of many favourites since the days of imperial Rome. In Enenkel's tract, however, the reader found not just the names of favourites who had lived in ages past but also examples of royal or princely servants who had risen to prominence in more recent times. In this context Enenkel mentioned the Elizabethan Earl of Essex, the French maréchal d'Ancre, and Emperor Rudolf II's favourite Wolfgang Rumpf. But he also mentioned the name of Matthäus Enzlin (pl. 22).²

Enzlin had been the most important counsellor of Duke Friedrich of Württemberg (pl. 23), who governed the duchy between 1593 and 1608. A few months after the duke's death his successor had Enzlin arrested on a charge of corruption and embezzlement. Never tried by a proper court of law, Enzlin signed a confession in 1609. He swore to accept imprisonment for an indefinite period and to forgo his right of appeal. Nevertheless Enzlin's family appealed to the Chamber Court of the empire in Speyer. When they tried to orchestrate a public outcry outside Württemberg against the alleged miscarriage of justice in Enzlin's case, the fallen favourite was tried and sentenced by a special ducal commission on a charge of perjury, high treason and *crimen laesae majestatis*. He was executed in November 1613 in the market square of Urach.

Enzlin's career and the reasons for his rise but also for the fate he suffered after 1608 can be understood only in the context of the constitutional and administrative structures of the German territorial state of the later sixteenth century in general, and of Württemberg in particular. In Germany, as in other

parts of Europe, the first half of the sixteenth century had seen a move towards more bureaucratic forms of administration. In the later Middle Ages, counsellors and officeholders had been entrusted with various tasks on an *ad hoc* basis and had given advice either as individuals or as members of committees which lacked a clear corporate identity. But now conciliar bodies with clear responsibilities and a fixed membership were formed. At the same time the princely household largely lost its role as a centre of administration.

All this is familiar enough, but it was not the end of the story. Most princes were not prepared to leave politics and administration entirely to the newly constituted councils, or even to decide controversial matters during the sessions of the relevant conciliar body held in their presence. Rather they reserved a number of important matters, such as dynastic policy, for example, or secret financial transactions, for their own decision. Papers relating to these *Reservatsachen*, reserved matters, were processed not by the normal councils nor by the central chancellery, but by a personal secretary who worked either in the prince's privy chamber or in a room in its immediate vicinity. This secretary was therefore often called *Kammersekretär*, chamber secretary. During the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the office of the personal secretary often became the nucleus of a separate chancellery, the court chancellery. If the prince required any advice on 'reserved matters' he asked some of his more important officeholders for their opinion on an *ad hoc* basis. These officeholders often received the official title of privy or secret councillor but they did not yet constitute a separate conciliar body with a permanent administrative identity. In most territories such bodies were not created until the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century.³

This general model of administrative development, which was outlined many decades ago by Gerhard Oestreich, also applies to Württemberg. Here we find three central administrative bodies in the later sixteenth century. First, the *Oberrat*, the so-called Upper Council (the name was derived from the fact that the council held its sessions on the first floor of the Stuttgart Castle); secondly, the Treasury or *Rentkammer*, which again was organized as a conciliar body; and, thirdly, the Church Council (*Kirchenrat*) which not only dealt with theological matters but also supervised the administration of the ecclesiastical property which had been secularized during the Reformation.⁴ The *Oberrat* was undoubtedly the most important institution but its influence on political decisions was limited. Rather it concentrated on legal matters and was in fact at least as much a court of law as an administrative body. Politically sensitive issues, as well as questions of patronage, were dealt with by the duke himself.

However, under Duke Friedrich's predecessor, Ludwig, who governed from 1568 to 1593, this often meant in practice that they were decided by Ludwig's personal secretary, Melchior Jäger von Gärtringen. Duke Ludwig was not too keen on reading official papers and even less on getting involved in the intricacies of the financial administration of his duchy, so more often than not he left these matters to Jäger. In fact Jäger's career shows that in the administrative

system which obtained in Württemberg in the later sixteenth century the position of personal secretary to the duke was the natural stepping stone for a potential favourite. Jäger, whose influence was so pervasive that he was sometimes referred to as 'Duke Melchior', ceased to perform the task of personal secretary himself in later years and was content to preside over the court chancellery as aulic and privy councillor. Nevertheless he had started his career as a humble clerk and had achieved his influence only because he handled the duke's personal papers and correspondence.⁵

The tensions between a bureaucratic central administration dealing with routine matters and the far less bureaucratic personal rule of the prince, and even the rise of a personal secretary to the position of favourite which we find in Württemberg in the later sixteenth century, were quite common in the German principalities of this period. However, what distinguished Württemberg from other territories was the absence of an estate of noblemen in the duchy and the strong position of the Diet, the *Landtag*. There were, of course, a number of noblemen holding fiefs from the duke in Swabia but they had managed to retain their independence and recognized only the emperor as their lord, that is they were *Reichsritter*, imperial knights. Some of these imperial knights did enter the service of the duke, served in his household or supervised the local administration as *Obervögte*, head bailiffs, but they were not represented in the assembly of Estates.⁶ Rather this assembly was dominated by the mayors and aldermen of the mostly quite small towns of the duchy. What is more, most of the ducal officeholders were recruited from this urban elite, a sort of patriciate, known as the *Ehrbarkeit*, and the same was true for the clergy. In fact, some senior Protestant theologians, the titular abbots of fourteen former monasteries, were also *ex officio* members of the territorial Diet and exerted a considerable influence on its discussions. The leading officeholders of the duchy were often related to the leaders of the Estates and senior clergymen, and one might in fact say that in Württemberg everybody who was anybody was related to everybody else.⁷

A closely knit elite dominated state, church and Diet. The Diet itself held an exceptionally strong position. In 1514 Duke Ulrich of Württemberg was forced by a popular rebellion to sign a treaty with his Estates, the famous Treaty of Tübingen (*Tübinger Vertrag*). The treaty established or confirmed a number of important privileges and liberties. Later political developments, in particular Duke Ulrich's exile between 1519 and 1534, had further reinforced the position of the Estates.⁸ Nevertheless after the death of Duke Ulrich in 1550 relations between his two immediate successors and the Estates had largely been quite harmonious. The dukes, their officeholders and the representatives of the Estates were all united in the effort to defend the Reformation settlement, which came under severe pressure in the later 1540s and early 1550s, and their political attitudes were largely inspired by the same set of confessional values.⁹

Duke Friedrich, however, who succeeded Ludwig in 1593, resented the power of this traditional network of families which dominated state and church

alike.¹⁰ He was himself largely a stranger to the duchy. Although he had been educated in Stuttgart and Tübingen he was a member of a cadet branch of the ducal dynasty and had governed the small county of Montbeliard or Mömpelgard before 1593. As Count of Mömpelgard he got involved for a time in the French wars of religion and his political and intellectual horizons were certainly much wider than those of Duke Ludwig, not to mention those of the average Württemberg officeholder. In fact he not only knew France quite well, but he also visited other European countries, for example England. Friedrich was proud to be created a Knight of the Garter in 1603 and had received the French Order of Saint-Michel even earlier.¹¹

When he succeeded as duke, Friedrich was determined not to have his freedom of action restricted by the network of officeholders, theologians and aldermen who traditionally dominated the duchy. It was therefore not surprising that his predecessor's more intimate advisers lost their influence under the new ruler. This applied in particular to Melchior Jäger, the once all-powerful *Kammersekretär* and privy councillor, who was almost totally excluded from important decisions once Friedrich had become familiar with his new principality.¹² On the other hand, Friedrich could hardly remove all members of the Upper Council, the Treasury and the Church Council from their positions. He therefore had to be content with recruiting a limited number of new men whom he employed to supervise the administration in general, to enforce his will against the old network of officeholders, and to deal with the great political projects he wanted to realize.

One of these new men was a nobleman and courtier, Christoph von Degenfeld, who seems to have concentrated on handling patronage matters. Another was Georg Elßlinger, who was appointed to the new office of *Landprokurator* in 1597.¹³ The *Landprokurator*, a sort of fiscal general, had the task of improving the duchy's financial administration and was expected to put an end to the widespread corruption among officeholders. The most important of the new men, however, was undoubtedly Matthäus Enzlin.¹⁴ Enzlin had acted as Friedrich's counsellor when the latter was still Count of Mömpelgard.¹⁵ When Duke Ludwig's last will was officially read in Stuttgart in August 1593, Enzlin was already present as Duke Friedrich's personal adviser. Similarly he stood beside the new duke when the latter received the representatives of the Estates in audience in November 1593.¹⁶

Enzlin's influence was quite clearly based on his expertise and knowledge as a lawyer. Although Friedrich apparently was not overly concerned about legal niceties and did not have much respect for lawyers in general, he needed their advice to realize his ambitious projects in domestic affairs as much as in his relations with the emperor and other princes. In 1598 his privy councillors, including Enzlin, advised him not to show his disrespect for the traditional privileges of the Estates too openly. He replied that the doctors 'might well cook their own pudding' but he was determined to govern free of any traditional restraints, otherwise he would prefer not to remain duke at all.¹⁷ Friedrich was

by inclination an autocratic ruler. He was a short-tempered man who did not suffer fools gladly, and in his opinion most people who contradicted him were fools. When, for example, the Estates protested against the new academy for noblemen which the duke had founded in Tübingen, one of the first of its kind in Germany,¹⁸ Friedrich's laconic comment was 'treschen ufs mhull', in other words that the representatives of the Estates deserved a thorough beating.¹⁹ And when his councillors, again including Enzlin, advised him that not only the Treaty of Tübingen but also the statutes enacted by the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire entitled his subjects to a proper trial in a regular court of law, the duke wrote that his councillors should not 'waffle' so much. If anybody acted against him, he would simply punish him, no matter what his status was.²⁰

However, in practice matters were not quite so straightforward and the duke needed somebody who was able to transform his quest for power into legal arguments. In late-sixteenth-century Germany, the dominant language of politics was the language of law. This was true for relations between the various princes of the empire but also for domestic politics in the various principalities of the empire, and if Enzlin's services were indispensable for the duke this was because he spoke this language so well. Moreover, by origin Enzlin belonged himself to the old-established governing elite of the duchy, and was therefore familiar with the principality's most important administrative and political problems, and, of course, with the prevailing patronage relations. He had studied in Tübingen, where he was made a doctor of law in 1576, had subsequently worked in Speyer at the Imperial Chamber Court and had later held a chair in the faculty of law in Heidelberg. In 1583 he returned to Tübingen as a professor and acted twice as *Rektor* of the university. He was employed as counsellor not only by Duke Ludwig, Friedrich's predecessor, but by quite a number of princes in southern Germany, whom he provided with legal advice. Enzlin's father had been director of the Church Council under Duke Ludwig and Enzlin was related to many important Württemberg families.²¹

One of the first great memoranda which Enzlin wrote for Duke Friedrich after 1593 was on Württemberg's relations with the Habsburgs. Ever since 1534 the duchy had been a fief of the House of Habsburg. This meant that although the dukes retained their seat in the imperial Diet and their status as princes of the empire, their immediate liege lord was the most senior Habsburg archduke, not the emperor in his capacity as feudal overlord over all German princes. In his memorandum of March 1594 on the problem of Württemberg's subinfeudation to Austria, Enzlin assessed the legal merits of the case at great length.²² He became the driving force, after the duke himself, behind the negotiations with Innsbruck and the imperial court in Prague which were undertaken to restore Württemberg's status as a direct imperial fief.²³ At the same time he was in charge of the complicated discussions with the Estates, the Diet and its committees, for it was the Estates which were to provide the emperor and the imperial dynasty with the costly compensation in cash which they demanded for the repeal of the subinfeudation. After five years of

protracted diplomatic and domestic bargaining the subinfeudation was finally repealed and the Württemberg Estates agreed to pay a huge sum of money to the House of Habsburg as compensation.²⁴ In return the Diet had insisted that Duke Friedrich should confirm the cherished Treaty of Tübingen and their traditional liberties once more. The duke was, however, extremely reluctant to do so. The very name of the treaty had, as he wrote, become odious to him by now and he wished that the devil should take those who had persuaded him in 1593 to confirm it in the first place – the duke was probably thinking of Jäger, his father's favourite. Finally, however, Enzlin and the members of the duke's entourage persuaded him to make some concessions to the Estates and a compromise could thus be reached.²⁵

The end of the subinfeudation was a personal triumph for Enzlin. In April 1594 he had been appointed the duke's councillor and in October 1596 his secret or privy councillor.²⁶ From the latter date onwards he seems to have taught less and less at his old university in Tübingen, and in 1602 he finally resigned his professorship, concentrating all his energy on his work as the duke's legal adviser. However, his title of councillor did not imply permanent membership of any corporate body.²⁷ He was *Rat von Haus aus*, that is he was allowed to submit his advice in writing from his lodgings in Tübingen. And in fact he continued to live mainly in Tübingen, although he also acquired a house in Stuttgart.²⁸ Because Enzlin was often absent from court he did not control access to the duke. Nor was he able to filter the petitions submitted to him, as Secretary Jäger had clearly done. In fact, the duke insisted on reading all petitions himself.²⁹

A Mere Locator Operarum

Nevertheless Enzlin's influence was considerable. Around 1600 he was already called 'cor et os principis', that is the heart and mouth of the prince. In a poem publicly recited at his brother-in-law's wedding he was addressed thus and apparently did not object.³⁰ Official correspondence relating to secret matters, in particular diplomatic negotiations, was often sent directly to Tübingen to be dealt with by Enzlin.³¹ But his influence was not limited to diplomatic affairs or negotiations with the Estates. Apparently Duke Friedrich had begun to channel an increasingly large share of his revenues not through the Treasury but through his privy purse. Large sums of money from this source were devoted to the purchase of manors, villages and whole lordships from the impoverished nobility living beyond the borders of the duchy or were used to provide these noblemen with loans and mortgages in the hope that they would have to cede their property to the duke, should they fail to repay the money.³² Enzlin was apparently the duke's principal agent in these rather complicated and somewhat shady financial transactions, in which Jewish moneylenders and merchants were frequently employed as brokers.³³ Thus large sums of money went through

Enzlin's hands. Unlike the officials of the duchy's Treasury Enzlin had never sworn a special oath binding him to act faithfully in financial matters. He had sworn only a normal councillor's oath which did not mention financial affairs at all. Later, when Enzlin was accused of corruption, of having embezzled some of the money the duke had given him, his opponents argued that the lack of a proper patent of office and the fact that the favourite had not been sworn in as the duke's treasurer or financial agent proved that Enzlin had interfered in matters which were beyond his responsibilities.³⁴

Enzlin, not surprisingly, saw matters differently. He agreed that he had been only *locator operarum* for the duke, as he put it, that is a sort of private contractor who had performed certain tasks, but by no means an officeholder. However, in his opinion this implied that he could not be judged as an officeholder, in particular not for perjury as he had never sworn an oath of office, at least as far as these financial transactions were concerned. Enzlin went even further and said that the letters patent appointing him a councillor did not make him an officeholder in any sense at all. After all, he had in earlier years also acted as counsellor for foreign princes and thus his relationship with the duke was not much closer than if he had been the King of Poland's adviser, giving his advice from his house in Tübingen.³⁵ This may have been somewhat disingenuous, but it was nevertheless true that Enzlin's position was extremely ill defined and never rested on any clear commission or patent. This did not prevent him, however, from procuring the dismissal of other councillors – on charges of corruption for example. Some of them were even imprisoned.³⁶

By 1600 Enzlin had certainly already made a lot of enemies. For example, in 1602 the former vicar of Untertürckheim, a small town near Stuttgart, who had left the duchy some time before, published a sermon. The vicar, a certain Thomas Birck, seems to have been a quarrelsome man, but it is nevertheless remarkable that he compared his opponents, and Enzlin was clearly one of them or perhaps rather their supreme patron, to the Saxon chancellor Krell. Birck gave his readers to understand that those who acted like Krell would suffer his fate too. Krell had been a sort of crypto-Calvinist who had made life uncomfortable for the Lutheran clergy of Saxony in the late 1580s. In 1591, after the death of his electoral patron, however, he had been arrested. Ten years later he was executed, after an impeachment by the Estates of Saxony.³⁷ Ironically enough Enzlin had been among the lawyers and legal experts who had provided the prosecution with legal advice.³⁸

Clearly by 1602 Duke Friedrich and his most influential adviser – although neither had any recognizable sympathies for Calvinism – had already fallen foul of the leaders of the Württemberg clergy. This was partly because they were pursuing a more liberal policy with regard to Jewish merchants, and partly also because they were trying to reduce the influence of the prelates in the Diet. In fact after 1599 relations between the duke and the Diet deteriorated rapidly. The duke was now determined to free himself of the constraints of the Treaty of Tübingen. Again it was Enzlin who provided him with the decisive legal

arguments. Enzlin did not advise Friedrich to revoke entirely the privileges which the Estates enjoyed, and it is doubtful whether he can be described as an advocate of 'absolutism', but he argued that the treaty needed to be modified in a special declaration to which the Diet was to give its assent. The duke was not only to be allowed to raise new customs duties and indirect taxes without the consent of the Estates, but Enzlin considered it even more crucial that the Diet should recognize its responsibility to provide the funds needed to pay for mercenaries should Württemberg be involved in a major war.³⁹ In 1607, when the tensions which were to lead to the outbreak of war in the empire in 1618 were already very much in evidence, this was certainly not an entirely implausible argument.

The Estates put up considerable resistance against the intended changes. Early in 1607 the Diet was dissolved by the duke because the delegates had proved too stubborn. The next Diet, after carefully manipulated elections, proved more amenable. In 1607, the Treaty of Tübingen was amended according to the duke's wishes.⁴⁰ This was another triumph for Enzlin, who had been responsible for the negotiations with the Estates. However, in January 1608 Duke Friedrich died. Relations between the duke and his eldest son Johann Friedrich had been fraught with tension in the years before 1608. Not only had the father kept about a dozen mistresses, something his son clearly resented,⁴¹ but he had also refused to finance the prince's luxurious lifestyle.⁴² As Enzlin had advised the duke on the education of his son, as on many other matters,⁴³ it was not surprising that Johann Friedrich now dismissed him. Melchior Jäger and a number of other councillors who had either been deprived of their offices during the preceding years or lost their influence now returned to favour.

Jäger was apparently the driving force behind the imprisonment and indictment of Enzlin in summer 1608, but other councillors agreed that Enzlin knew so much that he could not be allowed to go free.⁴⁴ The indictment against him raised no strictly political charges. Rather the fact that he had spent money from the duke's privy purse without keeping proper records and accounts provided his opponents with most of the material against him. After signing a confession under the threat of torture and a death sentence which the town court of Stuttgart was only too likely to pronounce, Enzlin was imprisoned in the fortress of Urach.⁴⁵ During his imprisonment he tried to mobilize support for his release outside Württemberg and instructed his wife and children to appeal to the *Kammergericht* in Speyer.⁴⁶ As a result new charges were brought against him in 1612. Again, however, none of these charges was directly related to the part he had taken in the late duke's attempts to subdue the Diet before 1608.⁴⁷

Some councillors were indeed of the opinion that such charges would have made the trial a much more straightforward affair, as Enzlin now claimed for himself the legal privileges of the Treaty of Tübingen, which stipulated that nobody was to be convicted without a proper trial. These councillors thought that Enzlin should be charged with having persuaded the late duke to pursue a policy which aimed 'ad eversionem totius status, obliteranda omnium

subditorum privilegia et mores patrios inducendumque extremum seditionis periculum', but clearly Johann Friedrich, who had since 1608 had a number of rather unpleasant encounters with the Estates himself, objected to such a political charge.⁴⁸

Thus Enzlin was convicted because he had broken his promise, given under oath, not to appeal to a court outside Württemberg, because he had besmirched the reputation of the duke and his officeholders, and finally because he had allegedly tried to provide Württemberg's enemies with material and papers which would have allowed them to claim a large part of the duchy as their own property.⁴⁹ In any case now more than ever Enzlin's release was seen as too dangerous. He had to die, for as it was argued twenty-eight years later during the impeachment of another powerful and unpopular early-seventeenth-century minister, the Earl of Strafford, 'stone dead hath no fellow'. And thus Enzlin was duly executed in Urach on 22 November 1613.⁵⁰

The Structure of a Career

At first glance Enzlin was a very unlikely figure as a favourite. He never really controlled access to the duke, neither in the physical sense nor in the sense that all or most petitions to the duke went through his hands. In fact, for weeks or perhaps even months on end he was not even present at court, dealing with business from his home in Tübingen.⁵¹ Nevertheless his contemporaries clearly saw him as a favourite, and given that Enzlin was so powerful but that this power was based not on any office with clear responsibilities but on the duke's personal favour, it would in fact be difficult to describe Enzlin as anything but a favourite. Indeed, in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Germany the rise of lawyers to the position of favourite was not exceptional. In the 1620s there was the case of the *Generalaudienzier*, provost martial general, Günther in Hesse-Kassel. Günther presided over the military jurisdiction of the principality and also held the position of *director causarum criminalium* and fiscal general. In 1628 he, like Enzlin, was tried and executed on the initiative of the Estates.⁵² Earlier there had been Chancellor Nikolaus Krell in electoral Saxony, mentioned above, who had dominated politics in the prince electorate between 1585 and 1591. Krell was also executed, though not until 1601.⁵³

What, however, are we to make of the charges of corruption raised against Enzlin after his fall? Were they just a cynical move in a political game or are they to be taken seriously? Does Enzlin's career and that of other favourites in Germany as well as in other European countries demonstrate that administrative practices had indeed become more corrupt during the course of the later sixteenth century? Linda Levy Peck has stated in her study *Court Patronage and Corruption* that in England the taking of bribes and official venality had indeed acquired a new dimension around 1600 and that in response to this development 'the types of practices labelled corrupt were extended . . . and bribery was

defined more narrowly'. Furthermore she has argued that charges of corruption constituted a political discourse which was employed to give voice to political opposition which would otherwise have been difficult to articulate.⁵⁴

However, it should not be forgotten that parliaments and estates were not alone in accusing officeholders of corruption. Rulers could speak the same language if they felt like it. Indeed men like Enzlin and his companion the *Landprokurator*, the fiscal general, Eßlinger, owed their career to the fact that Duke Friedrich considered most of his servants to be corrupt and that a large part of his revenues disappeared into their pockets.⁵⁵ And his son, Johann Friedrich, came to share this view once his honeymoon with the old-established elite, the *Ehrbarkeit*, was over.⁵⁶ Thus the discourse of corruption could, at least in Germany, be employed by the prince as much as by his officeholders and the Estates. In fact, in Enzlin's case it is plausible to call the discourse of corruption a language of consensus and not of opposition. For limiting the charges against Enzlin to embezzlement and corruption clearly allowed the real political issues to be avoided.

Legal proceedings against favourites, even when their original princely patrons were no longer alive as in Enzlin's case, were always politically explosive. Enzlin was not the only favourite to be brought to trial in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Germany on the initiative of the Estates or members of the ruling elite of officeholders and clergymen closely connected with the Estates. There were the cases – already mentioned – of Chancellor Krell in Saxony and of Fiscal General Günther in Hesse.⁵⁷ These examples show that impeachment was a procedure by no means limited to England, where the charges brought against Buckingham in 1626 are perhaps the most prominent example; if the Earl of Strafford were to be considered a favourite for the last stage of his career immediately before the meeting of the Long Parliament, his trial would offer another important example.⁵⁸

The problem with such judicial proceedings in England as well as in Germany was always that the defendant was likely to argue that he had only obeyed orders. It could seem preposterous to accuse of treason princely servants who had only tried to strengthen the authority of their master. There were essentially two answers to this defence. It was possible to concentrate on misdemeanours which were politically less explosive, such as the favourite's 'avarice' and the allegedly corrupt exploitation of his influence over the ruler. Thus the charge of corruption could be used to downplay the real issues and to maintain consensus between the prince and the Estates. If this most obvious line of attack failed, however, treason had to be redefined as a crime against a God-given objective order, not just against the personal will and the personal interests of the prince. Such a charge was much more explosive. To bring a favourite down in this way the entire position of the ruler within the legal system had to be redefined. The natural person of the ruler had to be distinguished from his 'body politic', which could be identified with the legal order. This could easily lead to a major political crisis, as events showed in England in 1626–7 during and after

the Duke of Buckingham's impeachment and even more so in 1641 when the Earl of Strafford was impeached and finally condemned by bill of attainder.

