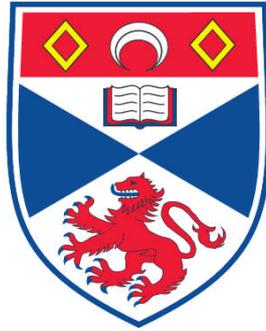


**SECRETARIES, STATESMEN AND SPIES : THE CLERKS OF THE
TUDOR PRIVY COUNCIL, C.1540 - C.1603**

Jacqueline D. Vaughan

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

**SECRETARIES, STATESMEN AND SPIES:
THE CLERKS OF THE TUDOR PRIVY COUNCIL, c. 1540 – c.1603**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL OF HISTORY

BY
JACQUELINE D. VAUGHAN

JUNE 2006

I, Jacqueline D. Vaughan, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 84,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of the work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date Jacqueline D. Vaughan

I was admitted as a research student in September 2002 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Modern History in September 2003; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2002 and 2006.

Date Jacqueline D. Vaughan

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Modern History in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date Paul E. J. Hammer

ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the office of the clerk of the Privy Council, including discussions of the office itself, and the nineteen men who held that office between its creation in 1540 and 1603. The dual focus on the office and officers aims to provide greater understanding of both. Areas of study include the personal and professional backgrounds of the clerks, their careers, writings both political and personal, additional offices held and both social and financial concerns. This covers areas as diverse as knighthoods, land grants, election to the House of Commons, political treatises and university education. Additionally, the duties of the office, both standard and extraordinary, are discussed, as well as details regarding the creation and handling of the clerk's primary concern, the Privy Council register. This includes details regarding signatures, meetings with ambassadors, examination of prisoners, Council meetings, salaries and fees, and attendance rotation. Ties between the clerks and clerkship and the Privy Council and its members are discussed throughout, as well as the role of patronage, education, foreign experience and personal motives. This study aims to provide a greater understanding of the clerks of the Privy Council and their office, knowing that one cannot be fully understood without the other.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ii
CHAPTERS	
Introduction	1
1. The Clerks and their Appointments	8
2. Work in the Council Chamber	52
3. Work Outside the Council Chamber	74
4. Security and Advancement	124
5. Writings of the Clerks	161
Conclusion	188
APPENDIX	
1. Chronological List of Clerks, including dates of office	193
2. Timeline of Clerk Appointments	194
2. Appointment of a Clerk to the Privy Council	196
3. Examples of Register Entries	197
4. “Othe of a Clerk to the Counsell”	198
BIBLIOGRAPHY	199

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ABBREVIATIONS

Add MS(S)	Additional Manuscript(s)
APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England; New Series</i> , ed. J. R. Dasent, E. G. Atkinson, et al. (London, 1890-1964)
Bindoff	<i>The House of Commons, 1509-1558</i> . ed. S. T. Bindoff (London, 1982)
BL	British Library
CPR, Edward VI	<i>Calendar of the patent rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Edward VI</i> (London, 1924-1929)
CPR, Elizabeth	<i>Calendar of the patent rolls preserved in the Public Record Office. Elizabeth I: 1558-1581</i> (London, 1939)
CPR, Mary	<i>Calendar of the patent rolls: Philip and Mary, 1553-1558</i> , (London, 1936-1939)
CPR, L&I	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls Elizabeth I: 1582-1594, published by List and Index Society</i> , (Kew, 1999-2005)
CSPD	<i>Calendar of state papers, Domestic series, of the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James I, 1547-1625</i> , eds. R. Lemon, M. A. Everett et al. (London, 1856-1872)
CSPF, Edward VI	<i>Calendar of state papers. Foreign series: of the reign of Edward VI., 1547-1553</i> , ed. William B. Turnbull (London, 1861)
CSPF, Elizabeth	<i>Calendar of state papers, foreign series, of the reign of Elizabeth: 1558-1589</i> , ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1863-1950)
CSPF, Mary	<i>Calendar of state papers. Foreign series: of the reign of Mary, 1553-1558</i> , ed. William B. Turnbull (London, 1861)
CSP, Ireland	<i>Calendar of State Papers, relating to Ireland</i> , ed. H.C. Hamilton (London, 1860-1912)
CSP, MQS	<i>Calendar of the state papers relating to Scotland and Mary, queen of Scots, 1547-1603</i> , (Edinburgh, 1898-1969)
CSP, Spain	<i>Calendar of letters and state papers, relating to English affairs, preserved principally in the archives of Simancas</i> , ed. M.A.S. Hume (London, 1896-99)
Diplomatic Reps.	<i>A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688</i> , ed. Gary M. Bell (London, 1990)

<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , eds. L. Stephen and S. Lee (London, 1885-1900)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Hasler	<i>The House of Commons, 1558-1603</i> ed. P.W. Hasler (London, 1981)
HEH	Henry E. Huntington Library
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HMCS</i>	Historical Manuscripts Commission, <i>Calendar of the manuscripts of the most honourable, the Marquess of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House</i> , (London, 1883-1976)
<i>JCL</i>	<i>The Letters of John Chamberlain</i> , ed. Norman E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939)
<i>L&P</i>	<i>Letters and Papers, foreign and domestic, of Henry VIII, 1509-1547</i> , ed. J.S. Brewer et al. (London, 1862-1910)
NA	National Archives, Kew (formerly Public Record Office)
<i>OxfordDNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004)
<i>PPC</i>	<i>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. Sir Harris Nichols (London, 1834-37)
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

INTRODUCTION

The office of clerk of the Privy Council has been largely ignored by historians. While some individual clerks who eventually rose to the ranks of the Privy Council have drawn some attention from scholars, most clerks are unknown, or mentioned only tangentially in journal articles or historical monographs. However, due to their connection to the Council, court and a variety of elements of administration, the clerks of the Privy Council are long overdue for serious study. The following dissertation analyzes the Tudor clerks of the Privy Council: their lives, careers, and the office they held. The study covers sixty-three years, four reigns and nineteen men. The timeframe for this analysis, 1540 to 1603, is defined by two events. The first of these was the official appointment of William Paget as the first clerk of the Privy Council on 10 August 1540. On that date Paget not only took up an office, but also recorded his appointment in the first official record of the Privy Council, the Council register, the responsibility for which was the primary duty of the Council clerks. The end