In Germany matters were different, as the trial against Krell in Saxony, which took place about ten years before Enzlin's execution, demonstrates. Of course the fact that Krell's former patron and master, Prince Elector Christian, had died when the chancellor was imprisoned made matters much easier. But this was not the whole story. Krell was accused of having acted against the Peace of Augsburg, one of the fundamental constitutions of the empire, and against the *Landfrieden*, the Perpetual Peace, of 1495.⁵⁹ Thus the objective legal order embodied in the imperial constitutions could provide a standard for defining treason in such a way that it was possible to charge favourites with having given counsel against the principles of this order. It was not necessary to redefine the position of the ruler, which was essentially limited in Germany by the constitution of the empire, thereby avoiding the risks of a major political crisis. However, there were clear limits to attempts to invoke the laws of the empire against 'evil counsellors' and in the Estates' favour. After all, at the end of the day the empire was constituted by its princes and high nobility, under the supervision and rule of the emperor, and the solidarity of the princes was unlikely to favour the territorial Estates. In Enzlin's case the chance was too great that other German princes, allies and friends of the late duke in particular and the law courts of the empire, especially the Chamber Court in Speyer, would intervene in his favour, as they in fact did.⁶⁰ Here the normal legal procedures as applied by the highest law courts of the empire were likely to work in Enzlin's favour. This was why all politically explosive issues were avoided in his trial and the prosecution essentially limited to charges of corruption. When the Imperial Chamber Court nevertheless ordered Enzlin's release from prison he was sentenced and condemned without further ado.⁶¹

The young duke, the officeholders and the Estates all welcomed charges of corruption against Enzlin because they allowed them to avoid the really sensitive issues. Although Enzlin's personal enemies, often men who had accepted gifts just as willingly as Enzlin in their time,⁶² clearly exploited the widespread criticism of corrupt practices to further their own ends and to undo their rival, there is no doubt that there was a widespread feeling that counsellors should not really behave in the way Enzlin had. Nor was this merely a question of private morals, of personal greed and avarice. Ultimately what was at stake here was the tension between the private and the public sphere.⁶³ This can be illustrated by looking at the tract written by Enenkel mentioned at the beginning of this essay. In his treatise Enenkel stressed that one of the favourite's defining features was that he did not respect the God-given order of society. He did not just have ideas above his station, he also acted above his station by interfering in business and in conflicts which did not really concern him, or should not have concerned him. Moreover, and this is an important point, the favourite used his influence to work against the common good and the public interest of the commonwealth, not just by pursuing his own interests in a reckless way but also by keeping

others, who otherwise might have given the prince better advice, busy by nourishing their private feuds and enmities. What was more, favourites tried to render suspect to the prince the ‘conventus subditorum in quibus de bono publico et utilitate universorum consulatur’, that is the Estates and their assemblies, which promoted the common interests of everybody. In the last resort they tried to prevent the meeting of the Diets altogether.⁶⁴

Enenkel’s definition of the favourite – commonplace enough in the early seventeenth century – quite clearly hinged on the distinction between the private and the public sphere, a distinction which Enenkel saw as necessary but which favourites did not respect. On matters of political significance princes in Enenkel’s opinion should consult properly constituted officeholders and the Estates of their dominions, not their personal friends or private counsellors without a proper office or commission. In practice, of course, the distinction between the private and the public on which Enenkel and other authors insisted⁶⁵ was highly problematic in a political system in which the court and the personal entourage of the ruler were often the real centre of government and in which patronage networks were all-pervasive. However, one might say that the special position of the favourite in the period under discussion here was defined by this very tension between two equally valid but conflicting moral codes: on the one hand an ideal of public consultation and of the common good, and on the other an ideal of friendship, of mutual loyalty between patron and client, and of course of personal devotion to the prince.⁶⁶ Men like Enzlin exploited this tension. They demonstrated that personal loyalty to the ruler, which a prince such as Duke Friedrich expected, and, what is more, their administrative skills provided the prince with a counterweight against a bureaucracy which he controlled only very incompletely because offices had become the virtual free-hold of those who held them or because officeholders were too closely connected to the Estates and local interests. But at the same time favourites were liable to become the victims of the tension they exploited. It was not just their wealth acquired in questionable ways which provoked resentment, but the very fact that they moved outside the normal system of administration and consultation, that they were, like Enzlin, only *locatores operarum*,⁶⁷ men of business, counsellors and attorneys serving the ruler in a private, not an official capacity. In a manner of speaking favourites had to be corrupt, regardless of their personal vices or virtues, because they stood outside the normal hierarchy of offices and because only patronage and the accepting and giving of gifts allowed them to acquire the power they strove for. For other officeholders such practices were the foundation perhaps for their private wealth and social advancement. For the favourite they were the very foundation of his political power.

In Württemberg, however, the entrenched caste of officeholders and the Estates were to triumph over the favourite in the seventeenth century. Not only was Enzlin executed, but fifteen years after his death a special Secret or Privy Council was created on the initiative, at least to some extent, of the Estates. The new council was to deal with the *Reservatsachen*, the secret business, which in

the past had been the responsibility of the duke's personal secretaries and those counsellors who happened to enjoy his special trust. One might say the position of favourite was transformed into or rather replaced by a bureaucratic institution with a corporate identity.⁶⁸ The Estates now faced an administrative body with a clearly defined membership which allowed them to hold the privy councillors to account for any violations of their privileges. Private secretaries and favourites like Enzlin had been able to plead that all controversial decisions had been taken by the duke himself or under the influence of other councillors. In the end, however, this was not much help to Enzlin, who became the victim of the social group to which he belonged and against which he revolted, the all-powerful *Ehrbarkeit*.

Notes

1. Georg Acacius Enenkel, *Liber Baro Hoheneccius, Sejanus seu de praepotentibus regum ac principum ministris commonefactio* (Argentorati, 1620).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
3. G. Oestreich, 'Das Persönliche Regiment der deutschen Fürsten am Beginn der Neuzeit', in *idem, Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 201–34.
4. J. A. Vann, *The Making of a State: Württemberg, 1593–1793* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), pp. 53–88; W. Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden des Herzogtums Württemberg und ihre Beamten, 1520–1629*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1972), i, pp. 15–64.
5. For the reign of Duke Ludwig and Jäger's influence see M. Rudersdorf, 'Herzog Ludwig, 1568–1593', in R. Uhland, ed., *900 Jahre Haus Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 163–73; Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, pp. 402–6; K. Pfaff, *Württembergischer Plutarch* (Esslingen, 1830), pp. 1–9; Vann, *Making*, p. 62.
6. D. Mertens, 'Württemberg', in M. Schaab and H. Schwarzmäier, eds, *Handbuch der Baden-Württembergischen Geschichte*, ii: *Die Territorien im Alten Reich* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 1–163, at pp. 89–90, 94. For the development of the Landtag see W. Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag* (Stuttgart, 1957) and F. L. Carsten, *Princes and Parliament in Germany: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1959), ch. 1.
7. For the *Ehrbarkeit* see H. Decker-Hauff, 'Die geistige Führungsschicht Württembergs', in G. Franz, ed., *Beamtentum und Pfarrerstand, 1400–1800* (Limburg, 1972), pp. 51–80; cf. Grube, *Landtag*, pp. 226–7, for the status of the prelates in the Diet.
8. Mertens, 'Württemberg', pp. 74–82.
9. H. Maurer, 'Herzog Christoph als Landesherr', *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, 68/69 (1968–9), pp. 112–38; Grube, *Landtag*, pp. 224–36.
10. There is no adequate modern biography, but cf. E. Schneider, *Württembergische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1896), pp. 200–13; H. Gmelin, *Über Herzog Friedrich I. von Württemberg und seine Stände* (PhD thesis, Tübingen/Stuttgart, 1885); A. E. Adam, 'Herzog Friedrich I von Württemberg und die Landschaft', *Württembergische Vierteljahrsheshefte*, new series 25 (1916), pp. 210–29; O. Borst, *Württemberg und seine Herren* (Esslingen, 1987), pp. 101–9; G. Raff, *Hier gut Württemberg allewege*, ii (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 4–55.
11. R. Uhland, 'Herzog Friedrich I (1593–1608)', in Uhland, *900 Jahre*, pp. 174–82, at pp. 177–8.
12. Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, p. 33; Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, Cod. hist. fol. 320, 'Georg Hengher, Württembergische Chronik', p. 264.
13. Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, pp. 34, 226–7, 275 6, and G. Lang, 'Landprokurator Georg Eßlinger', *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, 5 (1941), pp. 34–87.
14. For Enzlin's biography see Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, pp. 263–70; Pfaff, *Plutarch*, 11–35; [Anonymous], 'Der Prozeß des Kanzlers Dr. Matthäus Enzlin', *Württembergische Jahrbücher* (1827), pp. 271–326; and (1828), pp. 171–200. See further the entries in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* and the *Neue Deutsche Biographie*.

15. A. E. Adam, ed., *Württembergische Landtagsakten*, 2nd series, 1592–1620, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1910–19), i, p. 76, n. 4.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–81, 86.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 557–9: Degenfeld, chancellor and Enzlin to duke about negotiations with the Estates, 11 December 1598, and Duke Friedrich's answer.
18. On the *collegium illustre* in Tübingen see N. Conrad, *Ritterakademien der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1982), pp. 154–200.
19. Friedrich's comment on the grievances raised by the Diet against the *collegium*, 14 February 1599, relating in particular to the fact that most grants would go to foreign students: *Landtagsakten*, ii, pp. 47–8.
20. *Landtagsakten*, ii, p. 41, 13 February 1599, cf. pp. 39–41 for the much more moderate advice of the ducal commissioners.
21. See above, note 14, for biographical information on Enzlin.
22. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (hereafter HStA), A 107, Fasc. 13 a, no. 8a, 23 March 1594.
23. For Enzlin's activities see in particular HStA Stuttgart, A 107, Fasc. 14 a, nos 22–5 and 32 b.
24. Grube, *Landtag*, pp. 251–63; *Landtagsakten*, i, pp. 456–83; ii, pp. 1–30, 88–176.
25. The duke initially refused to have the Treaty of Tübingen even mentioned in the final resolution of the Diet: *Landtagsakten*, ii, p. 136, 10 March 1599; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 137–48, and see further i, p. 559 (quoted above, note 17); also Grube, *Landtag*, pp. 262–3.
26. Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, pp. 263–4; cf. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 13, no. 83, letters patent appointing Enzlin as councillor, 23 April 1594, and no. 85, appointment as privy councillor (with lodgings in Tübingen!), 30 October 1596.
27. As James Allen Vann has put it, the *Geheime Räte* (privy councillors) were 'a pool of advisors rather than a functioning agency, though records survive of sporadic committee meetings in the first three years of the seventeenth century' (Vann, *Making*, p. 68). The Privy Council as a separate institution was not founded until 1628.
28. See above, note 26, with reference to Enzlin's appointment as privy councillor in 1596 and the correspondence between Duke Friedrich and Enzlin, HStA Stuttgart, G 59, Fasc. 11. See also Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, p. 264, on Enzlin's travels.
29. See 'Hengher, Chronik', p. 264, and Enzlin's own testimony in his justification, HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 17, fol. 54r.
30. Thus Thomas Birck, *Letze Predig Thoma Birckii* (Speyer, 1602), preface, pp. 72–4; cf. R. Stahlecker and E. Staiger, eds, *Diarium Martini Crucis*, iii: 1600–1605 (Tübingen, 1958), p. 434, 18 May 1602. For Birck see also below, note 37.
31. Duke Friedrich to his Kammersekretär Sattler from Urach, 14 November 1599, HStA Stuttgart, G 59, Fasc. 11, instructing him to send all important correspondence to Enzlin in Tübingen; only the routine business ('gemeine sachen') was to be dealt with by the chancellery in Stuttgart.
32. See the records of Enzlin's trial, in particular HStA Stuttgart A 48 A, Fasc. 2, no. 98, 'Protocoll', 19 November 1608, esp. fols 3v–5v, and Fasc. 3, no. 109, 'Hauptbedenckhen', fols 30r–33r. Cf. Fasc. 3, no. 117, Enzlin's 'Deprecationsschrift', October 1608. See also Pfaff, *Plutarch*, pp. 20–3, and for the duke's attempt to extend his territory Schneider, *Geschichte*, pp. 208–9.
33. This was one of the charges raised against Enzlin ('Protocoll', fols 2r–3v); see also HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 1, *passim*.
34. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 2, no. 98, 'Protocoll', fols 3r–5v: charge relating to interference in 'alienum negotium'. It would have been the *Rentmeister*'s (treasurer) responsibility to deal with these matters.
35. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 12, no. 77, Enzlin's interrogation by the ducal commissioners, 3 February 1613: 'bey Herzog Friedrich sey er nur locator operarum gewesen ohne beaidigung und derselben anderst nit verbunden gewesen als wann einer bestallung vom König von Polen habe' (no pagination). Cf. 'Hauptbedenckhen', fol. 66v.
36. Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, pp. 242–3 and 195–6. For the part the dismissed councillors took in the proceedings against Enzlin see HStA Stuttgart A 48 A, Fasc. 17, Enzlin's justification, fols 13r–18r, 36r–38r and 40v, 56r.
37. Birck, *Predig*, pp. 82ff, refers to Krell's trial and quotes a funeral sermon on Krell (Nicolaus Blumius, *Leichpredigt über den custodierten D. Nicolaum Krell* (Magdeburg, 1601)) which gave an extremely hostile account of Krell and his trial. For Krell and his fate cf. T. Klein, *Der Kampf um die zweite Reformation in Kursachsen, 1586–1591* (Cologne, 1962), in particular pp. 20–35; B. Böhnenstädt, *Das Processverfahren gegen den kursächsischen Kanzler Dr. Nicolaus Krell, 1591–1601*,

- pt i (Halle a. d. S., 1901), and A. V. Richard, *Der Kurfürstlich sächsische Kanzler Dr. Nicolaus Krell, 2 vols* (Dresden, 1859).
38. Richard, *Krell*, ii, pp. 258–66, prints the ‘Bedenken’ by Dr Varnbüler and Enzlin, both professors of law in Tübingen, dated 2 July 1594.
 39. See Enzlin’s memorial, HStA Stuttgart, A 34, Fasc. 28 b, no. 1, 25 January 1607, and an earlier version of the same memorial, *Landtagsakten*, ii, pp. 511–30, 27 November 1606.
 40. Grube, *Landtag*, pp. 265–73; *Landtagsakten*, ii, pp. 542–764.
 41. Raff, *Württemberg*, ii, p. 39.
 42. See for example HStA Stuttgart, G 66, Fasc. 2, Duke Friedrich to Prince Johann Friedrich, 3 May 1607.
 43. See HStA Stuttgart, A 274, Fasc. 72.
 44. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 2, no. 98, ‘Protocoll’, November/December 1608, fols 9r–v, in particular Dr Bozer’s *votum*.
 45. See HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 3, no. 109, ‘Hauptbedenkchen’; Fasc. 5, no. 127 b, Enzlin’s submission, 13 March 1609 (Enzlin had to accept life imprisonment and had to pay compensation of 119,496fl. for the money which he had allegedly embezzled).
 46. See e.g. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 6, no. 4, Enzlin’s wife and sons to Duke Johann Friedrich, 22 August 1612; Fasc. 11, no. 6, Enzlin’s sons to the brother of the reigning duke, Ludwig Friedrich, 22 August 1612; Fasc. 11, no. 11, mandate of the Imperial Chamber Court, presented 10 December 1612, asking the duke to justify his procedure against Enzlin or to release him. See further HStA Stuttgart, C 3, Fasc. 926, in particular the memorial by Enzlin’s attorney (undated), in which he castigated the original proceedings against his client who had been blackmailed into signing his own confession.
 47. See HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 13, no. 98, report by ducal councillors, 29 July 1613, and Fasc. 11, ‘Iudicialprotocoll’ 1613. See also Fasc. 8, no. 92, report by councillors 20 February 1613.
 48. HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 13, no. 98, report 29 July 1613, art. viii. For Enzlin’s attempt to invoke the privileges of the Treaty of Tübingen: Fasc. 11, ‘Iudicialprotocoll’ 1613, p. 26.
 49. See above, note 47, and Grube, *Landtag*, p. 277.
 50. C. V. Wedgwood, *Thomas Wentworth, First Earl of Strafford, 1593–1641: A Revaluation* (London, 1961), p. 369, quoting Clarendon’s *History of the Great Rebellion*.
 51. See above, notes 26 and 28.
 52. L. W. Grotewold, ‘Der Prozeß des landgräflichen Raths Dr. Wolfgang Gunther (1627–28)’, *Hessenland*, 12 (1898), pp. 226–38, 270–2, 298–301; W. Keim, ‘Landgraf Wilhelm V. von Hessen-Kassel vom Regierungsantritt 1627 bis zum Abschluß des Bündnisses mit Gustav Adolf 1631’, pt 1, *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 12 (1962), pp. 130–210, esp. pp. 164–9.
 53. For Krell, see above, note 37. For his position as first minister in the central administration, cf. W. Ohnsorge, ‘Die Verwaltungsreform unter Christian I. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der zentralen Behördenbildung Kursachsens im 16. Jahrhundert’, *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte*, 63 (1943), pp. 26–80, at pp. 57–80.
 54. L. L. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (Boston, 1990), pp. 163 and 185–207.
 55. See for example Enzlin’s memorial of 25 January 1607, HStA Stuttgart A 34, Fasc. 28 b, fol. 45r; Bernhardt, *Zentralbehörden*, i, p. 34, and Lang, ‘Eßlinger’, pp. 41–4.
 56. In December 1610 Johann Friedrich referred to the ‘devilish corruptions’ (‘teuffelische corruptiones’) among his officeholders: *Landtagsakten*, iii, pp. 279 and 281; see also the duke’s justification for employing noblemen as officeholders and *Obervögte*, *ibid.*, p. 274 (9 December).
 57. See above, notes 37 and 52.
 58. For the impeachment in England see C. G. C. Tite, *Impeachment and Parliamentary Judicature in Early Stuart England* (London, 1974); cf. C. Russell, ‘The Theory of Treason in the Trial of Strafford’, *English Historical Review*, 80 (1965), pp. 30–50.
 59. Richard, *Krell*, ii, pp. 179–81, articles 42–5 of Krell’s interrogation relating to ecclesiastical matters, with reference to the Peace of Augsburg (the Peace had, according to the strict Lutheran and Catholic interpretation, declared Calvinism illegal, a religious denomination which Krell was supposed to have supported) and p. 187, articles 7 and 8, interrogation in political matters referring to the empire’s ‘constitutions’ which Krell was accused of having undermined by pursuing a warlike policy and having granted support to the French Huguenots.

60. Enzlin's wife and sons did argue in 1612 that his imprisonment was an insult to the entire estate of princes in the empire ('Reichsfürstenstand') as he had served one of them, the late duke, so faithfully. See HStA Stuttgart, A 48 A, Fasc. 6, no. 4, and Fasc. 11, no. 6 (as above, note 46).
61. As above, note 46 (mandate by Chamber Court). Enzlin's companion Eßlinger was tried by the town court of Stuttgart, but in December 1613 the Imperial Chamber Court peremptorily ordered his release from prison, an order which the Württemberg authorities reluctantly obeyed just over a year later; see Lang, 'Eßlinger', pp. 63–4 and 73–83.
62. The tension between conflicting moral codes is illustrated by the criticism which Enzlin faced by other councillors. Dr Eisengrein argued that Enzlin, as opposed to other officeholders, had accepted gifts as a reward not only for work which he had really done himself – this was clearly seen as acceptable – but also for the efforts of others which he later claimed as his own (HStA Stuttgart, A 42, Fasc. 25, no. 190, 28 March 1608). Cf. A 48 A, Fasc. 17, Enzlin's justification, fol. 54v, stressing that it was quite normal to receive gifts ('Verehrungen') in his position.
63. For contemporary opinions on the separation between private and public and between the prince's private friends and public councillors see Christoph Besold, *De Consilio politico axiomata* (Tübingen, 1615), § 134, p. 88; cf. the general invective against favourites, §§ 79–99 and 129, as well as § 135, pp. 88–9; cf. § 140, p. 91 against the 'secretarii intimi'. For the notion of the private and public see further [Bartholomeus Keckermann], *Cursus Philosophici disputatio xxxiv . . . de aula principis . . . praeside Bartholomeo Keckermanno, respondente Simone Clugio Daniscano* (Danzig, 1608), in particular part II, problema vii; and Bartholomäus Keckermann, *Systema disciplinae politicae* (Hanoviae, 1608), liber I, cap. XXIII, pp. 367ff.; cf. W. Weber, *Prudentia Gubernatoria: Studien zur Herrschaftslehre in der deutschen politischen Wissenschaft des 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1992), p. 213, with reference to Lipsius, and p. 255, n. 53. See also most recently G. Chittolini, 'The "Private", the "Public", the State', *Journal of Modern History*, 67, supplement (1995), pp. S34–S61.
64. Enenkel, *Sejanus*, pp. 43, 57–8.
65. Cf. Besold, *Axiomata*.
66. Cf. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, p. 173: 'If the language of law and religion emphasised responsibility to the public commonwealth, writings on the courtier stressed his or her private relationship to the king.'
67. See above, note 35.
68. See Vann, *Making*, pp. 85–6. Still useful is L. T. Spittler, 'Geschichte des württembergischen Geheimen Ratscollegiums', in *idem, Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K. Wächter, xiii (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1837), pp. 279–452, at pp. 331–9. The new Privy Council was expressly created to prevent favourites and chamber secretaries or mere courtiers from exercising political influence and its members had to swear an oath to act not just in the prince's but also in the country's and the Estates' interest.

Staying in Power: The Count-Duke of Olivares

J. H. ELLIOTT

One day in September 1625, some four years after the accession of Philip IV as King of Spain, a Madrid scrivener interrupted the lunch of a royal official responsible for public order in the capital, saying that he had urgent news for his ears alone. A neighbour of his, a maker of leather jerkins called Antonio Diaz, had discovered that his wife had been administering him certain potions to make him ‘love her well’. These potions had been provided by another neighbour, a woman called Leonor. When he taxed Leonor with attempting to cast a spell over him, she told him what she had already told his wife – that the potions would do him no harm, and that no less a person than the king was living proof of this. For the very same potions had been administered to his Majesty on the orders of the Count of Olivares (pls 24 and 41–6), to ensure that he would retain his hold over the king’s affections. Later investigations indicated that, in addition to the administration of potions, Leonor’s magical arts had included casting spells over the king’s handkerchief and strips of the royal shoe-leather.¹

Allegations of sorcery and enchantment were common currency among those who aspired to bring about the overthrow of favourites. In Madrid, where they provided a continuous accompaniment to the twenty-two years of Olivares’ rule, they surfaced in an unusually sophisticated form in 1635 when Calderón presented his court spectacle, *El mayor encanto, amor*, on the island that had been built in the lake of the gardens of the new palace of the Buen Retiro. This was transformed for the occasion into Circe’s island. It was widely alleged at the time that the king was being prevented by Olivares from leading his armies on campaign against the French, and the audience, beginning with Philip himself, would have had no difficulty in equating Circe with Olivares and Ulysses with the king held in thrall by his favourite.² This was a text that needed little decoding. Philip, like Ulysses, must open his eyes to the truth, turn his back on the seductive delights of the pleasure palace built for him by his favourite, and rise to the responsibilities of his royal office.

The allegation that a monarch had fallen victim to the exercise of magical arts was a convenient device for criticizing his rule without subverting the majesty

of his kingship. But it may also have responded to a psychological need in the political culture of early modern European societies, susceptible as they were at every level to allegations of the role of malign influences in human affairs. It was not easy for nobles and grandes who saw themselves collectively as the king's natural counsellors to accept the fact that, of his own free will, he had placed all his trust in a single individual, an omnicompetent minister. If, as happened in the Spain of Olivares, that minister remained dominant for year after year, in spite of glaring mistakes and failures of policy, it was natural to assume that he had acquired some special and improper influence over the monarch. At the very least, such an assumption made it easier for the opposition to explain, not least to itself, what otherwise seemed inexplicable – its continuing failure to dislodge an unpopular minister from the royal favour.

Although explanations of allegedly irrational royal behaviour in terms of bewitchment contained a large element of self-deception, they also hinted at an underlying truth. The magic might not be so crudely administered as it was by Leonor with her magic potions, but in a system of government in which the personal and the institutional coexisted in uneasy combination the minister-favourite needed gifts and skills beyond the ordinary, first to win, and then to retain, the confidence of his king. In particular, he needed, if not the arts of the magician, at least a high degree of psychological insight – an ability to see into the darker recesses of the monarch's personality – in order to respond to every changing royal mood and avoid some fatal step which would lose him his master's trust. Both Olivares and Richelieu possessed this insight to an almost uncanny extent, and it played a vital part in their retention of power for twenty years or more.³

In making the most of this insight, Richelieu possessed one important advantage that Olivares lacked – the influence and prestige conferred by clerical status. Richelieu played with great skill the role of the stern but forgiving father-confessor to a monarch racked by a morbid fear of the devil and damnation. Given the complexities of Louis XIII's tortured personality, the cardinal no doubt needed this additional advantage in his dealings with his royal master. But even Philip, with his more docile temperament, required careful handling. The obsequious self-abasement that Olivares imposed upon himself in order to win the initial favour of a prince to whom at the beginning he was personally antipathetic included the famous episode of his kissing the prince's chamber-pot;⁴ and, even when Philip's confidence was gained, the count could never take it for granted. Philip was malleable but he also possessed a streak of obstinacy, and Olivares' enemies were ready to pounce at any hint of a false move.

Retaining Philip's favour therefore required as much thought and energy as the initial winning of it – something that does not seem to have been true of the relationship between Philip's father and *his* favourite, the Duke of Lerma (pl. 33). All we know about Philip III suggests that his sense of personal inadequacy when confronted by the awesome burdens of his royal office made him turn

with a profound sense of relief to Lerma as his *alter ego*. Philip IV, too, suffered from feelings of personal inadequacy, but he was more conscious than his father of the need to rise to the occasion and perform his royal duties. He also had more spirit, and a livelier intelligence. This demanded of Olivares constant circumspection in his dealings with his royal master.

The circumspection, however, was accompanied by a high-risk strategy. Olivares' own sense of the high importance of Spanish kingship, and of the political necessity of deploying the full panoply of royal power in order to promote his programme of reforms, forced him to write a script for Philip IV which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would eventually involve his own exclusion from it. Olivares' programme demanded a *Felipe el Grande* – Philip the Great – a king of Spain as politically astute as Ferdinand the Catholic, as heroic in war as Charles V, and as just and conscientious as Philip II. But, by definition, such a paragon would have no need of a favourite. If Philip could indeed be transformed into this paragon, what place remained for Olivares in the order of things?

The grooming of the king for greatness would, of course, take time. Philip was sixteen when he came to the throne in 1621, and for much of the decade Olivares could successfully present himself to the young monarch as the man best equipped to educate him in the varied arts of kingship. This gave him the opportunity to rebuke Philip when he strayed from the path of duty, and in so doing to increase the dependence upon him of a monarch whose aspirations to glory were accompanied by a dispiriting awareness of his own need to be kept up to the mark if they were ever to be realized. In a famous exchange in 1626, when Olivares, not for the first nor for the last time, requested permission to retire from the royal service because the king was failing to apply himself to his duties, Philip replied in words which speak volumes about Olivares' success in establishing himself in the role of guardian of the king's better self. 'Count,' the royal reply began, 'I am determined to do as you ask of me both for my own sake and yours, and your request can in no way be looked upon as excessive temerity by someone as conscious as I am of your zeal and your love. I will do what you ask, Count, and I return your paper with my reply so that you can include it in your entailed estate, to show your descendants how they should speak to their kings. . . .'⁵

Those words, 'how they should speak to their kings', emphasize the supreme importance to the favourite of finding the right language in which to address his royal master. This language, as Philip makes clear at the end of his reply, must not be self-serving – it must, he writes, be 'free of human consideration and interest'. Olivares succeeded in forging such a language for himself in his dealings with Philip, although it had to be adapted to new circumstances as the king matured and the relationship changed. It was a language at once deferential and frank, and its persistent theme was that of disinterestedness – a theme depicted on the title-page of *El Fernando*, a heroic poem by Olivares' friend the Count of La Roca, where the Atlas figure of the count-duke is

portrayed on the left as naked of interest and, on the right, as clothed with valour (pl. 24).

In choosing to emphasize this theme above all others, Olivares was consciously pitting himself against the traditional image of the self-serving favourite. He refused to use the word *valido* or *privado* of himself, preferring always to be known as a 'minister', or as 'the king's faithful minister'.⁶ This same theme of disinterested minister was echoed by his admirers and publicists – by the Count of La Roca in his *Fragmentos históricos de la vida de Don Gaspar de Guzmán*, completed at the end of 1628, and by Francisco de Quevedo in his sycophantic play of 1629, *Cómo ha de ser el privado*, even if Quevedo himself continues to use the offending word *privado*, albeit with a clear intention of sanitizing it.⁷ The play's hero, the Marquis of Valisero (a transparent anagram of Olivares), adopts exactly the same stance and the same kind of language as those adopted by Olivares when he sought to guide and control the policies of his royal master.

The stance was that of the minister who tells the truth, however unwelcome, while insisting that it was for the king himself to make the final decision. It was precisely in 1629, the year of Quevedo's play, that the relationship between Olivares and the king went through an unusually rough passage, which for many at court seemed to presage the count-duke's imminent downfall. The two men came into conflict over Philip's expressed determination to leave Spain to assume personal command of his armies in Italy, at a time of acute crisis for the Monarchy both in Flanders and in the Mantuan War. Philip was being openly urged by the count-duke's enemies to assert his independence, and their carefully orchestrated campaign was well designed to play on the young king's well-known cravings for glory on the battlefield.

In the flurry of papers exchanged between king and favourite over this contentious issue, Olivares assumes the role of the cautious counsellor who insists on pointing out the practical difficulties that a headstrong monarch seemed determined to ignore.⁸ 'This', he writes at the end of one of his memoranda, 'is the overall plan for this great movement of arms, drawn up by someone who is totally opposed to it....'⁹ In producing the plan, however reluctantly, the count-duke was simply performing his ministerial duty as he conceived it. That duty, as he explained in another of his papers, was the logical outcome of historical developments. Ever since affairs of state in Europe had been conducted, as he put it, with 'policy and method', no prince had been able to attend to them full-time. It was therefore the duty of the minister to prepare carefully digested statements of the pros and cons of a particular line of action, so that the prince could make as informed a choice as possible.¹⁰

This, as Olivares saw it, was the fundamental argument for the existence of a single, omnicompetent minister, a figure far removed from the old-style favourite. Possessed at once of a mastery over the mass of business generated by the new bureaucratic state, and of a rectitude which sprang from absolute dedication to the royal service, such a minister was ideally placed to provide the

wise and disinterested counsel that would enable a hard-pressed monarch to reach his solitary decisions. The idealized image of the minister-favourite's role was to provide the foundations for the working relationship established between Olivares and the king once the storms of 1629 were past. The days of Philip's tutelage were now over. In August 1629 the king produced a state document of a kind which – in the admiring words of Olivares to his colleagues – no other ruler of Spain since Ferdinand the Catholic would have been capable of producing by his own unaided effort.¹¹ The working minister had now created what he had always claimed it had been his intention to create – the effective counterpart to a working minister in a working monarch.

The new relationship held, in spite of periodic difficulties, like those of 1635 when Philip's aspirations to become a warrior-king reasserted themselves. It was a relationship cemented by a shared servitude to the overwhelming necessities of the state. During the 1630s Philip was putting in long hours at his desk. Olivares, for his part, worked without respite, and let everyone know it. The parade of unremitting labour was itself a useful weapon in his armoury, since it helped to foster the impression of his indispensability in the eyes of the king. Careful, as always, to leave the decisions to the monarch, his language remained a language of deference, laced at moments of crisis with expressions of self-abasement. Periodically he would ask for permission to leave office, as in a letter of 1642 in which, after prostrating himself yet again at the king's feet, he observed that the most miserable university professor is allowed to retire after twenty years of service, and he had already served twenty-one.¹² But these offers, however genuine they may have been at the time, were nonetheless made in the knowledge that the king's need of him was, if anything, even greater than his own need of the king. Philip had become dependent on the untiring efforts of a sleepless minister who gave him unstinting devotion and addressed him with a reverence that bordered on adulation.

The king later admitted this condition of dependency, at least implicitly. When he finally gave Olivares leave to retire in January 1643, he announced his intention of ruling on his own, explaining in a letter to the count-duke's son-in-law that 'the burden of government and the management of affairs will now depend directly on my person, for with the Count gone I dare not entrust to anybody what I entrusted to him'.¹³ Some months later he wrote to his confidante, Sor María de Agreda, assuring her that he was resolute in his determination to turn away from his former style of government. Although, he wrote, 'there are some who aspire to *valimiento* (for this is a very natural human condition), they are deceived. I will try to *valerme* [make use of] all of them, each and every one where most appropriate. . .'.¹⁴ For the second half of his reign he struggled hard to keep his word, although in practice Don Luis de Haro discreetly carried out many of the duties formerly exercised by his uncle the count-duke. Always in the background there must have loomed over Philip the shade of Olivares, summoning him to greatness (pl. 25).

The count-duke's skill in moulding a monarch who would continue to see the world through his eyes, and who would still struggle to play the part written for him after the man who combined the roles of playwright and stage-manager had left the scene for good, suggests the strength of the hold that he gained over the king. It was a hold which understandably drove his enemies, during those twenty-two long years, to frustration and despair. But is that hold – achieved, as here suggested, by a shrewd insight into the personality of his royal master, and by a capacity to involve him in a shared world of service to the ideal of the greatness and *reputación* of a king of Spain – sufficient of itself to explain his survival in power for so long?

In Spain, as in the other monarchies of early-seventeenth-century Europe, no constitutional mechanism existed for removing an unpopular minister or favourite from power, although the English were at this moment struggling to achieve this through the parliamentary device of impeachment. Short of armed revolt or assassination, therefore, favourites were irremovable without the consent of the monarch. In France, the enemies of Concini removed him by assassination, while those of Richelieu tried, and failed, to remove him by revolt. They ordered such matters differently in Spain. A relatively domesticated nobility might mutter and cabal, as it seems to have done in the Duke of Medinaceli's house in the 1630s,¹⁵ but this was a nobility that had lost the habit of revolt. With no upper chamber in the Cortes of Castile to provide a constitutional forum for opposition, all the grandees could manage by way of concerted action was collective withdrawal from court, as happened in 1634 and again in 1642 during the count-duke's final months of power.¹⁶ While such mass abstentions presumably sent a strong message to the king, they still left the initiative in his hands.

The joint action of the grandees, in any event, came very late in the day, and looks like a manifestation more of collective weakness than of collective strength. This weakness is all the more striking when their loathing of the count-duke is taken into account. The Duke of Lerma had remained in power for twenty years, but he had used his massive influence and powers of patronage to bind the great aristocratic houses to his own, constructing in the process a vast network of kinship and clientage which aimed to leave nobody out in the cold.¹⁷ Olivares, by contrast, almost seems to have gone out of his way to slight and humiliate the grandees, eschewing the favours and the *douceurs* which, as they receded into the past, made the years of Lerma's ascendancy look increasingly like a golden age for the great houses of Castile.

Yet, in spite of refusing to play by the rules, Olivares held on to power for even longer than Lerma. If his skill in shaping the king to his own designs was the key to his success, other important elements too must surely have come into play, for (as the career of Alvaro de Luna had shown) not even the most favoured of royal favourites can hold on to power indefinitely when the political establishment is ranged solidly against him. Olivares clearly benefited

from the unwillingness of the aristocracy to challenge openly the king's choice of minister-favourite in a society in which loyalty to the monarch had been inculcated by countless theoretical arguments reinforced by at least a century of effective political practice. But no favourite operates in a political and social vacuum, and the count-duke naturally made use of a whole range of devices to buttress his hold on power.

In some ways the devices he did not use, or used to only a limited degree, are almost as revealing of his approach and style as those to which he did in fact resort. Fear undoubtedly played a part in his retention of power, but the apparatus of repression deployed by Olivares looks unimpressive in comparison with that deployed by Richelieu. The censorship laws were tightened in 1627, but even in their revised form they do not seem to have been very effective in preventing the circulation of pasquins and anti-Olivares tracts.¹⁸ A special junta for the enforcement of obedience was set up in 1634,¹⁹ and there were one or two spectacular cases of persecution of individuals who had fallen foul of the regime, like Don Fadrique de Toledo, or Francisco de Quevedo, arrested under cover of darkness in December 1639 and summarily incarcerated in the convent of San Marcos in León, where he remained in miserable captivity until after the count-duke's fall from power.²⁰ But these seem to have been relatively isolated episodes, and there is little indication of the ruthless repressiveness with which Richelieu treated dissidents and rivals.

Nor did pomp and circumstance represent essential concomitants to the power of Olivares, as they did to that of Richelieu. There could hardly have been a more striking contrast than that between the cardinal, looking every inch a prince of the church as he swept into a room with his impressive entourage, and the count-duke bustling around the palace with state papers stuck into his hatband and dangling from his waist, reminding those who saw him of nothing so much as a scarecrow.²¹ At least from the mid-1620s his table was austere, his personal expenditure moderate for someone of his status and position,²² and neither his apartments in the palace nor his country retreat at Loeches boasted the splendours that surrounded Richelieu in the Palais Cardinal.

If neither the apparatus of terror nor the apparatus of pomp played a significant part in Olivares' retention of power, we must turn elsewhere for explanations of his political longevity. Patronage, inevitably, was a potent weapon in his hands, but it was a patronage used far more sparingly and selectively than it had been used by Lerma. Given the programme with which he identified himself as he staked out his claims to power and favour, this relative parsimony in the dispensing of patronage was inevitable. He had set out to represent himself as the antithesis of the Duke of Lerma, whose profligacy had reduced the royal finances to their current straits, and it is not therefore surprising that his first known memorandum for the king should have been a manifesto against the indiscriminate distribution of *mercedes*.²³ Once he had taken his stand on this issue, it became impossible for him, even if he had so wished, to imitate the profligacy of his predecessor.

But, like all seventeenth-century favourites, he used his command of the resources of the crown to surround himself with his own 'creatures' (*hechuras*), and to build up a following of loyal supporters. In common with his contemporaries elsewhere in Europe, he turned in the first instance to his own extended kinship group, the Guzmáns, the Haros and the Zúñigas, rewarding them with palace appointments, viceroyalties and seats at the council table. By seventeenth-century standards his own hands were relatively clean, but some of his relatives, like his brother-in-law the Count of Monterrey, who was appointed to the lucrative viceroyalty of Naples, made fortunes from their offices.

The building up of his family clan – the *parentela*, as it was called – created a power-group at court and around the person of the king which effectively held rival family groupings at arm's length, and to some extent kept the monarch isolated from criticisms of the favourite which could have endangered his hold on power. At the same time Olivares cast the mantle of his favour and protection over selected members of the royal administration, who in turn would dedicate themselves as unremittingly as himself to the royal service, and support him loyally when the going became rough. In this way he created over the years, from among the ranks of the aristocracy and the bureaucracy alike, a group of *olivaristas*, all of them, as the count-duke once observed, 'embarked on our ship'.²⁴ It was only when some of the *olivaristas*, and especially a handful of his most influential relatives, turned against him towards the end, in a bid to save themselves from the shipwreck which they saw was coming, that the count-duke became vulnerable to a concerted assault from his enemies.

Control of the king and control of the court and administration were both essential to the survival of a seventeenth-century minister-favourite. But increasingly there was a third desideratum – the control of public opinion. 'It is always important', wrote Olivares in his famous secret memorandum of 1624 for the king, 'to pay attention to the voice of the people'.²⁵ Diego Saavedra Fajardo, whose political philosophy was shaped by his experience of the Olivares years, echoed this observation in his *Idea of a Christian Prince*: 'The *valimiento* is very subject to the people, because if the people abhor the favourite, the prince cannot sustain him against the *voz común*'.²⁶

For much of his period of office Olivares was in fact a walking refutation of this axiom. Although almost universally detested from the later 1620s onwards, he was effectively sustained by his prince year after year against the *voz común*. But he was and remained very conscious of the need to present his case as effectively as possible before the court of public opinion, or at least of that section of public opinion represented by the elite in Madrid and the provinces. He and his friends had swept to power in 1621 on a wave of reformist sentiment. In the Cortes of Castile, in sections of the royal administration and in the municipal oligarchies, the tide of opinion had moved strongly against a dying regime which was identified with corruption and gross mismanagement at home and humiliation abroad. Making the most of the groundswell of sentiment in

favour of change, Olivares effectively shaped a language of power which would play as well before the public as before the king.

With its heavy reliance on such words as *reformación* and *reputación* it was a language well attuned to the harsher and more austere age that was dawning in the 1620s as Europe returned to war after two spendthrift decades of at least relative peace.²⁷ It was also a language indebted to the fashionable writings of Justus Lipsius, whose insistence on such concepts as 'obedience', 'discipline' and 'authority' held a natural appeal for ministers desperately seeking to tighten their grip on societies in which corporate privilege and archaic custom impeded effective mobilization for war.

This Lipsian language of duty, service and obedience became pervasive in the Spain of Olivares as the struggle to sustain its enormous military commitments became increasingly intense. 'We Spaniards', wrote the count-duke in 1632, 'are very good when subject to rigorous obedience, but if we are left to our own devices we are the worst of the lot.'²⁸ This was the message purveyed by the publicists and spin-doctors of the Olivares regime, the jurists who insisted on the overriding importance of 'necessity', and the playwrights who exalted the absolute authority of the king.

But it remains uncertain how far this authoritarian language, or the accompanying glorification of the king and the regime in the theatre and in the visual imagery of the Hall of Realms, the great hall in the palace of the Buen Retiro,²⁹ effectively contributed to the count-duke's continuing hold on power. The identification of the authority of the king with the wishes of the minister undoubtedly made opposition more difficult, since resistance to the minister looked like treason to the king. On the other hand, by the later 1630s the image that the regime had sought to fashion for itself was raising grave problems of credibility. It spoke of the need for sacrifice, and yet spent millions on indulging the king in his pleasure-palace of the Retiro. It trumpeted its victories, but failed to win its wars. It rode roughshod over privilege in the name of 'necessity', and yet claimed that its actions enjoyed the sanction of law. When another of the count-duke's spin-doctors, the regime's official historiographer Virgilio Malvezzi, wrote in 1639 that 'this monarchy is a government of the king and of law, or rather of law alone, not because the king cannot do what he wishes, but because he does not wish for more than what he should',³⁰ his remark could only provoke incredulity. This was not how the king's government was perceived in the country at large.

Control of the king, control of the court, control of public opinion – it was the last of these that was the first to go. The tide of opinion seems to have turned against the count-duke as early as 1627, when the king's nearly fatal illness laid bare the full extent of his government's unpopularity.³¹ The outbreak of war with France in 1635 may have brought a momentary respite, but any solidarity provoked by an upsurge of patriotism in Castile was rapidly dissipated by the king's failure to abandon his pleasure-palace and lead his armies into battle.

Thereafter, the hatred of the regime, inside as well as outside Castile, was almost palpable.

And yet it survived for another seven years. Given the chasm that had now opened between the language of the regime and the language of the country, its manipulation of the language of power would hardly seem to have been integral to its capacity for survival. This was a regime which, like that of Charles I in England, was talking during the 1630s largely to itself.

Clearly we must look beyond the language to the substance – to the massively imposing figure of a hyperactive, astute and immensely dedicated minister, whose fertile mind ranged creatively across the European military and diplomatic chessboard as he prepared for each new move, and who possessed the energy, the stamina and the sheer force of personality to browbeat into compliance the generals, the ministers and the bankers on whom he depended to sustain the vast effort required for the prosecution of the war. In many ways, at least until his world began to collapse around him in 1640 with the rebellions of Catalonia and Portugal, it was a virtuoso performance, which itself seemed to offer the best of arguments for his retention of power.

But it was a performance that was called forth, and made possible, by the demands of international diplomacy and war, as the two titans, France and Spain, strove for hegemony in Europe; and it is even possible that in part at least Olivares survived because Richelieu survived, with the converse no less valid. If either minister had fallen during the course of the 1630s, the other's hold on power might well have been weakened by the disappearance of the enemy; and it would hardly seem a coincidence that the death of Richelieu was followed within a matter of weeks by the overthrow of Olivares. With the cardinal gone, the count-duke hardly seemed as indispensable as he had seemed while he lived.

Yet indispensability is itself a relative concept, and one heavily dependent on the terms in which it is defined. The man who did most to define it in the Spain of Olivares was Olivares himself. By insisting first that only his programme of reforms could save Castile from disaster, and then that war was the only way to peace, he effectively created an environment in which he could hold himself out as uniquely qualified to serve as the king's right-hand man. As he presented it, there was no alternative either to the policies or to the man. Within his own terms of reference he may indeed have been right. The king, at least, believed him. Contemporaries preferred to put it differently: Circe had worked her magic arts and held Ulysses in thrall.

Notes

1. Gregorio Marañón, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares*, 3rd edn (Madrid, 1952), pp. 195–8; Adolfo de Castro, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares y el Rey Felipe IV* (Cádiz, 1846), libro VII ('Ilustraciones') for the *Informe* of Miguel de Cárdenas; Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Inquisición, legajo 494, no. 38, fols 70–3, 'Nacimiento, vida y costumbres de Don Gaspar de Guzmán, Conde Duque de Olivares'.

2. See Margaret Rich Greer, *The Play of Power* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 87–94.
3. See J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984), ch. 2 ('Masters and Servants'), for an examination of the relationship of the two ministers to their monarchs.
4. J. H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven and London, 1986), p. 30.
5. John H. Elliott and José F. de la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas del Conde Duque de Olivares*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1978–80), i, doc. xi.
6. Francisco Tomás y Valiente, *Los validos en la monarquía española del siglo XVII*, 2nd revised edn (Madrid, 1990), p. 106.
7. See 'Quevedo and the Count-Duke of Olivares', in J. H. Elliott, *Spain and its World, 1500–1700* (New Haven and London, 1989), ch. 9, esp. pp. 196–201.
8. Elliott and la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas*, ii, docs i–x.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
11. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, pp. 385–6.
12. Elliott and la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas*, ii, doc. xviii, p. 219.
13. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, pp. 648–9.
14. *Cartas de Sor María de Jesús de Agreda y de Felipe IV*, ed. Carlos Seco Serrano, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 108 (Madrid, 1958), p. 7, letter of 16 October 1643.
15. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, p. 557.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 479 and 646.
17. The ramifications of Lerma's patronage network are explored by Antonio Feros in his doctoral dissertation, 'The King's Favorite, the Duke of Lerma: Power, Wealth and Court Culture during the Reign of Philip III of Spain, 1598–1621' (The Johns Hopkins University, 1994).
18. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, pp. 307 and 364.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 478–9.
20. See 'Quevedo and the Count-Duke of Olivares', in Elliott, *Spain and its World*, ch. 9.
21. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, p. 283.
22. See Antonio Herrera García, *El estado de Olivares* (Seville, 1990), esp. pp. 223–4.
23. Elliott and la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas*, i, doc. i.
24. Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, legajo 2713, Olivares to Monterrey, 30 October 1629.
25. Elliott and la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas*, i, doc. iv, p. 62.
26. Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Empresas políticas: Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano*, ed. Quintín Aldea Vaquero, 2 vols (Madrid, 1976), i, p. 483 (*empresa* 50).
27. For further discussion of the language of the Olivares regime, see J. H. Elliott, *Lengua e imperio en la España de Felipe IV* (Salamanca, 1994).
28. Elliott and la Peña, *Memoriales y cartas*, ii, doc. xi, p. 76.
29. See Jonathan Brown and J. H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV* (New Haven and London, 1980), ch. 6.
30. Virgilio Malvezzi, *La libra de Grivilio Vezzalmi* (Pamplona, 1639), p. 113.
31. Elliott, *Count-Duke*, p. 314.

9

Words and Wealth in the France of Richelieu and Mazarin

OREST RANUM

In recent years Richard Bonney and Joseph Bergin have not only helped to establish the public and private fiscal and financial history of France under Richelieu (pls 26 and 47–57) and Mazarin (pl. 27), they have brought to light some particularly revealing phrases and words about money which they discovered in the mass of archival material that has yielded more secrets than anyone thought possible.¹ What perhaps remains to be done is to sharpen the analysis of phrases and thoughts that were typically used by the governing elites at the time. The meaning that specific words about wealth held for various groups and professions is at present unclear. Scrutinizing words and phrases about wealth may help to clarify attitudes not only about rank and wealth, but about the state, commerce, consumables and religious beliefs. In this essay I explore what the two cardinals say about money, the state and their personal fortunes.

Would it be historically sound to suggest that the words, the metaphors and the innuendo that prompted thought about money changed little or not at all in the decades that separate 1624 and 1661? If the semantic fields of the words about wealth changed little in this period, it would be particularly significant given that this was a time when French as a language was being reformed. The movement generally known as classicization obliged not only the literary but the political and the religious elites to choose their words in conformity with cultural principles of *bienséance*, or risk being characterized as vulgar or out of date. Prompted by a more general courtly social and cultural movement, this effort to rid French of off-colour and popular words resulted in an increased reluctance to speak specifically about money in polite conversation.² And never, perhaps, before the 1630s had there been so much borrowing, lending, office purchasing and luxury spending; yet it became increasingly less *bienséant* to talk about money. These were also decades of unprecedented increases in the fiscal power of the state. Never before had so much revenue been raised with consequent political and social protest, yet the increased power of the state seems not to have resulted from new words about wealth or from new meanings given to existing words.

There were three quite distinct sets of words about wealth that the two cardinals and the governing elites could use during this period. Not a language, not a discourse, not quite a historical tradition, each of these sets of words had historical and cultural links to distinct professional groups.³ Hearing one or more of these words from a prelate, a man of the law or a projecting banker-merchant would prompt distinct mental associations with other words. The professional and cultural characteristics of these groups gave specific meanings to words that were part of the general French vocabulary. *Bienfaits*, *crédit*, *grâces* and *corruption*, along with *argent* and *accroissement*, had quite distinct meanings for each of these groups. Indeed, the distinctiveness of each set of words was so great that it permitted Richelieu to live as he did without feeling culpable when the reforming Catholic clergy spoke to him about ecclesiastical poverty. This same distinctiveness permitted him to ignore, for example, *parlementaire* charges that he was financially corrupt, because he believed it was in the nature of kingship to reward subjects liberally for their services. As both a statesman and a thinker, Richelieu never found it necessary to refute arguments about ecclesiastical vows of poverty, or about corruption as violation of public trust for private gain. His stance derived from the distinctiveness of each of the sets of words.

The first set of words about wealth had early Christian origins, but it had recently been restated and given exemplary force at the highest level of the governing elites by such prelates as Bérulle.⁴ The insistence on poverty for consistency with the life of Christ, and on charity as an active life principle, constituted a logically coherent ensemble of words that could be used to stimulate reform or launch attacks against the clergy for living in luxury. Every prelate in the period 1624–61 heard these words forcefully articulated in sermons by preachers, notably those belonging to the reforming religious orders.

The second set of words had neo-Stoic origins; and among the nobility, and more particularly the robe, it was solidly articulated both in public legislation about recusation in cases involving kin to the sixth degree and in philosophies of life expressed by Montaigne, Charron, du Vair and others.⁵ The words ‘service’ or ‘duty’, ‘office’, ‘reward’, ‘benefit’ and *grâces* constituted a veritable civic and individual code of conduct that carefully prescribed attitudes towards wealth. The controversy over the *paulette*, as summarized in the differences of opinion between Bellièvre and Sully, is indicative of the richness and complexity of this set of words – which Sully in the end rejected, pressing Henri IV for the edict that made office heritable according to specific terms that, for Bellièvre, violated principles of probity in rendering justice.⁶

Richelieu’s political thought rests on an emphatic notion of service to an abstract principle, that is, the state, and of reward for this service.⁷ Mazarin also used the word ‘service’ when writing about the state, but his usage carries older, sixteenth-century meanings.⁸ For Mazarin, service also often meant something more personal – that is, service for the king or the regent, and not for the state.

His sense of state service has resonances not unlike what John Guy has found in the feudal, rather than the neo-classical, meaning of counselling.⁹

If ‘poverty’ was the most operative word in the first set of words, the word ‘appropriate’ (*decorum, bienséance*) played this role in neo-Stoic thought about wealth and rank. It is almost impossible to overemphasize the all-pervasiveness and force of the Ciceronian notion of appropriateness for seventeenth-century governing elites. J.-P. Labatut’s findings about the correlation between rank and fortune among the dukes and peers confirm the hypothesis that there was a relationship between the meaning of words, the force and the conviction with which they were used, and statistically verifiable correlations between wealth and rank.¹⁰ Clearly the notion of appropriateness extended far beyond the confines of robe corporations and culture. And when Louis XIII created a new duchy, an appropriate amount of land that would produce an appropriate income to sustain the lifestyle appropriate for a duke was either in hand or was provided as a gift from the crown to a favourite.¹¹ Indeed, these gifts may often be interpreted as the result of the notion of appropriateness at work. When the *frondeur* Councillor Broussel, with his reputation for probity, continued his attacks on Mazarin’s ministry, *frondeurs* spoke of raising funds to provide dowries for the old man’s daughters, so that they might make appropriate marriages.¹² And in the thirteen house designs published in the first French treatise on general domestic architecture, which Le Muet intended ‘for all sorts of persons’, the allocation of spaces, the decoration and the other marks of prestige considered appropriate for a given rank are worked out.¹³

To be sure, the conspicuous consumption by tax farmers and fiscal families that judges attacked so passionately with their neo-Stoic words ‘peculation’ and ‘corruption’ for inappropriateness, or *malséance*, was, in fact, expenditure necessary for the *financiers*’ credibility among their own social and financial groups.¹⁴ Borrowing huge sums, or ensuring that the advances involved in bidding for tax contracts would be repaid, required visible signs of wealth. High consumption among fiscal officials dates at least from the days of Jacques Coeur. Deemed a ‘mal nécessaire’ by Richelieu, who probably did not consciously understand the need for the *financiers* to keep up an opulent front before their colleagues, it is evident that the word *corruption* in the neo-Stoic sense is rarely found in the correspondence of the *financiers* or in the cardinal’s prose.¹⁵ Building country houses, collecting art and coins and accumulating capital surpassed what was appropriate for their social rank. We shall see how Richelieu’s understanding of and use of Laffemas’ words about *argent* and growth impeded him from moralizing about financiers’ behaviour. Strange as it may seem it was possible for Richelieu to use all the neo-Stoic words about state service, and yet avoid alluding to appropriate wealth and the dangers of avarice and display.

The third set of words about money had more recent origin: the thought of sixteenth-century Spanish casuists, of jurists such as Bodin and of non-university-trained projectors such as Henri IV’s personal accountant, Barthélemy de Laffemas.¹⁶ Through the latter’s writings and his years of

experience with merchants and virtually everyone at court, Laffemas launched a set of words about gold, silver and the state, and about growth understood as increased wealth and power. For the projectors, the words ‘exchange’, ‘value’ and *biens* did not merely connote things and actions, they had conceptual powers as words, and they almost equate the increased wealth of France with the growth of the state. The increased wealth of France, and of the French, at the expense of foreigners, is deemed not only a necessary but an ethically upright activity. In this set of words, the accumulation of wealth is described as a moral good. The projectors’ set of words about wealth almost directly contradicted the neo-Stoic notion about appropriateness according to rank.

Not all words about money were part of these three groups of words, but together these groups, their distinctiveness and their corporate foundations, made up what the governing elites could say and think about money. To be sure, there were also rhetorical techniques, and rabble-rousing cries such as *maliotier*, but these were rarely used by the elites except, in that world that was upside-down, by the writers of *Mazarinades*. A rhetoric about numbers on fiscal statements is also apparent in Richelieu’s or Mazarin’s desire for an activist foreign policy that might well include a costly war. Letters to Louis XIII are filled with assurances about the availability of funds.¹⁷ When the rebellious judges of the Parlement wanted to raise troops in 1649, the figures they cited about costs and revenue sources were largely pulled out of the air.¹⁸ Though these estimates were quite fanciful, they carried the day. Usually it was impossible to verify the figures bandied about in council, so a decision would be made to raise troops with no very precise idea of their cost.

With these sets of words in mind, it is possible to ask why the monarchy as a whole seems to have used no one distinct set. The question at first seems *mal posée*. Clerics, lawyers and projectors could not have been expected to talk about the monarchy in the same way, except to express their love for it; yet they might all have thought the crown’s rights and estates immense, despite the loss of revenue from their alienation. However, Louis XIII’s subjects did not describe him as wealthy, nor was the king known to be magnanimous. Devout, neither a builder nor a collector, he did indeed live in a manner that seemed barely appropriate to his rank among other European monarchs.¹⁹ Reformist circles urged funding the repurchase of the royal domain; but of course, like the repurchase of all venal offices, the proposal was never seriously acted upon.²⁰ When Richelieu accepted the royal anchorage rights on all foreign shipping into all ports as a reward (not a gift!) for his services at the siege of La Rochelle, he said not a word about the need to repurchase royal rights in order for the king to increase his own wealth.²¹

By its own set of words, the church was understood to be immensely wealthy. Large donations to the crown were therefore deemed not only appropriate, but necessary. Here is Louis XIII speaking to representatives of the clergy assembly of 1628:

Messieurs, I sent for you in order to tell you that I desire that you finish your assembly as promptly as you are able. As for the sum you offer me, 2,000,000 livres, I want much more, or nothing at all. It is a great shame for the welfare of the church and for all the realm . . . that you do not wish to contribute a third of your wealth [*biens*]. It would be better used in this way than in the feasts you give every day. You show me necessity but are you not so many prelates and ecclesiastics who have a 100, 25, or 30 thousand livres of income? It is on these that the tithes and new levies should be raised, and not on the poor *curés*. . . .²²

The shift in thought from the whole church to the incomes of individual clergymen is significant, for the set of words about ecclesiastical wealth centred on the reform of the clergy as individuals, and not on the wealth of the church. However, when the king reported to Richelieu what he had said, it is doubtful that he was upbraiding him for being a rich prelate. The sense of household, of protection for his ministers and domestics, was very strong in Louis XIII, in a way that suspended typical or general criticism of their conduct to outside the council or household.

As a reforming and activist prelate-minister, Cardinal Bérulle was well known for his vow not to take church benefices. Writing to Richelieu, Bérulle said: 'It has pleased the king to give me the abbey of La Reaulle, and I have thanked him for it, but I must go to the source of this benefaction, and many others that I must cover over in silence because I do not know how to speak of them worthily enough.'²³ After suggesting that Richelieu was leading him to break his resolution to decline benefices, Bérulle continued: 'You wish me to take the liberty of informing you of my feelings and thoughts. I complain therefore, and grow sad . . . and I say to Jesus Christ our Lord that I do not want any benefices at all that serve in the place of a recompense which on earth diminishes what I most desire, a portion of his holy *grâces*'.²⁴ In the following year, 1629, and while Father Joseph was close to the king, Louis informed Richelieu that he would be receiving the two 'best' abbeys of the recently deceased Grand Prieur Vendôme.

Richelieu humbly and immediately thanked the king but declined to accept them. After noting that it is possible to make inopportune requests of great kings, but that one ought not refuse their liberality, he humbly asked Louis to accept his refusal, saying:

I admit that my reluctance would be a crime, were it not founded on reason; His Majesty will approve since it comes, Sire . . . from being in your council when the interests of your state obliged you to arrest this person [the Grand Prieur]; and thus it seems to me that I would go against the heart that it pleased God to give me if I were to profit from his misfortune and take a part of his remains [*dépouille*].²⁵

Schoolboy casuistry? This was only the beginning of the story about the fate of the Grand Prieur's two best abbeys.

Louis then decided that Bérulle would have the abbeys.²⁶ The political atmosphere in early 1629 was already divisive in the council, as the devout party began firmly to express their doubts about the Italian campaign that was about to begin. Bérulle reports to Richelieu what he describes as the thoughts that are expressed here and there, all of which cast doubt on the current policy that would deepen the collision with Spain.²⁷ Having learnt of Richelieu's refusal of the two abbeys, Marillac wrote to him:

The action you took regarding the benefices has two fine qualities: one involves a singular generosity, the other, a great and upright charity shorn of personal interest; it is greatly praised, and has upon the mind several very advantageous effects to show the affection that you bear for M. the Cardinal de Bérulle, and the esteem in which you hold him.²⁸

Bérulle's subsequent thank-you letters to Richelieu suggest a less generous interpretation. First, Richelieu had informed him that he must take the revenues from these abbeys personally, and not turn them over to his new order, the Oratory. Bérulle writes:

You continue to oblige me with so much excess that I receive more confusion than contentment from it, but you continue your projects and perfect your work. You have placed me in this condition, and you want to maintain it, owing you what I owe you, and which cannot be sufficiently expressed. . . . It is true that in honouring me, raising me up and obliging me according to the world, I remain weighed down before God with such a heavy weight that I must fear that it crushes me and causes me eternal confusion.²⁹

The question of whether it was possible, under certain circumstances, to decline a royal reward merits much more scrutiny than can be given here. It is evident that Richelieu not only took personal satisfaction in creating an impression of disinterestedness and generosity towards another one of Marie de Médicis' collaborators, he personally engineered a rationalist undermining of the principle of (limited) ecclesiastical poverty as practised by one of France's most high-ranking and reforming prelates. Would the jeopardy to his soul not have given Bérulle a justification for declining the abbeys? Would accepting the abbeys involve more than spending a longer time in Purgatory? It is also possible that Richelieu knew Bérulle's character and could gamble that he would accept client dependency. The stakes were high. Bérulle's powers of persuasion were considerable. Had he lived until the Day of the Dupes, would he have rejected the obligation to Richelieu that was implicit in accepting these abbeys? Bérulle had the opportunity to settle accounts with the Master Accountant in Heaven, rather than face the choice between Richelieu's and Marie's foreign policies.

A last example of the use of the ecclesiastical set of words about poverty for the clergy concerns Richelieu's brother Alphonse, Cardinal Archbishop of Lyon and Primate of the Gauls, who complained to his brother that the superintendent of finance, Claude de Bullion, would not give him a special fund with which to pay domestics to spy on prelates who were attending an assembly of the clergy. It was customary to distribute *grâces* to facilitate voting large sums to the crown; but Alphonse wanted something more, and Bullion had refused him the special account for spies. The amounts were small, but it is evident that Alphonse did not want to use his own revenues for such a purpose. In reply Richelieu wrote: 'It is difficult and impossible to dispose M. de Bullion about what is necessary in such matters; but, if you please, inform me in cipher if you have some important occasion to use such funds; I shall do the impossible to provide them promptly.'³⁰ Richelieu does not specify the account from which he would draw the funds for spying, or whether they were ecclesiastical in origin.

Turning to the neo-Stoic set of words – that is, 'service', 'duty', 'benefit', 'gratitude', 'office' and *grâces* as well as 'peculation' and 'corruption' – their usage is so pervasive that it is possible to speculate that these words no longer had specific historical-ethical resonances. This was certainly not the case for Richelieu, for although not himself one of the philosophers who impressed the age with the originality of their thought, the cardinal nonetheless commented continually and philosophically on the ethical debates of his day, and these were largely between neo-Stoics and Catholic Reformation anti-Stoic reformers. For example, he warns against excessive royal liberality, arguing instead that compensating service was more capable of establishing order in the realm.³¹ He thus implicitly rejects the Senecan notion that giving an unsolicited gift, or favour, best assures the bonds of friendship between the prince and his councillor friends. Criticism of Louis XIII's liberality towards Cinq Mars remains oblique in the letters around the trial of the conspirators, but it was there for the king to read after the cardinal's death. The fruits of favour are rebellion. It is therefore not surprising that, in his thank-you letters to Marie and Louis, Richelieu always insists that the *grâces* he accepts are rewards for his service. These *grâces* may be more than he merits, or at least he claims they are, but they are rewards or recompenses, not gifts or favours. Before glancing at those letters, it is interesting to note that the cardinal alluded almost off-handedly to Louis and to 'the king's humour, which brings him to like to do things for persons who are almost unknown, more than he likes to do things for his intimates, allies or the friends of those who have the honour of serving him near his person'.³² This bears testimony to the dilemmas and frustrations resulting from the expectations and competitiveness that characterized relations among sovereigns, ministers and householders in a court culture.³³

In a reflective mood, Richelieu said: 'It is proper to kings to be *libéral*, and it is in imitation of God that they do good to their creatures, and those who are often considered the greatest kings did this the most. . .'.³⁴ This was written in reply to the thank-you letter from young Saint-Simon, who was rising rapidly

in the king's household. Saint-Simon answered: 'I shall not attempt to pay with words for the honours that I receive from you . . . and the joy that is greater than my pen can convey.'³⁵ The metaphors about meanings beyond words were carefully honed in thank-you notes. The emphatic distinction between reward and gift (*rémunération* and *grâces* or *faveur*) so important to Richelieu does not derive easily from Cicero's or Seneca's thought.³⁶

In the *Testament politique* the cardinal takes up the subject of whether punishment or reward is the more fundamental instrument for wielding power, and he casuistically concludes that, if one had to get along without one of them, it would be better to dispense with punishment than with reward. While Machiavellian inspiration is evident, there are also indications that he was familiar with the general sixteenth-century debates over the question, notably those of Spanish moralists whose works were well represented in his library.³⁷

In his own letters of thanks to sovereigns, Richelieu usually mentions the state, in effect depersonalizing the person who has rewarded him.³⁸ He seems to do everything the neo-Stoic set of words permits, to describe what he receives as rewards rather than gifts. There were, of course, gifts, not usually money, but objects such as the rosary he gave Marie de Médicis, and the crucifixes she gave him with the usual order to wear them 'pour l'amour de moy'.³⁹ To reward him for his services at La Rochelle, as Joseph Bergin has already noted, Marie gave Richelieu money to buy a château.⁴⁰ She specifically states that this is a reward for his services, and adds: 'You will have a better place to take relaxation and serve the king better. . . . If I could better express how much I esteem your services, it would also be with a good heart . . .'.⁴¹ When Marie de Médicis gave Richelieu money as a reward for his services, she specified what it was to be used for, almost as if she wanted the object purchased, and not the money itself, to be the reward.

Louis XIII did not usually write about rewards or gifts in his privy seal correspondence with the cardinal, or perhaps with anyone else. The letters patent granting Richelieu anchorage rights on all foreign vessels stopping in French ports were, their timing suggests, also a recompense for his service at La Rochelle.⁴² Only prayers for their mutual health and categorical assurances of his support and affection were expressed in the privy seal letters to Richelieu. It seems likely that the alienation of royal domain such as customs rights had, by law, to proceed through a royal council, the chancery and a number of sovereign courts. Louis probably had a fairly good idea of the enormous recompense he was giving the cardinal, and was willing to quash protests from *grands* such as Guise in the inevitable litigation over these rights.

Louis' largesse with favourites such as Saint-Simon and Cinq Mars, like his mother's with Concini, suggests that they occasionally practised the Senecan gesture of free liberality as a technique of binding these persons to them. For Seneca the gesture of giving, not the gift, is the ultimate friendly act.⁴³ Only further research will clarify whether Louis had a philosophy about gift-giving and rewards that was consistently followed. His first minister, by contrast, attempted to act according to principles cast in neo-Stoic terms and to win

others over to his views. Richelieu's rejection of Seneca's specific views on both clemency and benefits did not, however, remove him from the Stoic school of thought, or inhibit his ability to act forcefully with those who followed Seneca's views. Quite the contrary.

Stating that a recompense exceeds one's merit or asserting that 'words cannot express my gratitude' were conventional replies that linked service, reward and merit; but, while the first statement was continually used by Richelieu, the second was not. His views are consistent with his theology about grace, and the symmetry of these views is evident. While God's grace alone assured man's salvation, a sinner's ability to contribute to his personal salvation by good works remained an article in his faith. For him, service to the state was therefore a divinely required duty, and it was this conviction about working for the 'reign of God' that gave him the courage to pursue his policies, despite the sense of isolation, opposition and foreboding that inevitably followed. The congruence of divine and royal power would lead him to reject, in certain critical instances, the neo-Stoic principle of appropriateness, and put above all other principles the belief in an ethically grounded, limitless, divine power in the state.

There is no doubt that Richelieu was entirely familiar with neo-Stoic, largely robe, thought about corruption, which it defined as private gain from public trust. Though he did not totally engineer La Vieuville's disgrace, the cardinal undertook the quite difficult task of clearing the disgraced minister's clients from fiscal offices and tax farms. He wanted to know how the *chambre de justice* in the reign of Henry III had proceeded against tax farmers,⁴⁴ and he quickly developed a policy of systematic threat and terror to force disgraced *financiers* to pay heavy fines. As was always the case with the cardinal, his words about justice reflect the Greek concept of more-or-less-guilty, rather than the Roman guilty-or-not-guilty. And, for him, all this belonged to the sphere of expedients, that is, aspects of government that were ethically doubtful or wrong, but a *mal nécessaire*. Fines, he believed, would lead these officials to mend their ways. Information about the fines should be announced in churches, which suggests that he was trying to shame these officials and tax farmers into greater conformity to the neo-Stoic ideal of disinterestedness in fiscal matters. And he was enhancing his public image as a reformer. Marigny, he noted, had been sentenced to death for the immensity of his fortune, and there was no doubt about the origin of his wealth.⁴⁵ Referring in general terms to the *financiers'* activities, he said: 'The laws that do not wish anyone to be obliged to explain where the property one possesses comes from, apply only to those who have not dealt with public funds.'⁴⁶

Even so, the projector word *accroissement*, or 'growth', when used about commerce, manufacturing and the state, would enable Richelieu to apply selectively, in good conscience, neo-Stoic thought about corruption and the appropriateness of wealth according to rank. This is not to suggest, however, that the principle of appropriateness was entirely rejected. The cardinal's attempts to curtail *Surintendant* Bullion's rapacity may be interpreted in this light.

Permitting Bullion to enrich himself was not the issue; allowing him to become as wealthy as some of the most powerful great nobles – and as the cardinal himself – was out of the question.⁴⁷

Partly from lack of time, and also, certainly, to protect himself, the cardinal called in bankers and estate managers to pull the maximum income from his rapidly growing estate; but Joseph Bergin is right to stress that Richelieu's grip never really lessened over the bigger issues, such as land acquisition, exchange of royal rights for other royal rights, and revenues that the cardinal collected from abbeys that were part of a political and geographic strategy for increasing power and wealth (pl. 28).⁴⁸ Throughout his writings runs the refrain that persons without wealth receive no *considération*, even if they are kings.⁴⁹ The cardinal did his utmost to ensure that he would never be in this pitiful condition. There is no indication that he felt guilty about having amassed too much wealth as he lay near death in Narbonne, dictating his will.

Thus the third set of words, that is the words *crédit, argent, or, commerce, Etat, biens* and *accroissement*, was of the utmost importance. An activist in a hurry by comparision with Louis' other ministers, Richelieu adopted projector ideas about global commerce, empire, fleets, in order to define the state spatially and commercially as something that required great power if it was to enforce royal rights and customs.⁵⁰

The ideas of the projectors received considerable attention from historians before the Second World War, yet their thought remains obscure. Debates over monetary policy, royally sponsored manufacturing, colonization, urban planning and transport networks were enthusiastically proposed by one or another of the projectors. Laffemas, and still more François du Noyer de Saint-Martin, believed firmly in the need for a royal council to shape royal commercial and imperial policies. Men with commercial experience, a knowledge of accounting and skill at smelting metal worked in Sully's shadow to shape a utopian vision of a wealthy France that was powerful on the high seas and able to sell more luxury goods than it imported.

Richelieu was too young to belong to this group. It is not certain that he read the pamphlets published by Laffemas and du Noyer, but in the reformist years that saw the Assembly of Notables and other initiatives Richelieu applied his theologian's logic to the perennial problem of the monarchy's inadequate financial resources, and he concluded that the Parlement would block efforts to increase taxation. Turning to colonization, to the gabelle and to monetary juggling in order to raise funds for the campaigns against the Huguenots and the Spanish in the late 1620s, frantic borrowing and office-selling laid the groundwork for what can scarcely be described as a policy after 1635: namely, do whatever was necessary to find the money to defeat Spain.

What, for Laffemas and his circle, had been public projecting as formulated by a royal council now became, however, secret management, almost *arcana* for assuring the state's fortune – and his own. The cardinal's specific role in determining monetary policy remains obscure; he seems to have let his trusted

supporters, among them Laffemas' son Isaac, carry out minting and alloy experiments. If there is a magical and alchemical dimension (recall Dubois' fate!) to the cardinal's thought about gold and wealth, it was grounded firmly on the thinking of the projectors rather than on Aristotelian notions of gold and wealth, as expressed, for example, by Montchrétien.

Richelieu could be passionately patriotic about the practices of Dutch and Spanish shippers.⁵¹ All this is well known, but a brief review of the cardinal's thought about letters of exchange clarifies his position on the ethical questions regarding *crédit*, a word that Sharon Kettering has shown to be at the semantic crossroad between money and political power.⁵² The word means belief, confidence and trust, that necessary feature of both private and public action that ensured the ability to borrow and to influence one person to do another's bidding.

Richelieu inveighs against merchants who draw up letters of exchange simply as instruments for borrowing and lending, the so-called dry letter of exchange,⁵³ that is, a letter of exchange that was used not to pay for goods purchased in another location, but merely to borrow and lend at interest. The cardinal wanted legislation to stop this practice, but he realized how difficult it would be to draft it, and then enforce it. His reasons reveal his thought about commerce. Contrary to what one might expect from a seventeenth-century moralizing prelate, he is not troubled by profit from interest on loans. Instead, it is the *traffic* in money that he opposes. If a merchant can make a living merely by taking interest on bills of exchange, he will not risk buying and selling in the market. The implication is that France needed more risk-taking merchants than it had. Obviously finding it difficult to understand money as just another commodity, the cardinal nonetheless shared Laffemas' views on competition as a means of acquiring more and more precious metals through commerce – and at foreigners' expense.

Although Richelieu's last bold plan for reforming the fiscal administration has not been overlooked, historians have not given it the attention it deserves.⁵⁴ His fundamentally economic understanding about the relations between prices, taxes and increasing wealth is of particular importance. To be sure, the *peuple* would not be dutiful unless taxed, but the cardinal argues in favour of minimizing the fiscal weight once government expenses have been drastically reduced. The implication is that wealth, even opulence, creates more wealth, and that higher taxes and duties raise prices, thereby reducing consumption.⁵⁵ Richelieu's critiques of the fiscal system and of the venality of office were not cast in the neo-Stoic group of words, but were more commercial and projecting – these ever necessary financial expedients rather than the 'corruption' of the neo-Stoics being the real source of future weakness and impoverishment. Rendering the *peuple à son aise* while paring down the state was not contradictory. He concludes:

I well know that it will be said that it is easy to draw up such plans, similar to those in Plato's *Republic* which, while beautiful as ideas, are chimerical in effect.

But I dare say that this plan is not only so reasonable, but so easy to carry out that if God gives the king the gift of having peace soon, and preserving it for this realm, along with his servants, of whom I consider myself one of the least, instead of leaving this advice by testament, I hope to be able to accomplish it.⁵⁶

Omissions are also a sign of the projector's influence. There are no attacks on luxury, and no recommendations for amassing a royal war chest.

When the cardinal wrote about the *relation* between the condition of the *people* and the need for revenues so that the state can sustain itself in grandeur and glory, was he not drawing on the neo-Stoic principle of 'appropriateness' and propriety? Not necessarily. His understanding of the relations between tax rates and economic and social conditions is just that – a *relation* or dynamic grounded on the principle that certain conditions increase wealth, and others do not. The two chapters in the *Testament politique* that immediately precede the chapter on fiscal reform deal with sea power and commerce, the success of the latter being dependent on the former.

This same set of projectors' words about commerce, utility, colonies, fleets and growth also served the cardinal to justify his amassing a personal fortune. He could easily have reached back into French history to find models of noble but impoverished prelates who grew wealthy from state service, but his turn of mind was more philosophical. Fond of maxims, and tending to take pride in coining them himself, Richelieu wrote: 'At court, the minister must not think of increasing his fortune, except through the good and growth of the state.'⁵⁷ Here again is a *relation* in axiomatic terms, and quantitatively unlimited because of the limitless power of the state. There is no allusion to appropriateness regarding the fortunes of dukes and peers, or of politically engaged prelates. The order of the words is very significant: first the good, and then the growth, of the state. But Richelieu – the minister who had excluded the Huguenots from state power, obliged the *grands* to conduct themselves like subjects, returned the powers of governors to just limits, built a fleet, founded commercial companies, redressed French prestige in Italy and in the Low Countries – had little doubt that he had been responsible for the growth of the state. Put succinctly, Richelieu died believing that he had increased the state in such a way that it justified his massive increase in fortune. There are no traces of either ecclesiastical or neo-Stoic sets of words about godliness and poverty, nor is there talk of 'appropriateness' in his last will and testament.

Almost the same may be said of James Howell's attempt to sum up the matter in 1646, as he lay writing and rotting in the Tower of London. After the inevitable comparison with Wolsey – who, he says, surpassed Richelieu in train and in building – Howell narrates what a gentleman of quality told him:

a merchant of Paris brought him [Richelieu] a jewel of high price to shew and sell, he was so taken with it, that he offered 50,000 crowns for it, the merchant demanded 15,000 more and would not go a penny less: a few days after the merchant carrying the jewell to a great lady to see, was suddenly in some place of

advantage surprised, muffled, and so unjewelled: a little after the merchant going to the cardinal's secretary upon some other business, the cardinal hearing of his being their, sent for him, and making grievous mone of his jewell, the cardinal fetched out of his cabinet a box, and drew thence a jewell, and asked whether that was his; the merchant in a kind of amazement answered, I dare not say 'tis mine because 'tis in your Eminence's hand, but were it in any other hand I would swear it were mine. Go, saith he, and keep a better conscience in your dealing hereafter, for I know what this jewell is worth as well as you, and out of that I offered you already, you may draw very fair gaines; so he gave order his 50,000 crowns should be pay'd him, and the business was hushed up.⁵⁸

The notion of 'faire gaine' in this story is revealing of the ethical and rhetorical understandings about exchange in the seventeenth century. The principle of 'appropriateness' would again seem to underlie the words, but it is not certain that someone who uttered those words in an exchange believed them as a neo-Stoic might. If the story is true, and I believe it is, Richelieu used his rank and power as a ducal prelate to frame an exchange the merchant could not refuse. And his weakness for books, paintings, jewels, duchies, sculptures and a gold vermeil altar service was just that: a weakness, not a sin, a stimulant to French opulence, not impoverishment.

While Chéruel's edition of Mazarin's letters is only partial, it is doubtful that sets of words about ecclesiastical poverty and state growth through commerce have been edited out of thousands of letters. If these sets of words are missing, it is because neither is present in the thought of the Roman diplomat.

The neo-Stoic ensemble of words was, however, at the heart of Mazarin's understanding of social relations, and of wielding power. Along with *grâces* and *gratitude*, the words *intérêts* and *gagner* are found much more frequently in Mazarin's prose than in that of his predecessor. Indeed, the ontological aspect so important to Seneca, namely that the gift is in the thought and the gesture, rather than in the material object given, is more frequently sensed (though rejected) in Richelieu than in Mazarin. The word *grâces*, when coupled with *intérêts* and *gagner*, that is, to win over someone with a gift, is particularly frequent in his letters written during the Fronde. At one point Mazarin wrote to Abbé Fouquet, an intimate, that Turenne had to be 'bought' (*acheter*), suggesting that he really understood clientage in monetary terms.⁵⁹ Still, both cardinals repeated the lament about how the French had short memories and became ungrateful too quickly, a commonplace in the neo-Stoic group of words that dates at least from Machiavelli.

When someone continued to *fronder*, or in some way upset Mazarin after receiving a *grâce*, he would be disconcerted. It is not always true, the cardinal commented, that 'les honneurs changent les moeurs'. And when some benefit failed to inspire the recipient to change his politics, he would simply remark, 'C'est étrange.'

Fidelity to the king and service to the state were principles that Mazarin clearly noticed in such loyal officials as Le Tellier, but he seems to have been less willing than Richelieu to coerce, or attempt to coerce, obedience away from rebellion by appealing to these principles. Seeking to *gagner frondeurs*, perhaps a bit too quickly, by appealing to their *intérêts*, on many occasions Mazarin lost the initiative when he found the appeals to loyalty and service to be either ineffective or particularly difficult to make for someone who was only a naturalized Frenchman. Though it may be an exaggeration to suggest that appearances and gestures counted even more for Mazarin than they did for Richelieu, it is clear that when his contemporaries alluded to the Roman diplomat's reputation for 'belles paroles', it was a harsh criticism. The Fronde was in no small way a matter of who could keep his word; and on this point Mazarin simply had a different personality and attitude from those of his predecessor – and of some *frondeurs*.

In his long letter to Abel Servien of 14 August 1648, just as the latter was receiving final instructions for the negotiations at Münster, Mazarin described in detail his own financial status. It certainly would be a factor in the peace-making, he thought; and so he chose to stress his poverty. The *relation* between appearances and his financial status was, according to him, almost an inverse correlation: 'It is superfluous to take the precaution to tell you that in appearances I bear things with more pride than ever'⁶⁰ – after which he describes how he must borrow daily in order to be able to live and keep his household going.

Mazarin had already pointed out to Servien that he had no forts, offices, governments, duchies or establishments, nor did he have a relative who had become rich during the eighteen years he had served France, or the six he had been first minister. This portrait of the totally disinterested, untarnished royal servant in 1648 was more than rhetorical (and it certainly was that). He seemed to recognize that, in diplomatic negotiations, this image would improve Servien's chances for a settlement.

In the same letter the experienced diplomat becomes more evident still, when he assures Servien that the 100,000 livres in presents – gold chains, flatware, tapestries, diamonds and money – will be shipped to him in a week, to distribute among the foreign diplomats as he sees fit. Though insignificant by comparison with the enormous fortune in money, fine fabrics, paintings, sculptures and jewels that the cardinal possessed at the time of his death, it is nonetheless a clue to how important appearances were to European diplomacy. Nor is it clear that the 100,000 livres in presents came from the royal treasury, which was virtually bankrupt at the time, or from Mazarin's own purse.

In conclusion, if there were no new words about money or wealth, there was in fact one quite recently formulated projector set of words, the key word being *accroissement*. Cardinal Richelieu used this particular set of words to speak of the state, and of his own estate, to make them both more economic in meaning,

thereby fusing increased wealth, heightened dignity and power. By contrast, Mazarin's thought about the state was grounded in the hierarchy of international dignities and the appearances that sustained it. He did not think of the growth of the state in economic terms.

For Richelieu, the statesman and private person, casuistic argumentation grounded on the distinctiveness of three sets of words not only helped him overcome moral doubt about his policies, but strengthened the single-mindedness with which he pursued the execution of those policies. The cardinal-theologian differed very much from his fellow state servants, whose education and experience scarcely extended beyond a vague neo-Stoic notion of state and personal service. Mazarin, the consummate courtier, suffered *ad hominem* attacks not only because his *belles paroles* were vapid, but because he followed on the heels of a minister for whom words were things, like swords, guns and the eucharist.

Like the high-level consumerism of the tax farmers and royal-debt financiers, the appearances of international diplomacy may have made Richelieu's neo-Stoic understanding of gift-giving-as-intention quite parochial. Mazarin's understanding of *grâces* was perhaps more cosmopolitan, more materialistic and more in accord with the gift-giving that was part of diplomacy. What Richelieu admired most in the young Roman diplomat was his faultless self-control, and perhaps his willingness to trust fortune and to let time bring what it might – two things the poor Poitevin theologian could not do. Their words about wealth and power differed considerably, and the French of their generation contested the policies grounded on these words; but their love for things beautiful and prestigious – the appearances of power – was enthusiastically shared not only by them but by the new classes of moneyed royal officials for whom *éclat* rather than appropriateness would express their thought regarding culture and power.

Notes

1. R. J. Bonney, *The King's Debts: Finance and Politics in France, 1589–1661* (Oxford, 1981); and J. Bergin, *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (New Haven, 1985), and articles too numerous to be cited here. See also J. Dent, *Crisis in Finance: Crown, Financiers and Society in Seventeenth-Century France* (Newton Abbot, 1973).
2. The first round of this movement primarily concerned 'grossièreté et indécence'; the second, epitomized in Molière's social mirror of French society, very probably has neo-Stoic origins. See the old but still useful M. Magendie, *La Politesse mondaine* (Geneva, 1970, reprint of the 1925 edn), and M. Fumaroli, 'Le Génie de la langue française', in P. Nora, ed., *Lieux de mémoire* (Paris, 1993), iii, pt 2, pp. 911–73.
3. The literature on language theory and social history is vast. See Arthur L. Herman Jr, 'The Language of Fidelity in Early Modern France', *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), pp. 1–24, for a critical bibliography, and a study of a word and social-political relation that complements this paper. A more personal confirmation of how I think as I read sources can be found in J. H. M. Salmon's *Renaissance and Revolt: Essays in the Intellectual and Social History of Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 1–24. On Richelieu's mode of thinking see Françoise Hildesheimer, 'Le Testament politique de Richelieu, ou le règne terrestre de la raison', *Annuaire Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* (1994), pp. 17–34.

4. The immense literature on reform of the church has short summaries and occasional sentences regarding ideas about ecclesiastical poverty in the early seventeenth century. For Bérulle in particular, Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France* (Paris, 1935), iii, *passim*. J. Bergin elucidates the effects of La Rochefoucauld's lack of fortune in his *Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld . . .* (New Haven, 1987), p. 45, but does not sum up his financial situation at his death or specific views on ecclesiastical poverty. Jacques Depauw, 'De la pauvreté: à propos de *De la Sagesse de Pierre Charron, questions de définition*', *XVIIe Siècle*, 171 (1991), pp. 107–18, sums up Bodin's and Charron's attitudes towards the wealth of the church. Regarding regulars with vows of poverty, the ensemble of words was clearly articulated, but according to L. J. Lekai: 'Was the fiscal administration of the college suited to the observance of the vow of poverty? Or, was the college a den of thieves, as the reformers charged? To be sure, no monk, with the exception of the procurator, was supposed to hold and spend money. Those who did possess money, must have been fully aware of their wrongdoing. That they [sic] were some abuses, seems to be undeniable. The question how widespread was the independent handling of money among the members of the College, cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.' 'The Parisian College of Saint Bernard in 1634–35', *Analecta Cisterciensa* (1969), pp. 180–208, which includes the report of La Rochefoucauld's visitation.
5. Since this chapter attempts to discern these sets of words about wealth at the most personal rather than institutional level, I shall privilege such sources, beginning with Montaigne, the *Essays*, iii, p. 9, where it would seem that his thought must be taken literally and directly. See President Henri II de Mesmes' speeches in Bibliothèque Nationale (hereafter BN), MSS fr. 523 4, and Omer Talon's testament in H. Mailfait, *Omer Talon* (Paris, 1902). On the importance of Lipsius as editor and translator of neo-Stoic ideas on wealth see Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 177ff.; and G. Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, trans. D. McClintock (Cambridge, 1982). Georges Matoré found no need to include either *accroissement* or *bienéance* in his *Vocabulaire et la société du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1988), which suggests that these words were gaining in conceptual strength in the early seventeenth century.
6. Roland Mousnier, 'Sully et le Conseil d'Etat et des finances . . .', *Revue Historique*, 192 (1941), pp. 68–86; and J. Russell Major, *Bellière, Sully, and the Assembly of Notables of 1596*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, new series, 64 (Philadelphia, 1974).
7. William F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton, 1972). See also the numerous works on the *Etat d'offices*, the service state, that centre on interpreting Loysseau, notably Roland Mousnier's early work, *La Vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris, 2nd edn, 1971).
8. Despite all the research and writing about Mazarin, his writings have not been studied as political thought in his age.
9. 'The Rhetoric of Counsell in Early Modern England', in Dale Hoak, ed., *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 292–310.
10. *Les Ducs et pairs en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1972), p. 326. The value of their movables was on the average, however, about the same: p. 300.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
12. 'Relation de ce qui s'est passé . . . à Paris le 26 août 1648', BN, ms. fr. 5218, fol. 346. It was also noted that Broussel lacked a country house: BN, ms. fr. 25026, fol. 168v.
13. The first edition appeared in 1623, the second in 1648.
14. F. Bayard, *Le Monde des financiers* (Paris, 1988); D. Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1984).
15. Bayard, *Le Monde des financiers*, found some evidence of sincere attachment to the *Etat* by some of the financiers: pp. 303ff.
16. Such old works as Paul Harsin, *Les Doctrines monétaires et financières en France du XVIe et XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1928), and C. W. Cole, *French Mercantilist Doctrines before Colbert* (New York, 1931), have only partially been superseded by the works of Bernard Barbiche and David Buisseret in and around their edition of Sully's *Economies royales*, of which Barbiche's 'Une Tentative de réforme monétaire à la fin du règne de Henri IV: l'édit d'août 1609', *XVIIe Siècle*, 61 (1963), pp. 3–17, is a cogent early example. Norman Doiron's 'Neostoicism and nouveaux mondes: le voyageur et l'archer dans le *De Ratione cum Fructu Peregrinandi de Juste Lipse*', in *La Découverte de nouveaux mondes . . .*, ed. Cecilia Rizza (Fasano, 1993), pp. 181–90, is exemplary of the type of close reading that must be done in order to discern the projector's sense of space, power and wealth. Despite the attractiveness of the title, Pierre Dockès' *L'Espace dans la pensée économique du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1969) is much too general to shed light on du Noyer's and Richelieu's ideas about commercial and statist space.

17. As an example see the 'Mémoire pour le Roi' of May 1626, where Richelieu writes that things seem to 'conspire now to beat down Spanish pride' while assuring the king that there is money for war, but there could also be a rebellion if funds ran out. P. Grillon, ed., *Les Papiers de Richelieu* (Paris, 1975), i (1625), 41. (Citations show first the volume, then the year in parentheses, and finally the numeral of the document – plus the page when the document is long.)
18. See Jean Le Boindre's *Journal des Débats du Parlement de Paris*, AN, U 336, ed. R. Descimon and O. Ranum (Paris, 1997).
19. A. Lloyd Moote, *Louis XIII, the Just* (Berkeley, 1989), ch. 13.
20. J. Petit, *L'Assemblée des Notables de 1626–1627* (Paris, 1936), pp. 95–104.
21. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iii (28 December 1628), 655. As a reader of casuistic treatises, did Richelieu believe that he had literally increased the power of the state in order to increase these port duties, and that as a result he had a special title to these duties? As a casuistic thinker, did he think that these moneys were not French but foreign, and that therefore he had some greater moral right to them? The duties would simply have been passed on to French consumers, but it is possible that the cardinal did not see these funds in this way.
22. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iii (1628), 264.
23. *Ibid.*, 171.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, iv (1629), 65. In the *Advis au Roy* of a month earlier he wrote: 'Que j'ay refusé vingt mil escus de pension extraordinaire, qu'il pleust au Roy m'offrir, quoique je despense grandement...' Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iv (1629), 11 (p. 41). There are many other revealing details about his personal finances in this passage.
26. Richelieu wrote to Rancé that Marie de Médicis was to inform Bérulle of the decision, which obviously left Bérulle beholden not only to the king and Richelieu, but to Marie, and it made it virtually impossible for Bérulle to decline them.
27. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iv (1629), 77.
28. *Ibid.*, 86.
29. *Ibid.*, 76.
30. *Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du Cardinal de Richelieu*, ed. D. L. M. Avenel, 8 vols (Paris, 1853–77), v, CLXXXV (January 1636).
31. *Testament Politique*, ed. Françoise Hildesheimer (Paris, 1995), p. 258. *Bienfaits* are quickly forgotten. See my 'Richelieu and Corneille on Clemency', *Cahiers d'Histoire*, 16 (1996), pp. 80–100, and Sharon Kettering, 'Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France', *French History*, 2 (1988), pp. 131–51.
32. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iv (1629), 11 (p. 41).
33. Richelieu remarks that the office of king keeps Louis from touching money, an intriguing remark given that the French sovereign's sacred character enabled him to touch and heal. Or was it a constitutional matter? *Ibid.*, i (1626), 68: 'et les formes de l'Etat ne permettant point que le Roy touche ses deniers par lui-même, estant nécessité que ce soit par les officiers qui en donnent leurs quittances...'. *Citrons* is used as a metaphor for money.
34. *Ibid.*, iii (1628), 115.
35. *Ibid.*, 124.
36. See the comparison between Corneille's and Richelieu's thought about clemency in the play *Cinna* and the Cinq Mars Affair, where Corneille seems to follow Seneca quite specifically; and, while rejecting Seneca's views, the cardinal does not seem to do so with Seneca specifically in mind. This would suggest the influence on his thought of other still to be determined and presumably modern writers.
37. Jorg Wollenberg, *Les Trois Richelieu*, trans. Edouard Husson (Paris, 1995), pp. 287, 293.
38. This is a general practice, but there are exceptions. See his letter of thanks when he suggests that his brother might serve well as archbishop of Lyon. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iii (1628), 451. The king expressed his desire to give Lyon to his brother in a letter dated the same day.
39. *Ibid.*, 101.
40. Richelieu, *Power and the Pursuit of Wealth*, ch. 3, which offers a precise overview of all that Richelieu received from the crown, as a royal official.
41. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iii (1628), 630.
42. *Ibid.*, 655.
43. *Les Œuvres*, trans. F. de Malherbe (Paris, 1659), Des Bienfaits, 'le vrai bienfait est la volonté seule de celuy qui donne' (p. 10). On the Baradat Affair of 1626, Richelieu wrote: 'Le remède de ce mal consiste ou à faire de grands biens non seulement à sa personne, mais encore à celle de ses parents.'

Je dis: grand biens, parce qu'il tesmoigne clairement que leur donner des charges mediocres, c'est plutost l'irriter que le contenter.' Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, i (1626), 317.

44. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, i (1624), 62.
45. *Ibid.*, 63.
46. *Ibid.*, 62 (p. 121).
47. Bonney, *King's Debts*, pp. 181–4.
48. Bergin, *Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth*, p. 68.
49. *Testament politique*, p. 343.
50. The standard work is by H. Hauser, *La Pensée et l'action économiques du cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris, 1944).
51. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, i (1626), 333.
52. 'Brokerage at the Court of Louis XIV', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), pp. 76–7.
53. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, i (1626), 333.
54. *Testament politique*, pp. 343–68.
55. 'Le vray moyen d'enrichir l'Estat est de soulager le peuple et décharger de l'une et l'autre de ses charges en diminuant celles de l'Estat': *ibid.*, p. 358.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
57. Grillon, ed., *Papiers*, iv (1629), 66.
58. *Lustra Ludovic, or the Life of the Late Victorious King of France, Lewis the XIII* (London, 1646), p. 184.
59. *Lettres du cardinal Mazarin pendant son ministère*, ed. P. A. Chéruel, 9 vols (Paris, 1872–1906), v, 16 January 1652, IV.
60. *Ibid.*, iii, LXXXVI.

Favourite, Minister, Magnate: Power Strategies in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth

ANTONI MĄCZAK

The Structure of Power

The power structure of the Polish–Lithuanian state¹ was peculiar. From the Union of Lublin in 1569, it was a close federation of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with an elective king-and-grand-duke as its cornerstone. From 1385 to 1569 the kings of Poland were elected by the Sejm (the Diet) from among members of the Jagiellon dynasty, which claimed undisputed hereditary rights to the grand duchy. In the mid-fifteenth century this had led to short-lived conflicts. For a brief period – 1444–7 – both countries, in personal union since 1385, had two brothers as separate rulers. In the next century there was no serious danger of such a split, but the different interests of the two states (*avant la lettre*) and the particularist interests of provincial elites often led to open conflicts. It is of importance that in Lithuania the assemblies of the nobility emerged only in the sixteenth century and the ruling elite consisted of princes and boyars. This changed when, after 1569, the grand duchy adopted the Polish system of *sejmiki* (county assemblies, or dietines, of the nobles, which included even the poor nobility).² The position of the great lords changed too. The problem is: how did the new power structure of the Commonwealth influence individual careers; what strategies were effective; and what room was left to royal favourites?

From 1569, the Senate of the Commonwealth was composed of ecclesiastical lords (archbishops and bishops), palatines and castellans.³ The crown (that is, Poland) and the grand duchy had their separate structures of offices and *cursus honorum*. The Act of Union secured for the Lithuanian lords seats in the Senate according to their respective dignities, equally with the Poles. It was of crucial importance that all offices were held for life, and not at the king's pleasure; for all practical purposes, officeholders retained their position until promotion to a higher or more profitable post. The ministries were separate for the kingdom and the grand duchy, and ministers had their places in the Senate as well.⁴ No *Herrenstand* existed in Poland, but Dr Henryk Litwin has proved statistically

that between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-seventeenth century the upper stratum of the nobility established a new identity based on informal *connubium*. A national elite replaced the former provincial elites, and with growing intensity the magnates intermarried beyond the borders of their native counties and provinces.⁵ Members of prominent families acquired offices in distant parts where they were not residents. At this high level the *ius indigenatus* could be fairly easily bypassed.⁶ The Senate was their forum, but networks of relationships were multiple and dense. The magnates maintained sumptuous households at the heart of their estates. Although they built palaces in and around Warsaw, their points of contact with the other notables, with their 'friends' (that is, real and potential clients) and finally with the independent nobility were their own households.⁷ The role of the magnates' residences was growing from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century but in the north-west (Great Poland) it never became so marked as in Lithuania and in the Ruthenian south-east, the Ukraine of today.

What may be called the spatial structure of power, which was so peculiar in the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania, was caused by a complex of legal, social and economic factors. The fifteenth-century statutes, and particularly those of 1454, gave to the Noble Estates freedoms similar to those acquired by the Estates in Hungary, in the Czech lands and in most countries of the West. However, the freedoms of the nobility (in the broad, continental sense of the term) found no counterweight in the wealth and strength of the Commonalty (the Third Estate). Secondly, the nobility succeeded in hampering the build-up of a royal administration; from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century the state gradually became something of a federation of counties run by their respective assemblies of the nobility. To a great extent, the situation (in terms of power and politics) within a county depended on the relationships between individuals and/or various strata of the nobility. It is important to add that, whereas the influence from the centre on the localities was minimal, the dietines expressed their opinions on general state issues, internal and foreign, and obliged their deputies to follow their instructions closely. Neither the landed gentry nor their mighty neighbours and patrons, the magnates, were interested in making the royal administration and juridical power strong; local self-government seemed preferable.

Thirdly, the country was very large – around 1632 it was up to one million square kilometres and in the border lands the king was very distant and could hardly be approached except with the friendly help of a magnate–patron. The modern notion of 'citizen', as opposed to 'subject', was current in early modern Poland. Yet this modern trait was hardly compatible with the social and economic structures. The lesser nobility entrenched in the Chamber of Deputies, where all the dietines were represented, achieved in the mid-sixteenth century a great degree of real political freedom from the magnates but were losing their wealth and economic independence. On top of all this, the authority of the 'freely elected' king was declining. He was regarded as 'the true husband of this

Commonwealth'.⁸ His person as a sovereign was rarely mentioned separately: the term often used was 'his Majesty the king and the Commonwealth'. And yet the Diet was regarded as an important forum. The king-in-parliament was able to display his favour and disfavour, chiefly by grants of offices and leaseholds of the royal domain. He could also play the factions against one another. In the seventeenth century, the Vasas⁹ more and more ruled through royalist factions. This created special rules of the game for prospective royal favourites. But in such a decentralized system who was a favourite and who was a minister? What was the relationship of the term 'magnate' to the terms 'minister' and 'favourite'?

Favourites–Ministers–Magnates: A Report from the British Isles¹⁰

Let me begin with the testimony of an anonymous alien who had spent a long time in Poland and compiled a 'Relation of . . . Polonia . . . Anno 1598'.¹¹ It was the fruit of a profound knowledge of the Polish polity: both the constitution and the structure of politics. The author must have been connected with Chancellor Jan Zamoyski (1542–1605), whose viewpoint he was presenting. Whoever he was, the author – who came from the British Isles – was critical of the Polish polity, and explained it in terms borrowed from Tacitus' *Germania*.¹² The concepts we are interested in – if not all the terms – can be found there. 'Favourite' we encounter in a marginal note summarizing a paragraph: 'Stephan assured of the State by making his favourites greate.'¹³ The former note ran as follows: 'The Kinge may make himselfe stronge.' Both notes accompanied a paragraph on King Stephan's (ruled 1576–86) wise choice of Zamoyski and on the latter's wisdom. The original term 'favour' was in use, as in the following sentence:

So that bothe spirituall and secular prefermentes allmost onely serve for the mainteyning of greate howses in theire greatness, they having the hability of following the course of ambition, and the advaantage of favoure with the Prince, whoe bestoweth all charges upon those which can best pleasure hym, by suche meanes obliging to hymselfe the mightie famelies.¹⁴

This described not the rise of the royal favourites but rather the method of obliging the great houses: the way of 'maintain[ing] the great houses in their greatness'. The author focused on them. He did not use the term 'minister'. Instead he wrote of 'Officers that are Dignitaries', or 'the greate officers admitted into the Senate . . . the Marshalls, Chauncellors, and Treasurers'.¹⁵ Elsewhere he called them simply 'officers', and contrasted them with 'Terrestres Officiarii'.¹⁶ These dignitaries were however ministers, if this term was not regarded as *singularis tantum*.

Our author related quite accurately the positions and functions of diverse principal officers, but the most valuable parts of his report are the paragraphs devoted to the magnates. The term itself did not appear in his text. This corresponded with Polish usage. The observations touching 'the greate Lordes' belong to the most interesting sections of the 'Relation, 1598'.¹⁷

Bothe the greate Lordes, and private riche gentlemen keepe greate traynes, commonly in the uttermost of theire habillity, and somme farre beyonde. . . . the Radzivils, Ostrog, Zbaras . . . or other Dukes of Lithuania, and Russia . . . have no other place, then is afforded them by suche office as they gett, howbeit that they are mighty in theire owne terretories, especially Ostrog, whoe hath 4000 feudataries besydes Bawres, Townesmen etc. But theire mighte is not feared because they neyther have pretension nor absolute commaunde other then other of the Nobility.

The author, who did not disguise his criticism of Polish political customs and the Polish constitution (including elective monarchy), saw a political rationale in the 'correspondency of patron, and Cliente' in Poland, and particularly in Lithuania and Ruthenia: a relationship which he regarded as strange, and described quoting long paragraphs from *Germania*.¹⁸

So that whether the Polish Noblemen keepe suche greate and ryotuous traynes in that reason of State, or uppon affection of pompe, and greatnes, or security of theire persons as being commonly in quarrells, the State cannot well stande without it. For that is the common bande of unity between the riche and the poor, bothe by that meanes participating of the benefites of lande, the one by commaunde, and the other by dependency of the Commaunders trencher. . . .

For this foreign observer in the late sixteenth century, the key question was typically the social order. In Poland it seemed to him solidly based on the 'common bande of unity between the riche and the poore', the latter having been 'interested in the sovereignty . . . [because] the voice of every poore servingman being a gentleman weighes as much in all Conventes and elections as the greatest princes . . .'. At another point he observed: 'it seems that thys poorer sorte desyres not any better state, for they lyve ryotously and gallantly according to the Polish humoure'.¹⁹

It is rather strange that the author, who (better than many historians today) understood the importance and scale of the patronage of local magnates, underestimated the consequences of the magnates' growth and could not foresee the two civil wars to come during the seventeenth century. In his opinion the great lords somehow cooled the 'riotous' nature of the lesser gentry²⁰ and were able to keep them in reasonable order. However, he was aware that the magnates availed themselves of their clients not only 'uppon affectation of pompe, and greatnes', but also 'in quarrels'. He mentioned a characteristic case: 'This [civil war] might well have happened in the quarrell betweene Zamoysky and the



1 Henri III of France and his *mignons*. The King sits under the canopy on the left at the wedding of his favourite, the duc de Joyeuse. Sixteenth-century French school. (Musée du Louvre, Paris)



2 Alvaro de Luna, favourite of Juan II of Castile. His spectacular rise and fall in the fifteenth century epitomized the role of fortune in the career of favourites. (Painting in the Santiago Chapel, Toledo Cathedral)



3 Philip II of Spain: a prince who recognized the dangers of excessive dependence on favourites. Painting by Antonio Moro. (Museo del Prado, Madrid)



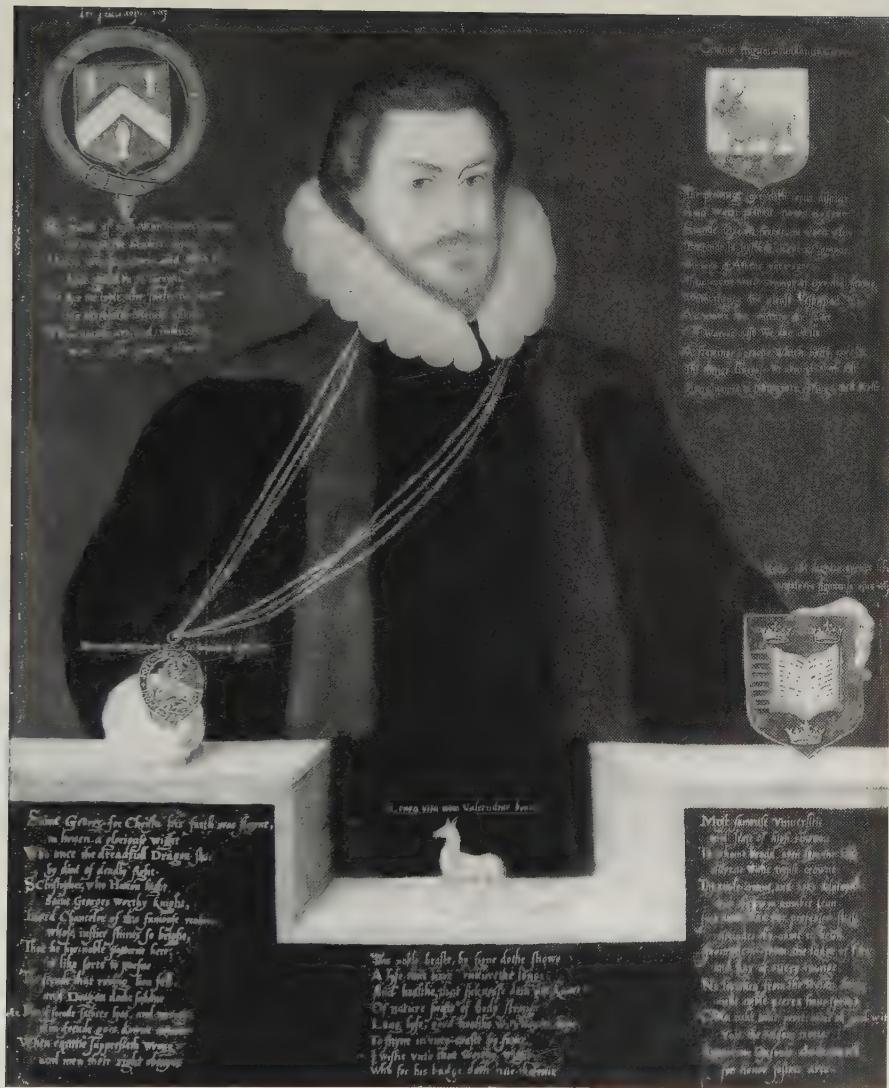
4 Ruy Gómez de Silva, better known as the Prince of Eboli, first and most powerful favourite of Philip II of Spain. (Painting in the collection of the Duke of Infantado, Madrid)



5 Sovereign Mistress of her Grace? Elizabeth I, the 'Armada Portrait'. Painted by George Gower (c. 1588). (Woburn Abbey)



6 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester: a favourite too close to the throne?
Painting of c. 1585–6. (Parham Park)

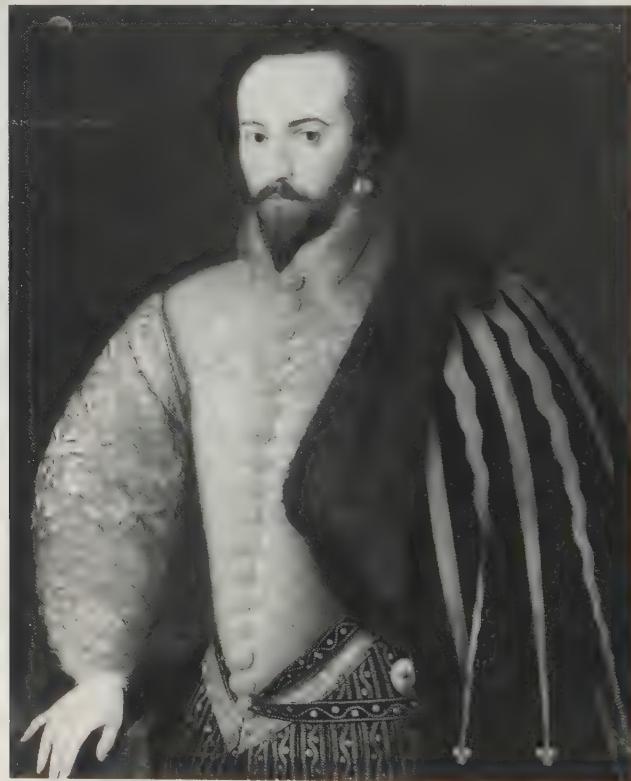


7 Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor, who danced his way into Elizabeth's favour. Painting of 1591. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

8 William Cecil, Lord Burghley:
Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer and
devoted servant. (Painting in the
Bodleian Library, Oxford)



9 Sir Walter Ralegh: Renaissance
courtier whose ambitions for office
were thwarted. Painting of 1588.
(National Portrait Gallery, London)





10 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the reckless favourite. Painting of 1590 by William Segar (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin)

The Kingly Cocke



1. The King of England & Queen of France. 2. The Duke of Araneo. 3. The Spanish Ambassador. 4. The Duke of Berwick. 5. The French Ambassador.

The King of England.

Most every churl doth have his golden chains,
And sleepeth faste in his full iron'd shaines,
To rett ame bekele me; and which Mars
Displaies his blode colours, to that force
Conspiring heare, haue a fayre and fayre
Brounging forth his armes of defens and force
To hold this peace I have, warre is by God
Sene on a Land to plague me, 'emis rod.
My Land is happe to this golden peace
Flowes & fayre, and greeves me greare
Of all the earth, eareme olde good thing
Himnes & Econome flouering.
Yea, I wot peace (desire though long and late)
Hope to regaine the lost palatine.

The King of France.

Awake, awake, flouer and fayre lord
Your flumb ring on your hailes tooke so long ref.
Drawe forth your Kingly word, the man that spurs
His neighbours house on fire, and yet hes
Seuerall, and yet he is a knave, and yet he
Is strok'd & burn'd & with his knafe & flame,
Yon ears are chain'd to o' fall into the aye
Of this impofors fuite, who will en faire
You Argos like in his fited net of gold
As the Peacocke in his plaine
Lookes on your cleare blood, dene branche faire
Whip through this tyrants rage, as exiles are,
And nother more fad reproffed ther land
By peace, as you doe dreame, but by strong hand,
I looke on you, and yet you haue no fayre
Whose faihfulness you may belieue and truthe
Doe swere, I will for this fawer child truthe
To fex them in their parmoniall righte,
Now, Perches, couze you, now brother, fowne in feld

With mee I arme to make ouer thy field.

Hero, french King, who taughte you to rule
Over our neare, King whiche perthe to intrude
Awre of your vices? for a plot knownes
To ouerturn our Land, in spryng? like a threare
You did no fower to helpe frute refred.

I be Englysh favorite to the King of Spain.

Holla, french King, who taughte you to rule
Over our neare, King whiche perthe to intrude
Awre of your vices? for a plot knownes
To ouerturn our Land, in spryng? like a threare
Our land is now in refls in quare, in quare
Was wot wate ware to us for our drese,
What we are wot, we are wot, we are wot
With al these Paines to the Fyld, whereby
Had not their Father to Bohemianee? is
Aljard, they had in quiet holder their land
Who wiling burmes his bosome, must be faire
In plesance, and yet he is a knave, and yet he
Wot of treble vantage we had? what haue we gone
That all men say? RESTIUVTON
It is betwix us, by meane, joustfull
We wot not whether we haue won or lost
Borne with chalenge, to ouerfie
Thornbacked conffet, cardewell, about in nightes
In hunting, yea, and ouerfie about in nightes
Whilke lord of a knave, monke wa, ce with paine
Whilke lord of a knave, monke wa, ce with paine

I be Englysh favorite to the King of Spain Extraordynarie.

Thus say I unto you, Ambassader Extraordynarie.

Ife feare, I feede you to him, the King
I must avow to him, that he
That I saw, who did fram his hope awake him
Was to awaken him, to seeke take him

Well n't I math and trike my comfit
To helpe at this! all I haue done is ill,
Exceyng that I haue done ill,
And pleaseth Brabant is in perfitt too,
The Hollander will alio not be backe
On that conffit to fal on our backe;
No, charme me, will not be backe,
Tear all shad evil, I am fayre prayere,
Then haill we ouerturn the Moyses land
And Lame shall of himself come in my hand.

The Earle of Araneo returning from the dia boldre as Regal bryg.

What hailest thou, King? Great God keep he and blif
Berold I bring to thee, the change news is it,
I bring haile to red Marster's sake,
For w loch I thinke he Highnes wot not thankie
The forme is full Due for, when I proppred
The hairefond in the realfous groundes
They couew with other hairefond in the spades
My King derided and his ferster fote,
Rake hell, fad they, & affake the devills there
OFTEN SITTIVTON if they once did hearre,
All the world wot, that he hairefond
Cafir fayre thus, cheare hairefond, fere hairefond,
Send near the charfis brent whoe that fand
On Toyer wharfe, he lno pray, but comfond,
Is in Cambrai and a marrall wifte
The earle of Araneo is, lord or knighe,
Who knowes to leue wifte, and who may get
Berzer contentz than any Legate yea,
Take out of every towne one man of men
And with thic well train'd & well arm'd Englysh men
Invade we Flanders, this is the way I ronder
To make them on good temmes the Pultz furrender.

Chorus. We doone our selfe Andrew don Chanc. D. 2. 2.

11 Charles I of England: the sleeping prince. A broadsheet of 1636. (British Museum, London)

12 Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset: James I of England's Scottish favourite. Painting of 1611 by Nicholas Hilliard. (National Portrait Gallery, London)



13 Jacopo da Ponte, *Beheading of John the Baptist*. One of the paintings in the Earl of Somerset's private collection, assembled whilst he was favourite to the King. (Statens Museum fur Kunst, Copenhagen)





14 Concino Concini: Marie de Médicis' Italian favourite. (Portrait in the Musée du Louvre, Paris)



15 Leonora Galigai: wife of Concino Concini and confidante of Marie de Médicis. (Portrait in the Musée du Louvre, Paris)



16 The marriage of Henri IV and Marie de Médicis at Lyon. The king and queen are depicted in the heavens as Jove and Juno with the queen's lion-drawn chariot below. From the Rubens cycle of the life of Marie de Médicis painted for the Luxembourg palace. (Musée du Louvre, Paris)



17 The duc de Luynes, first favourite of Louis XIII of France.



18 Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury: bureaucrat or favourite? Painting of 1602 attributed to John de Critz. (National Portrait Gallery, London)



19 James I, King of England. Painting of 1621 by Daniel Mytens.
(National Portrait Gallery, London)



20 The reward of favour: Hatfield House, country home of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.



21 Lord Burghley and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury: father and son as royal servants. (Fictional portrait, Hatfield House)

22 Matthäus Enzlin, counsellor and favourite of Duke Friedrich of Württemberg. (Woodcut in the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart)

I M A G O
Nobilis, & Confutissimi Viri, Dn.
ACAT THÆI ENZLINI, V. I. DOCTORIS, ET
illusterrimi Dux Würtembergicus D. D. FRIDERICI, &c.
Consilary unius, & primary: ac in inclita Tubingensi Aca-
demia Professor excellensissimi: Anno M. D. LXXXI. 41.



Dufuchon *Würtembergicus.*

Grande DEI DONVM Es, Partiriq; Duciq; Scholæq;
ENS Legum, & curuLINE Arctafon,

EIVS.

23 Duke Friedrich of Württemberg. (Engraving in the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart)



Palatyne of Kiovia, (whoe came to the Dyett with 7000 horses) yf it had not ben taken up. For that they twooe as most potent by allies and dependency, would have distracted the state into theirre twooe factions.²¹ It is obvious that the anonymous observer was laying stress on the role of the magnates as patrons of the lesser landed nobility (sometimes even defined as ‘servingmen’). Their position as great landowners and mighty neighbours was for him more important than the high, even crucial, offices they held.

He also mentions seven members of the Radziwiłł clan entrusted by King Stephan with key offices in the Grand Duchy. He does not suggest that either Jan Zamoyski or the Radziwiłłs were favourites of King Stephan in the *personal* meaning of the word. And indeed a close relationship existed only between the king and Zamoyski, whose career was by any standards spectacular.²²

Zamoyski’s father (1519–72) was a nobleman of modest means, the owner of four villages and part of a fifth in the Palatinate of Ruthenia. He served the king well as a soldier, and probably also won the protection of the first family of Lithuania, the Radziwiłłs, when he was fighting in the grand duchy. As a reward for his contribution to victory over the Muscovites he was granted a large royal estate (the *capitaneatus* of Bełz) and a seat in the Senate as a minor castellan. This placed him on the path to power.

Jan Sarius Zamoyski himself became the sole heir to his father’s fortune and position after the death of his elder brother. His early years were complicated by the fact that his father had converted to Calvinism in 1551. Although at the time this was normal, especially among the upwardly mobile nobility, the last quarter of the sixteenth century saw massive reconversions to Rome. Jan was sent away to study in Strasburg and Paris, and finally in Padua, where he studied Roman institutions with Carlo Sigonio, and was elected rector in 1561. In Padua he made valuable intellectual friendships,²³ and, with the help of two of his Italian friends, Sigonio and Paolo Manuzio, of the famous family of printers, he secured the protection of the royal secretary and newly appointed vice-chancellor of Poland, Piotr Myszkowski.

Back in Poland Jan Zamoyski, now a doctor of laws, became a secretary to the king. His duties included the reorganization of the Record Office, and according to his personal secretary and biographer, Reinhold Heidenstein, this ‘service to the motherland’ brought him both fame and profit. In addition, his close reading of legal texts gave him ‘uncommon skill in history and everything concerning the Commonwealth’. He was rewarded by the monarch with grants of land, and, when his father died in 1572, Sigismund Augustus – now terminally ill – transferred his father’s leaseholds to him. But, according to his most recent biographer,²⁴ Zamoyski was not entirely loyal to Sigismund Augustus, and was linked to the Myszkowskis, who were later accused of poisoning the king.

On 7 July 1572, when Sigismund Augustus, the last monarch of the House of Jagiellon, died, the court was virtually dissolved, and court factions lost much of their importance. Although it had long been apparent that no heir would be

born, the country was caught unprepared by his death. Zamoyski played a crucial role in one of the earliest county 'confederations' raised by local nobilities for the maintenance of law and order. Some of these were directed specifically against the senators, at a moment when the struggle between the Senate and the Noble Estate as to who represented the Commonwealth was gaining momentum. Zamoyski was on the side of the nobility and openly opposed the senators, but he never became a demagogue; and while it was he who composed the motion that every noble has a right, and duty, to elect the king, he was an advocate of majority voting. The Commonwealth was still far from the *liberum veto*, and the election of a successor to Sigismund Augustus was settled by agreement and compromise, with the election of Henri de Valois, duc d'Anjou, to the throne.

Until the second election and the crowning of Stephan Batory as king in 1576, following the departure of Anjou to assume the crown of France, Zamoyski continued as one of the leaders in the Chamber, and was the principal opponent of the Habsburgs and their Polish faction. Shortly after his coronation, Batory, who had also studied at Padua, appointed him vice-chancellor. Zamoyski's position under Batory is best defined as that of a minister, but he was probably something more. Although he was loyal to the king, there were moments when he had to choose between him and the Chamber of Deputies. His popularity as 'tribune of the nobility' suffered each time he tied himself more closely to the monarch and he appeared to draw the appropriate conclusion after the third royal election, that of Sigismund III.²⁵

Continuing as chancellor under the new sovereign, he never won the favour of one whom he defined as a *diabolum mutum*,²⁶ and consequently was pushed into opposition. Yet the king had no legal means of dismissing him. Few ministers of these times would think ill of the chancellor for having amassed fabulous wealth in landed property, his own estates and low-rent (or free) leaseholds of royal domain. He multiplied his father's four villages into a fortune of many hundreds of manors.²⁷ This self-made man was among the most accomplished patrons of that age. This was a consequence of his office. When the chancellor's power was petering out, he used his position more and more in defence of his clients for whom he was no longer able to win substantial royal favours.²⁸ In a sense he was becoming a full-blown magnate. It was his accumulated wealth and prestige, rather than his offices, or his close relationship with the king, which shaped his power. His private empire in the south-east he passed on to the descendants.

Chancellor-Hetman Zamoyski died in 1605, 'possibly too early. We do not know what would have happened,' writes Stanislaw Grzybowski,

if he had lived until the *rokosz* [the civil war of 1606–7], whether he would have become a Polish Cromwell or completed the construction of republican institutions similar to those of Venice. . . . We only know what his faithful pupil and best friend, Stanislaw Żółkiewski, did. He did not support the king but the law,

defending the full competence of the Sejm to settle political conflicts. He had defeated the rebels but did not pursue them, and put pressure on the king to pardon the defeated.²⁹

The conclusion we can draw is that Zamoyski (and, following him, Żółkiewski) regarded himself as a minister of the *Res Publica* rather than a royal servant.³⁰

Magnate and Courtier: An Alternative

At the turn of the sixteenth and in the early decades of the seventeenth century, the great houses and ambitious individuals of Poland adopted diverse strategies of advancement. Dr Leszek Kieniewicz, a student of the Senate in the late sixteenth century, has labelled them the magnate–aristocrat alternative.³¹ However, these were rather trends than clear-cut strategies.

The magnate strategy was possible only for the nobleman who enjoyed substantial influence in the localities. He dominated the county nobility in a large and/or important region. According to the Nieszawa Statutes of 1454, the king had to win the approval of the dietines in order to impose taxes and to wage war. Their opinions were eventually expressed by the Chamber of Deputies (to which each dietine despatched two deputies). However, the dietines paid close attention to other questions as well. They determined the county by-laws, local taxation and the militia; in questions of law and order they co-operated with the royal *starosta*,³² who, incidentally, was often a local man of influence.

The magnate extended his strength and increased his political position in several mutually compatible ways. His household was the centre of the social life of the locality; his estates and household troops gave employment to lesser nobles; the latter entrusted their savings to the magnate. A mighty neighbour's support and brokerage was instrumental for lesser noblemen seeking a career in national politics. However, in the seventeenth century, particularly in the western counties, the ordinary nobility was still relatively independent since sharp competition between magnates prevented any one of them from gaining absolute dominance.

Nevertheless, a numerous and loyal clientele in the localities and control over several county Diets was the foundation of magnate strategy. When dignities and honours were being distributed, a mighty patron of county nobility could not be simply disregarded, even if he stood in opposition to the sovereign.³³

This strategy eventually prevailed in Poland–Lithuania; it represented – or rather it was at the roots of – what may be defined as *dominium politicum*. It was incompatible with *dominium regale*. Polish public opinion tended to regard *dominium politicum et regale* as *absolutum dominium* or simply despotism.³⁴

The aristocratic, or rather court-oriented, strategy aimed at impressing and influencing the king directly. In return for valued service, loyalty and devotion, the king would bestow upon the nobleman an office and/or a

substantial leasehold on a royal estate (*starostwo*; Lat. *capitaneatus*) on very profitable terms. This was the other face of the Domain State. But it was of crucial importance that the king had no means of withdrawing any material favours he had bestowed. Disloyalty of a grantee was a common, even a typical, phenomenon.

This court-oriented strategy flourished in Poland–Lithuania under the first two Vasas.³⁵ The first Vasa king, Sigismund III, intensively prepared the election of his son Ladislas (Władysław) to the Polish throne. The household of the prince royal swarmed with young men from great houses competing for lasting friendship with the future sovereign;³⁶ but, as the future careers of two contemporaries of the prince, Stanislas Kazanowski and George Ossoliński, make clear,³⁷ initial favour at court did not necessarily determine behaviour in the longer term.

From Favourite to Minister: A Case Study

George Ossoliński (pl. 29) (1595–1650) was a statesman: a successful ambassador to London, Rome and the imperial Reichstag at Regensburg, from 1643 grand chancellor of the crown, the most influential public servant in the Commonwealth, the true kingmaker at the 1648 election and the minister of King John Casimir. And yet his early years at the royal court were characteristic of a favourite and gave little indication of his subsequent career as an accomplished statesman.

His father, who was the first member of his family to be a palatine (provincial governor), had been a partisan of the Habsburgs and became an ardent royalist and a supporter of Sigismund III Vasa. A great orator, he persuaded the rebels in 1607 to negotiate with the king. Although his own career was not spectacular, he successfully promoted that of his son, who was handsome and well educated. The young George Ossoliński was also an ardent Catholic, and studied in Jesuit colleges and at Louvain. To secure himself a place at court, he or his father made use of the influence of his uncle, George Firly, the vice-chancellor, of his father's friend, the Bishop of Cracow, and of the premier lay senator, Nicolas Zebrzydowski. The assistance of another relative, *hetman* John Charles Chodkiewicz, was probably decisive,³⁸ but the entire family supported its promising young member, and in the process made an excellent investment.³⁹

In the early stages of Ossoliński's career there were four principal dramatic characters, and the initial scene of the drama was the headquarters of the army moving on Moscow in 1617–18. King Sigismund strongly promoted his eldest son, Ladislas, as a great warlord and a perfect candidate for the Polish throne.⁴⁰ The prince (born 1595) was sent to Moscow, or rather against Muscovy, in 1617: during the Time of Troubles a party among the boyars had offered him the Muscovite throne but the opportunity was lost, chiefly because Sigismund himself had his eyes on the throne of the tsars.⁴¹ In 1617 the king and his

counsellors decided to try again. However, it was too late. The number of Polish partisans in Moscow had dwindled and the expedition ended with nothing more than a truce signed at Deulino for fourteen and a half years and some territorial gains for Lithuania. Relevant for my theme is what was happening in the prince's entourage. Our principal source of information is heavily biased: Ossoliński's own memoirs.⁴² We must not take his complaints and accusations at their face value, and yet his recollections retain a flavour of court life. To cut a long story short let me concentrate upon the different modes of behaviour of particular actors.

The prince's little court on the move towards Moscow was intertwined with the army command. The real commander was the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, John Charles Chodkiewicz, a great warlord, victorious over the Swedes at Kirchholm (1605) and a loyal supporter of the king in the subsequent Civil War. But Prince Ladislas was also accompanied by the whole clan of the Kazanowskis: two brothers Stanislas and Adam, both on close terms with the prince, their father Sigismund, marshal of the prince's court, and their cousin Martin, a military officer.

Young men were inspired by the high stakes of the expedition but seemed indifferent to diplomatic and military progress. Instead, the court-in-the-field swarmed with intrigues. Stanislas Kazanowski and George Ossoliński, who had joined the prince's entourage at the age of twenty-two, were the prince's bedfellows and spent their days playing cards and banqueting. Ossoliński was bitter when, for reasons which remain unclear, he lost his bedchamber privileges. But soon Stanislas Kazanowski, the closest companion of the prince, lost his favours abruptly. Prince Ladislas tended him during his unpleasant sickness (probably venereal disease) but later unexpectedly transferred his favour to his brother Adam (pl. 30), and Stanislas disappeared from the scene so completely that today he receives no entries in biographical dictionaries. Gossip was intense and the war between the courtiers visibly diminished the preparedness of the army. The prince had no military experience and Hetman Chodkiewicz was not in full control: consequently detachments of troops under diverse commands sometimes worked at cross-purposes. The hetman could not stand the prince's 'lovers',⁴³ who disregarded his orders. Ossoliński openly disapproved of such behaviour and after some unfortunate scenes at the 'court' inclined towards a group of more mature dignitaries who felt a sense of responsibility for the military and diplomatic outcome of the campaign, like the strong disciplinarian Hetman Chodkiewicz, several senators and the young Jacob Sobieski (who would be the father of King John III). The latter group – in this we may believe Ossoliński – strongly disliked what he called the 'silly and almost boorish pride' of Stanislas Kazanowski, whom a castellan compared with a character from Guarini's *Pastor Fido*:

O villano indiscreto e importuno!
*Mezzo uomo, mezza capra e tutto bestia.*⁴⁴

Ossoliński clung to this group and developed a genuine friendship with some of them. His personal bravery won him respect from the soldiers and officials and we may assume that this was not without impact on his subsequent career as a minister.

The strategy of the Kazanowskis was a clear-cut case of petty court politics: they had no parliamentary or popular support whatsoever (in the sense of *populus nobilium*), and no political programme; they were simply struggling for influence and the prince's favours. Adam Kazanowski 'gratified the prince's whims'. Vindictive and greedy, he was generally disliked at the court; he would make no great political career but concentrated on pressing Ladislas, elected king in 1632, for measurable proofs of his favour. His Warsaw residence was regarded as the most sumptuous palace in the capital.

Ossoliński was poorly equipped for such rivalry: by writing letters home about Kazanowski's doings, he made a monumental mistake, unaware that this was defaming the prince as well. By the time the campaign was reaching its end, Ossoliński had bitterly clear proof of the prince's disfavour – his 'bad heart', as he wrote. So he asked for permission to return to Warsaw for a session of the Diet and disappeared from the court, at that time in Smolensk. Prince Ladislas' letters, which Ossoliński brought to Warsaw, reflected the situation: those addressed to the king alone sang high praise of George (who had distinguished himself as a soldier) whereas one addressed to the king and the queen 'demanded the greatest possible vengeance'. Ossoliński wrote in his memoir: 'the king laughed and wondered about my simplicity in bringing such whips for myself'. Prince Ladislas in his youth visibly encouraged potential favourites, delighted in them and was exposed to their tactics.

Ossoliński did not try again to become a favourite in the strict sense. Fortunately, the prince's criticism did not destroy his position with the king. He was despatched to England to request permission to recruit troops against the Ottomans. Upon his return from Westminster and Denmark – or possibly shortly before – and after his marriage, he apparently made a self-examination and drew conclusions from his experience as a courtier.⁴⁵ Probably in 1623 he embarked upon a parliamentary career: he was elected deputy in 1623, 1624, 1625 and finally 1627. In that year he took a radical stand and loudly defended the principles of *incompatibilitas*, or the ban on holding more than one high ministerial post. Ossoliński, although a fervent Catholic, was even prepared to extend this principle to include all archbishops and bishops and did not shirk a stormy conflict with them on the floor of the Diet. Such a political programme was frowned upon by the court but, on the other hand, Ossoliński's popularity with the ordinary nobility could not be ignored, and he constantly underlined his deference to the king – a deference which was not typical of deputies and public opinion in general.

At the king's request he appeased Bishop Andrzej Lipski. The years 1631 and 1632 were critical for his career and demanded all his political skills. In 1631 he

was elected speaker (*marszałek*, Lat. *marscacus*) of the House (testimony to his strong position with the ordinary nobility). This was Sigismund's last Diet and the court was promoting a bill proposing a royal election *vivente rege*. Few if any motions were less popular, even with the magnates: this was a Polish version of the court-versus-country conflict. The motion had no chance in the House; Ossoliński, elected its speaker, complied with the majority but did it so politely that the king did not bear him a grudge and on his deathbed appointed him court treasurer. Prince Ladislas, still only a candidate of the throne, made him his representative during the Election Diet; Ossoliński thanked the electors in the newly elected king's name. The Brandenburg envoy rightly pointed to him as a rising star of the new reign. And indeed in the Coronation Diet Ossoliński took the liberty of contradicting even the grand chancellor, Jacob Zadzik, Bishop of Chełm. Re-elected speaker in 1635, he also successfully undertook several diplomatic missions.⁴⁶ In 1636 the king appointed him palatine of Sandomierz. This was his first senatorial office but in two years he would be vice-chancellor and from 1643 grand chancellor. What were his political views? What was his view of *raison d'état*?

Traditionally, historians laid stress on his Jesuit education, his original unpreparedness for court life and his alleged absolutist tendencies. However, both in his early writings and in his diplomatic and parliamentary speeches Ossoliński hailed the principle of *monarchia mixta*, particularly in its Polish – 'republican' – version. Yet there are reasons to suppose that in his opinion the correct balance of state institutions required an increase of royal power and a closer definition of the elite. He was the principal and most steadfast supporter of the project of the Order of the Immaculate Conception (and the lowest-ranking senator on the list of its prospective members). But when the country was flooded with pamphlets hostile to the knights of the Order, and even the king's brother, John Casimir – with an eye on his popularity with the ordinary nobility – declined to accept the distinction, the whole project was doomed.⁴⁷

In the next twelve years, George Ossoliński would be the principal minister of the Commonwealth, the close collaborator of King Ladislas IV, the initiator or executor of his projects, and eventually the author of an abortive political solution to the Cossack crisis of the Commonwealth after the military solution failed. His career differed from Zamoyski's: when Ossoliński entered on the political scene, the lesser nobility's movement for the Execution of the Laws was forgotten, and the Chamber of Deputies was much less independent of the magnates than in the 1570s. For the young Ossoliński's contemporaries the court of the royal prince seemed a promising avenue. On the other hand, the system of *dominium politicum* limited the chances of the prospective favourites. It also shaped the minister's position in a peculiar way. The latter (with the possible exception of the treasurers) was not so much an administrator as a broker between the conflicting interests of the king, the gentry and the magnate factions.⁴⁸

The Rise and Decline of the Magnates: Poland and the West Compared

The magnates in Poland were gaining momentum as a ruling stratum if not as an oligarchy in the strict sense of the term. It was what Robert Dahl has called ‘competitive oligarchy’. This made impossible a minister’s career similar to that of, say, Lord Burghley, Cardinal Richelieu, the Count-Duke of Olivares or Axel Oxenstierna. It also diminished the role of the royal court as an instrument for imposing solid discipline on the *vulgus nobilium*. This roughly explains the political assets of the magnate in his relation to the king. The magnate’s strength lay in his ability to mobilize and manipulate noble constituencies. The mighty neighbour was able to call together mounted and armed followers – against robbers, for political display and last but not least in defence of ‘noble freedom’ against the king.⁴⁹ In general, whereas landownership was the foundation of magnate power, the patronage of the lesser nobility was crucial for the magnates’ identity as a collective group.

Was it wealth in the form of landed property which made a nobleman eligible for a high office and place at the royal court, or rather office and position at court which led to enrichment and influence in the provinces? In most cases landed wealth and traditional domination over a particular area made the great noble an obvious candidate for appointment to high office (ministerial or honorific). Eventually, office was likely to bring him additional power and wealth. A magnate was really strong when he was constantly informed of what was happening at court and when at the same time he was able to control dietines (this could be directly done by his principal clients) and also take part in local country life. He had to run his own court.

While magnate families became solid pillars of the social structure and of the polity of the Commonwealth, there was remarkable mobility among them as a result of their high death-rate, and of patterns of intermarriage. The magnates never became a tightly closed group within the nobility, a *Herrenstand*. They constantly absorbed into their number the ablest members of the lesser nobility, and that link with the rank-and-file nobility contributed to their strength.

In the long run, in Poland the magnate won over the minister and the favourite. Dr Michał Kopczyński has shown how clearly this was reflected in the different behaviour of officeholders in Poland and Sweden.⁵⁰ Rule over space – in other words the regional power-base – played a much greater role in Poland than elsewhere in absolutist Europe, when the rise of absolutism was destroying the regional power-bases of the aristocracy.⁵¹

The magnate could also be a minister. Furthermore, the power and wealth of magnate families demanded that some of their members should hold crucial offices in the Commonwealth. It was good to send their scions to the court. But,

from the later seventeenth century, the real struggle for power between ‘the mightie famelies’ took place in the localities and in the Diet. The role of the favourite had petered out. He lost out to the magnate in Poland, just as he lost out to the minister in the West.

Notes

1. It was called *Rzeczpospolita*, or *Res Publica*, i.e., the Commonwealth.
2. J. P. Cooper writes: ‘Though the word noble was usually reserved for the peerage in England . . . in France, Poland and other countries it included those without titles who in England were called the gentry’ (‘General Introduction’, in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, iv (Cambridge, 1971), p. 16). In this paper the term ‘nobility’ will be used in this comprehensive sense. Its upper stratum will be called ‘magnates’ (great landowners even if untitled), while the rest of the noble estate will be called ‘lesser nobility’. See below, note 20.
3. I am reluctant to restate arguments of relevance which I have discussed elsewhere. The relevant papers written in English were reprinted in A. Mączak, *Money, Prices and Power in Poland, 16th–17th Centuries: A Comparative Approach* (Aldershot, 1994). See also ‘The Nobility–State Relationship’, in W. Reinhard, ed., *Power Elites and State Building* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 189–206, and ‘Lo Stato come protagonista e come impresa: tecniche, strumenti, linguaggio’, in M. Aymard, ed., *Storia dell’Europa, iv: L’età moderna, Secoli XVI–XVIII* (Turin, 1995), pp. 125–80.
4. Exceptions were the chief military commanders (*hetman*); these, however, usually held some senatorial office in addition to their military command.
5. H. Litwin, ‘The Polish Magnates, 1554–1648: The Shaping of an Estate’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 53 (1986), pp. 5–31.
6. A common method was to buy one or several estates in the county where the magnate aspired to an office or dignity. In Polish, as in English landed society, two or even three generations of residence did not necessarily lead to acceptance by the local nobility of the purchaser as one of their number.
7. I adapt the Eltonian notion of the point of contact to Polish conditions in ‘The Space of Power: Poland–Lithuania in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Wirtschaft. Gesellschaft. Unternehmen. Festschrift für Hans Pohl zum 60. Geburtstag*, 2. Teilband (Stuttgart, 1995) also *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Beiheft 120b, pp. 633–40. The Polish language does not distinguish between ‘court’ and ‘household’.
8. E. Opaliński, ‘Postawa szlachty polskiej wobec osoby królewskiej jako instytucji w latach, 1587–1648. Próba postawienia problematyki’ (Polish nobility’s attitudes to the king as an institution), *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 111 (1984), p. 796.
9. Sigismund III (1598–1632), Ladislas IV (1632–48) and John Casimir (1648–68).
10. I recently treated these questions from various viewpoints in ‘Paradoxes of Democracy in Poland–Lithuania’, a paper read at the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies in 1994; also ‘Stände und Zentralmacht in Polen–Litauen des XVI. Jahrhunderts’ (forthcoming).
11. *Elementa ad Fontium Editiones*, xiii: *Res Polonicae ex Archivio Musei Britannici*, pt 1 (hereafter ‘Relation’), ed. Carolus H. Talbot (Rome, 1965). The authorship of the manuscript text (British Library, Royal MSS 18 B. 1) has been much discussed. There are two possible authors: Sir George Carew and the Scottish scholar William Bruce. See *ibid.*, pp. xii–xv; Stanisław Kot, ‘Bruce, William’, in *Polski słownik biograficzny* (Polish Biographical Dictionary). Notwithstanding the date in the title, the text contains information from subsequent years.
12. Antoni Mączak, ‘Tacitus, Aristotle and the Polish Polity in the Later Renaissance’, in Bengt Ankarloo et al., eds, *Maktpolitik och Husfrid: Studier i internationell och svensk historia tillägnade Göran Rystad* (Lund, 1991), pp. 27–35 (reprinted in *Money, Prices and Power*).
13. ‘Relation’, p. 60. The following quotations are from pp. 59 and 60.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 75; the following quotations are from pp. 80–2.
16. ‘Besides those are many officers of Charge and Magistrates for the publike government, not admitted into the Senate . . . other are called Terrestres Officarii, as belonging to particular provinces wherein they execute theirre proper offices, and have some authoritie in the Conventes of them. . . .’

- Other officers are secretaries, masters of requests, officers of the household and ‘Captaynes’, i.e. leaseholders of royal estates (Lat. *Capitanei*, Pol. *Starostowie*, Germ. *Amtsleute*). The British author often uses Latin terms current in Poland.
17. ‘Relation,’ pp. 83–4. In the following quotation ‘Russia’ signifies Ruthenia, or the eastern, mainly Orthodox, part of the Commonwealth.
 18. ‘Tacitus description of the Germane traynes doth most aptly expresse the Polish . . . Hys whole discourse of the German fashions in most thinges fit the Poles.’ *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 87. The following quotations are from pp. 86 and 83.
 19. On the other hand, the anonymous author frequently stressed the ‘tumultous’ nature of the Polish lesser nobility.
 20. See above, note 2. The anonymous author (1598) did not clearly distinguish between ‘nobility’ and ‘gentry’.
 21. ‘Relation’, p. 95. The palatine of Kiev was Constantine Ostrogski, regarded as the richest magnate in the Commonwealth.
 22. Aleksander Tarnawski, *Działalność gospodarcza Jana Zamoyskiego kanclerza i hetmana w. kor.* (The Economic Activity of John Zamoyski, Chancellor and Grand Crown Hetman (Lwów, 1935); Wojciech Tygielski, *Politics of Patronage in Renaissance Poland: Jan Zamoyski, His Supporters and the Political Map of Poland, 1572–1605* (Warsaw, 1990); and ‘The Faction Which Could Not Lose’, in Antoni Maczak, ed., *Klientelsysteme im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1988), pp. 177–201 (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 9). The most recent biography of John Zamoyski is Stanisław Grzybowski’s *Jan Zamoyski* (Warsaw, 1994).
 23. His foreign friends included the anatomist and surgeon Gabriel Fallopius, and at the age of twenty he delivered a funeral oration beside Fallopius’ grave.
 24. My presentation of the Grand Chancellor’s career is based on Grzybowski’s very interesting biography.
 25. Sigismund Vasa was regarded as an heir of the Polish Jagiellon dynasty because his mother was Catarina Jagiellonica, sister of King Sigismund Augustus (d. 1572).
 26. Sigismund III was rather taciturn and reserved; his native language was Swedish.
 27. Tarnawski, *Działalność gospodarcza Jana Zamoyskiego*.
 28. Wojciech Tygielski, who wrote penetrating studies of Zamoyski’s career, distinguished between ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive support’. See his ‘A Faction Which Could Not Lose’, p. 196.
 29. *Jan Zamoyski*, p. 285.
 30. This question of the king versus the Commonwealth (*Res Publica*) has recently been analysed in depth by Edward Opaliński. See his summary in ‘Die Funktionen regionaler Amter im Machtssystem der polnischen Adelsrepublik in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. und in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts . . .’, in Joachim Bahicke et al., eds, *Ständefreiheit und Staatsgestaltung in Ostmitteleuropa. Über nationale Gemeinsamkeiten in der politischen Kultur vom 16.–18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1996), pp. 66–7.
 31. Leszek Kieniewicz, *Senat Stefana Batorego* (Stephan Batory’s Senate) (Institute of History PAN, PhD thesis, 1993, forthcoming).
 32. These were *capitanei castrenses*, not simple leaseholders or managers of the royal estates.
 33. I analyse this point in *Klientela: Nieformalne systemy władzy w Polsce i Europie XVI–XVIII w.* (The Clientele: Informal Systems of Power in Poland and Europe, 16th–18th Centuries) (Warsaw, 1994), pp. 112–60. For the most interesting case of Chancellor Zamoyski in opposition to Sigismund III, see Tygielski, *Politics of Patronage*.
 34. An excellent presentation of the lesser Polish nobility’s political opinions is offered by Edward Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej, 1587–1652* (Political Culture of the Lesser Polish Nobility) (Warsaw, 1995).
 35. The third and last Vasa, John Casimir, abdicated in 1668 after the *rokosz* (civil war) led by George Lubomirski.
 36. For the efforts of a great noble to prepare his son for a court career, see *Jasia Ługowskiego podróz do ozkół w cudzzych krajach, 1639–1643* (Jaś Ługowski’s Travels to Schools Abroad), ed. Krystyna Muszyńska (Warsaw, 1974), p. 33.
 37. Ludwik Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński* (George Osoliński), 2nd edn (Warsaw, 1924); *Polski słownik biograficzny*, s.v.; Jerzy Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik* (A Memoir), ed. Władysław Czapliński (Wrocław, 1976).
 38. Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, p. 9.
 39. The Ossolińskis (a princely family after the Emperor Ferdinand bestowed the title on George) never

- belonged to the principal magnate families enjoying political importance. But they remained rich, and pursued intellectual interests in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Joseph Maximilian (1748–1826), prefect of the Imperial Library in Vienna, founded the Ossoliński Library (Ossolineum), one of the two richest Polish collections (now in Wrocław).
40. One has to remember that the Polish monarchy was elective and that since the extinction of the Jagiellons (1572) the king's son had no legal precedence over any other candidate, Polish or foreign. On the other hand, the first two freely elected kings were expected to marry Princess Anna, sister of Sigismund Augustus, and their successor, Sigismund III Vasa, was born in Sweden as the son of Catarina Jagiellonica, another royal sister. The king's children were traditionally regarded as princes and called *królewicz* – literally, son of the king but also prince royal. Notwithstanding the elective monarchy, the myth of dynastic continuity persisted and after the third and last Vasa abdicated (1668) his two native successors were called 'the Piasts', as (symbolic) descendants of the medieval Polish dynasty.
 41. He would keep the somewhat incongruous title 'electus Magnus Dux Moscoviae' and during his visit in Italy would be called 'Gran Duca di Moscova'.
 42. Jerzy Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik*. In the following paragraphs I rely on Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, the respective entries on Ossoliński and the Kazanowskis in *Polski słownik biograficzny* (Stanisław Kazanowski has no entry), as well as Władysław Czapliński, *Władysław IV i jego czasy* (Ladislas IV and his Times) (Wrocław, 1972). I follow Professor Czapliński's revisionist opinion of Ossoliński as a politician and statesman.
 43. Hetman Chodkiewicz's expression, although in this case there is no proof of any homosexual relationship. One bed for two men was the norm in European inns. See A. Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), ch. 2.
 44. Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik*, p. 62.
 45. I am following the argument of Władysław Czapliński in his introduction to Jerzy Ossoliński, *Pamiętnik*, pp. 9–17.
 46. In 1633, an embassy to Rome; in 1635 the military governorship of Ducal Prussia; in 1636, an embassy to the Reichstag in Regensburg (negotiations for the marriage of Ladislas with princess Cecilia Renata).
 47. 'Mane sparsum fuit Casimirum principem resilire ab equitum regiorum numero creandorum. Varia interpretatio animorum successerit, cum captandae benevolentiae popularis abstinentia ab hac novitate forte deterret, vel in casu arbatae patriae calculum electionis refutatione promitteret.' Albrecht Stanisław Radziwiłł, *Memoriale rerum gestarum in Polonia, 1632–1656*, ii: 1634–1639, ed. Adam Przyboś and Roman Żelewski (Wrocław, 1970), p. 246, entry of 6 October 1637; Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, ch. 8. The Order of the Immaculate Conception (which was intended to consist of seventy-two Polish and twenty-four foreign members) was widely regarded as an instrument of *absolutum dominum*. According to the principal senator of Lithuania, Christopher Radziwiłł (a Calvinist), the 'Knights associated with the king may in course of time grow presumptuous and either strive to attain equality with their monarch, or to dominate their fellows'. Kubala, *Jerzy Ossoliński*, ch. 8. The quotation is taken from pp. 107–8.
 48. See the comparative essay of Michał Kopczyński, 'Service or Benefice? Office Holders in Poland and Sweden in the Seventeenth Century', *European Journal of History*, 1 (1994), pp. 19–28.
 49. This happened in two civil wars (*rokosze*) of the seventeenth century, against Sigismund III (1606–9) and his son John Casimir (1666).
 50. Kopczyński, 'Service or Benefice?'
 51. See the discussion of an important case by W. A. Weary, 'Royal Policy and Patronage in Renaissance France: The Monarchy and the House of La Trémoille' (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1972); see also a concise version of his thesis, 'La Maison de La Trémoille pendant la Renaissance: une seigneurie agrandie', in B. Chevalier, ed., *La France de la fin du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1985), pp. 187–212. On the magnate-style use of the clientèles in a major conflict see S. Kettlering, 'Patronage and Politics during the Fronde', *French Historical Studies*, 14/3 (1986), p. 421. On the regional power-bases of the aristocracy in Spain see M. J. Rodriguez-Salgado, 'The Court of Philip II of Spain', in R. G. Asch and A. Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c.1450–1650* (Oxford, 1991), p. 207.

Part Three
Representations of the Favourite

II

Favourites on the English Stage

BLAIR WORDEN

If there is a single register of the extent and persistence of the early-modern preoccupation with the power of royal favourites, it is the theatre.¹ Favourites are everywhere on the early modern English stage (though their ubiquitousness has generally escaped the attention of literary historians and critics). Their deleterious influence on monarchs is a large theme of dramatic representation from the later sixteenth century to the early eighteenth. It announces itself as a theatrical subject in the early 1590s, amidst the rise of the public theatre, in Marlowe's *Edward II* and the anonymous play *Woodstock*. A decade and a half later the theme has matured, through plays by Ben Jonson, John Marston, Samuel Daniel, George Chapman and John Day. In the 1620s and 1630s it is a preoccupation of Philip Massinger, of John Fletcher, of John Ford, of James Shirley, of Sir William Davenant. It persists in the (largely royalist) drama put into print during the Puritan suppression of the playhouses, and returns to the theatres after the Restoration, where it figures in plays by Dryden and Congreve and a succession of lesser writers. It persists again after the Revolution of 1688 and into the ascendancy of Walpole. The Licensing Act of 1737, itself a reaction to the theatrical representation of favouritism, then curbs the theme on the stage. In the publication of play-texts, however, it survives well into the reign of George III.

Among the titles of the plays published over that long period we find *The Favourite*, *The Deserving Favourite*, *The Fair Favourite*, *The False Favourite*, *The Great Favourite*, *The Loyal Favourite*, *The Ungrateful Favourite*, *The Unhappy Favourite* and *The Fool Would Be a Favourite*. There is a much larger number of plays which have a character (or more than one character) listed as a 'favourite' among the *dramatis personae*, and another much larger number where favouritism, though not declared as a theme in the title or the preliminary matter, figures prominently in the text. The favourite is a theatrical type, with a recognizable set of characteristics. While not all theatrical favourites have all those characteristics, most of them have at least many of them.

The characteristics are defined by a vocabulary which establishes, and answers to, a series of generic expectations, and which it is the purpose of this essay, through quotation and example, to recover. Our survey will be broad and will necessarily pass many complexities by. It will be primarily concerned to identify the general tendency of theatrical treatments of favouritism, not the plentiful variations or contrasts to be found among them.

To perceive the vigour of that tendency is to witness the drama's alertness to, and its ability to articulate and intensify, the political concerns of its time. It may indeed be that the drama not only reflects the public preoccupation with favouritism but bears some responsibility for it. Patrick Collinson, in examining, on another early-modern front, the gap between reality and the theatrical representation of it, has suggested that the theatre invented Puritanism: that it shaped the caricature of the Puritan that was so influential at the time and has been so influential since.² Did the theatre, in the same sense, invent favouritism? Did it encourage contemporaries to interpret facts of political life in literary or fictional terms? There were many more stage-favourites than stage-Puritans. Like stage-Puritans, stage-favourites were caricatures. The theatre does not dramatize the inherently undramatic. It does not show advisers of monarchs working through their intrays. It does not delineate structures of administration or of patronage. It tells us not about the operation of power but about public perceptions of it. Those perceptions crossed the gulf between literature and life. Time and again the vocabulary which reports them on the stage, and which in doing so heightens or distorts or misrepresents facts of political life, infiltrates the correspondence and memoranda and remonstrances of the political arena.³

The perceptions were not always new. Long before the rise of the public theatre, beneficiaries of royal favour had been subjected to some of the terms of disparagement which we shall encounter in this essay. What seems to be novel is the stock image of 'the favourite' – a noun invented in our period – which draws the threads of earlier characterization together and supplies a type, or caricature, to which individuals can readily be judged to conform. Like all types, the type of the favourite reveals at least as much about those who deploy it as about those who reportedly exemplify it.

The drama could invent only so much. It exploited and heightened the topical interest of favouritism, but it did not manufacture it. Yet of the theatrical attractions of the theme, topicality was only one. The others were literary. Being literary, they sharpened the differences between literature and life. First, favourites could meet mechanical needs of plot and dialogue. Plays were conventionally about kings and queens. Favourites were characters in whom monarchs could confide, with whom they could collude, by whom they could be manipulated or betrayed. Second – and in both literary and historical terms more interestingly – there were attractions of characterization. Stage-favourites conformed to dramatic models. In comedy there was the parasite, whose comic scope goes back to Plautus. But in early modern England, favourites are present

more often in tragedy than in comedy. In tragedy they tend to conform to one or both of two other types.

First there is the Machiavel. The favourites of early-modern drama are ruthless schemers, quoting or endorsing Machiavellian ‘maxims’ of statecraft⁴ and ‘twisting and winding’⁵ the more ‘credulous’⁶ of the rulers who have elevated them. ‘Masters’ of ‘cunning’,⁷ they pursue ‘deep designes’ and ‘deep ends’ with ‘deep dissimulation’,⁸ disclosing their intentions only in soliloquies. They are atheists, scorning the ethical sanctions of religion⁹ and making light of ‘conscience’ (though it sometimes catches up with them).¹⁰ Their goal is ‘success’, at whatever cost to virtue or justice. The end, they insist, justifies the means.¹¹ Machiavellian favourites are the equivalents among royal advisers of Shakespeare’s Edmund or Iago. Othello’s description of Iago as ‘honest’ is echoed by a number of men duped by favourites on the seventeenth-century stage.¹²

The second theatrical type to which favourites belong provides equivalents to Macbeth or Tamburlaine or Volpone. This is the over-reacher, whose inevitable doom is as spectacular as his ascent. Beginning as the ‘creatures’ of monarchs,¹³ favourites seek first to become their ‘partners’ or ‘equals’¹⁴ and then to ‘rule’ or ‘aign o’re’ them¹⁵ and ‘usurp’ their powers; sometimes they aim to ‘usurp’ their thrones.¹⁶ The motive most persistently ascribed to them is ‘ambition’, ‘fatal’ or ‘giant-like’ ambition¹⁷ (though ‘revenge’ for some past injury is another frequent incentive¹⁸). Having ‘aspiring’ instincts,¹⁹ they ‘rise’ or ‘climb’ or ‘swell’, or are ‘raised’ or ‘lifted’ by their rulers, to dizzy ‘heights’, to ‘highest pinnacles’.²⁰ Ambition or power or favour makes them ‘giddy’²¹ or ‘mad’²² or ‘drunk’²³ or induces a ‘thirst’ which drinking only intensifies.²⁴ Favourites aim to master or astonish ‘the whole world’, only to find that it offers insufficient ‘room’ for their designs, that ‘Empire’ is ‘too narrow’ for their ‘souls’, that their ‘power’ runs out of ‘opposites’ against which to prove or measure itself. So, seeking ‘new projects’, they ‘tread’ on ‘air’ or on ‘stars’ or reach for the ‘skies’ or ‘the Region of the Sun’.²⁵

Even favourites who sense the doom awaiting them are drawn ever onwards and upwards by the logic of ambition and by the logic of tragedy. Once they have begun, once they are ‘in’, favourites know they must ‘goe on’, for there can be no ‘retiring’.²⁶ At the peaks of their fortunes they exult in ‘the glories of a favourite’, in the power, the attention and the servility that their sway commands.²⁷ Yet the shrewder of them grasp the precariousness of their triumphs. Favourites ‘rise first, and commonly fall after’, for ‘Men born to Greatness, are but born to fall’.²⁸ Their ambition

mounts upward,
Higher and higher still, to perch on clouds,
But tumbles headlong down with heavier ruin.²⁹

In the totality or epic quality of their own destruction they recognize a fitting tribute to their stature:

Mount, mount, my thoughts! that I may tread on kings,
 Or if I chance to fall, thus soaring high;
 I melt like Icarus, in the sun's eye.³⁰

Wanting 'To be sublimely great or to be nothing',³¹ they look forward to bringing the whole 'dull' 'world' down with them, rejoicing to think that in their fall their 'large ruins' will crush all beneath them.³²

The ascent of favourites is social as well as political. Mostly they are of 'base' or 'obscure' or 'mean' origins, 'upstarts', 'raised from the dust',³³ 'mushrooms' that have 'shot up in the night',³⁴ rising – and falling – 'in a moment', 'on the sudden'.³⁵ Often (and especially in plays written before the civil wars) they are enemies to the ancient baronage, to 'the noble mind', to 'true born gentry'.³⁶ Many of them lack not only social roots but that other stabilizing force, age. For although there are some elderly favourites,³⁷ many more are young, displacing white-haired men of virtue from royal counsels.³⁸

Favourites rise not through worth but through the whims of kings who promote them 'accidentally', 'blindly', 'in a good humour', 'without thinking'.³⁹ They are the playthings of 'fortune', that 'deity' or 'fickle Goddess' which they 'adore'⁴⁰ and which raises and then tumbles them. Their careers leave in their wake a trail of Stoic commentary on the frailty and emptiness of fortune, on the superiority of 'virtue' or 'wisdom' or 'fortitude' or 'patience' to it,⁴¹ on the need to be true, amidst the changing winds of prosperity and adversity, to the inner 'self'.⁴² Favourites have no constant selves. Constancy is a Stoic virtue. Favourites 'delight in change',⁴³ its enemy. They are 'Protean', 'putting on' or 'wearing' any 'shape'.⁴⁴ Favour proves to be as 'short-lived' as those shapes, to be as mutable as the 'weather'.⁴⁵

The theme of favouritism had a further attraction to dramatists, though one harder to pin down. The noun 'favourite' seems to have carried a *frisson*. Sometimes the word is introduced into a play in a manner which suggests that the audience was expected to perk up at the sound of it. Similes are deployed to insert the noun into surprising contexts.⁴⁶ Sometimes, in the lists of *dramatis personae* which were published at the front of play-texts, and which were meant to help the plays sell, characters are described as favourites who barely earn that description in the ensuing action. Or a playwright, in adapting a source or adapting a play by another author, would introduce a favourite or turn an existing character into one.⁴⁷ Outside the drama, too, publishers noticed the public appetite for the noun 'favourite'. William Prynne's tract of 1643, *The Popish Royall Favourite*, is not about a favourite, rather about the king's indulgence to papists. In 1689 an account of the career of Judge Jeffreys, whom we do not normally think of as a favourite, was given the title *The Unfortunate Favourite*. The pamphlet drew on the tropes of characterization that theatrical accounts of favourites had established or at least fortified. So did Nathaniel Crouch's historical work *The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England* in 1695.⁴⁸

In plays, the *frisson* is sometimes sexual. Just as early-modern literature played on the two meanings of ‘court’ (the one pertaining to politics, the other to love),⁴⁹ so it made use of the fact that lovers, no less than kings, distribute ‘favours’ and have their ‘favourites’. Davenant’s play of 1638 *The Fair Favourite* is about a favoured lover, not a favoured subject, though political favouritism is a theme of it. In play after play the sexually charged word ‘minion’ (or ‘mignon’) is used to describe a political favourite; occasionally the word ‘darling’ is used as well or instead. Some plays make an explicit connection between political and sexual favour or conduct.⁵⁰

Abusive epithets rain on stage-favourites. Time and again they are ‘monsters’ or ‘villains’. They and their accomplices are ‘snakes’, ‘rats’, ‘toads’, ‘spiders’, ‘earwigs’, ‘wasps’, ‘worms’.⁵¹ Yet not all favourites are enemies to virtue. In lists of *dramatis personae* the noun ‘favourite’ is not expected to carry the imputation of evil – or at least, not a sufficiently vivid one – by itself. An egregious adviser is liable to be described as a ‘Villanous Favourite’ or ‘a Favourite, and Parasite’, or a ‘politic stout ambitious favourite’, or ‘a great Favourite: One that by his Sycophantick Counsels misleads his Prince’.⁵²

‘Favourite’ had different resonances for different people or in different contexts. Sometimes the resonances were laudatory. John Day, whose play of 1605 *The Isle of Gulls* attacked political favouritism mercilessly, dedicated another play, without irony, to a group of people whom he hailed as ‘honour[’]s favourites’.⁵³ John Dryden, whose plays generally portray favourites unsympathetically, nonetheless commends the Earl of Clarendon for having been a loyal ‘favourite’ of the doomed Charles I.⁵⁴ There are virtuous stage-favourites, who are sometimes undermined by less virtuous ones. That is the fate of the hero of Chapman’s *The Tragedy of Chabot*, a ‘favourite’.⁵⁵ John Fletcher’s *The Loyal Subject* has an ‘honest . . . favourite’, only for the duke to be swayed instead by ‘a malicious seducing Councillor’, who has standard failings of stage-favourites.⁵⁶ There is the heroic central character of Lodowick Carlell’s play of 1629, *The Deserving Favourite*, commended to its readers as a ‘faire courtly piece’ (sig. A2v). It is a general (though not universal) seventeenth-century rule that playwrights with connections at court, or with monarchical or Tory sympathies, were those likeliest to portray favourites sympathetically. There are, it is true, unsympathetically portrayed favourites in two courtly plays of the 1630s, Carlell’s *The Fool would be a Favourite* and William Strode’s *The Floating Island*. Yet those characters are portrayed not, as most stage-favourites are, as representatives of an unhealthy courtly norm but as aberrations from correct standards, the standards of the court of Charles I. In John Crowne’s Tory play of 1679, *The Ambitious Statesman, or The Loyal Favourite*, it is the statesman of the title who is evil, while the favourite represents ‘virtue in this dirty world’ (p. 35). The leading character of Crowne’s masque *Calisto*

(1675) is ‘a chaste and favourite Nymph of Diana’, though her monopoly of Diana’s affections leads an envious rival to ascribe stock shortcomings of ‘favourites’ to her (pp. 7, 78).⁵⁷

Even dramatists who delighted in portraying bad favourites might acknowledge the desirability of good ones. In Richard Brome’s *The Court-Begger* (1640), ‘a man rising in the favour royll’ is rebuked not for being a favourite but for becoming one ‘Before your time, that is, before you had merit’.⁵⁸ At the end of Thomas Southerne’s Tory play *The Loyal Brother* (1682) the ‘Villanous Favourite’ is overthrown, and the king restores harmony by appointing a virtuous servant to ‘Rise to our favour’ in his stead.⁵⁹ There are other ‘worthily deserv[ing]’ favourites too.⁶⁰

Although the relationship between king and favourite usually involves deceit by one or both parties, there are some plays – and some writings outside the drama – where it is honest, at least for a time. Sometimes too there is at least half-sympathy for monarchs and advisers who are caught up in inescapable rules and pressures of power or who need, amidst its loneliness, the consolations of companionship which favourites can provide. As Sir Francis Bacon reminded the future Duke of Buckingham in 1616, ‘even the wisest’ kings and princes ‘have had their friends, their favourites, their privadoes in all ages; for they have their affections as well as other men’.⁶¹ Many stage-favourites are ‘friends’ of monarchs and – sometimes for better, sometimes for worse – are close to their ‘hearts’ or ‘souls’.⁶² The Earl of Orrery’s play of 1664 *The History of Henry the Fifth* explores the relationship between favouritism and friendship, and asks how far even a virtuous favourite can be truly a king’s friend, since friendship is properly between equals (esp. pp. 2, 17, 32).⁶³ In a number of plays, bonds of friendship derive or draw strength from bonds of gratitude. Favours are gifts, and gifts are demonstrations of amity, of power, ideally of virtue. Royal ‘bounties’ bind the favourites who receive them and impose obligations on them. If those favourites betray their masters they are charged, or charge themselves, with ‘ingratitude’.⁶⁴

In addressing the theme of favouritism, playwrights were liberal in supplying their characters with generalizations about the qualities and obligations of ‘kings’, of ‘princes’, of ‘courts’.⁶⁵ Truths which had a general application could not but have topical ones. Sometimes playwrights found delicate phrases through which to point their audiences or readers towards the contemporary scene, an art of which Massinger was the subtlest exponent.⁶⁶ When suspected of mischievous intent, dramatists offered standard protestations of innocence, claiming that their words had merely followed their sources or had been written before current events had given them an unintended ‘application’.⁶⁷ There is, however, a change over the course of the seventeenth century. In its first half,

audiences were normally left to discern contemporary applications for themselves. In its second, dramatists were readier to draw attention to the present 'parallels' which their plays supplied.⁶⁸

Though contemporary application was only occasionally a playwright's overriding purpose, it was often one of his purposes. What does stage-favouritism tell us about the political perspectives of the time? First, it reminds us how strong and pervasive was the commitment to the ideal of just kingship, the ideal which evil stage-favourites undermine. Virtuous subjects of misgoverned kings longingly recall the reigns of virtuous ones (often the father of the present ruler) or hope for deliverance by virtuous princes in exile.⁶⁹ It is true that many stage-kings are at least as Machiavellian as their favourites. Occasionally they are more so. 'The favourites of Kings', explains a character in Davenant's *The Fair Favourite*, 'are chosen but / To own, and wear their master's worser sins'.⁷⁰ Normally, however, favourites 'weaken' or 'eclipse' the merits of kingship, which is rightly 'rich and strong'. 'Royalty' is 'lent out' or 'farmed out' or 'leased', or its 'beams' are 'engrossed'. 'Majesty' is 'trampled on' or made a 'lawn', while the favourite 'grasps the [prince's] sceptre in his stead', leaving him only the 'bare' or 'empty' 'name' of ruler.⁷¹

The problem of favourites is the problem of 'evil counsel'.⁷² Favourites and their followers monopolize and 'abuse' the royal 'ear'.⁷³ Kings 'hear nothing' but what their favourites want them to hear and will 'hear nothing' against them.⁷⁴ Rulers are urged to rely on 'councillors' or 'Counsellors', 'not Favourites', and to choose their advisers not 'for favour, but for parts'.⁷⁵ Favourites lead 'factions' which capture the prince for factious purposes.⁷⁶ Instead the ruler should 'be / Everybody's king' and 'lend equal ears / To what all say'.⁷⁷ One frequent occasion of dramatic conflict is the determination of a favourite's opponent that the ruler be 'told' of the state of his realm and of the abuses to which he has given his authority.⁷⁸ Some plays or characters insist that the admonition of monarchs should be 'modest', that rulers must be advised 'with that reverence which to kings is due'.⁷⁹ There are warnings against 'boldness' of address. Yet sometimes 'boldness' is a 'duty' towards monarchs,⁸⁰ who are almost universally cocooned in flattery and sycophancy. Play after play, especially in the half century before the civil wars, contrasts the artificial, honeyed speech of favourites and parasites around the king with the commitment of their opponents – often representatives of ancient noble houses – to 'honest bluntness', 'honest plainness', 'plain dealing', 'plain truth'.⁸¹

Plainness of speech against favourites moves rulers to anger.⁸² Under regimes controlled by favourites, 'speaking truth' can be 'dangerous'.⁸³ So 'kings do seldom hear' 'Free speech'.⁸⁴ Criticism of favourites, or other 'talk of the state', is held to be 'treasonous'.⁸⁵ It is risky to speak 'too loud',⁸⁶ for 'spies' and 'informers' are ubiquitous.⁸⁷ 'Safety' lies in keeping quiet and in prudent adjustment to the facts of power.⁸⁸ In play after play the question is raised whether the opponents of favourites will 'dare' to confront princes with 'the truth'.⁸⁹ A

common device is to have a spirited critic speak out while a less brave or less prominent figure applauds his courage in an aside.⁹⁰

The sway of favourites is identified sometimes with 'tyranny', sometimes with 'absolute' or 'unlimited' rule.⁹¹ The 'will' or 'prerogative' of rulers, and thus of their favourites, prevails over law or custom or consent.⁹² In plays by Jonson and Daniel written in the years around the death of Queen Elizabeth, treatments of impending tyranny corresponded to immediate contemporary anxieties.⁹³ In those plays too we find a theme which will again be of public concern in the 1620s and 1630s and which will then be developed in the plays of Massinger: the erosion of conciliar or parliamentary or customary liberties and the entrenchment – sometimes the deification⁹⁴ – of unlimited monarchical power. As authority contracts towards the centre, so aristocratic rule gives way to absolutism. Councillors and senators become mere 'lookers-on', giving their 'suffrages to that / Which was before determined', shunning topics which are now 'things above us, / And so no way concerne us'. Power has come to reside in 'cabinet counsels', which discredit and destroy conciliar rule.⁹⁵

Though the substance of freedom departs, its forms are preserved. Rulers and favourites pay false-hearted tributes to the liberties they are eroding.⁹⁶ Princes, swayed by favourites, claim to welcome candid counsel. In their more prudent moments, indeed, they realize that they need it.⁹⁷ Yet in general they soon revert to type. The most subtle observer of that process is again Massinger. In his *The Great Duke of Florence* the duke declares against adulatory forms of address and against the deification of princes, and expresses a wish for 'familiar conference' with those who 'counsel and direct us'. Yet his own 'will' and 'pleasure' prevail, for 'Princes are / As gods on earth'. In Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* the duke urges an adviser to 'use [his] freedome' of address to him. Yet seventy lines later, when a lord of the council has presumed to criticize the ruler's 'especiall favourite', the duke rounds on him for 'speak[ing] thus', calling him 'My vassall'.⁹⁸ In the world portrayed by Massinger and other dramatists, 'freedom' or 'liberty' is 'ancient', 'old'. Its antiquity, which is properly its sanction, is too often the mark of its impotence before new systems of power.⁹⁹ Few of the enemies of tyranny see legitimate means of resisting its advance. Most of them are instinctively loyal even to the most oppressive of kings. They think it wrong to censure them or pry into their hearts. They are mainly appalled by rebellion.¹⁰⁰

If the decline of liberty is one feature of modern politics addressed by stage-favouritism, another is the corrupting properties of courts. Though most plays with favourites are set in distant lands in distant times, their authors export to the monarchical entourages of those remote venues the features that were so widely associated with the Renaissance or Baroque courts of their own time: to ancient Greece, ancient Rome, Gothic Lombardy, Moorish Granada, timeless Turkey or Persia, Roman or Saxon Britain, medieval England or France.¹⁰¹ It is the 'unwholesom', 'infect[ious]', 'poys'nous Air' of courts, their 'foul corruption', that turns apparently honourable men into evil favourites.¹⁰²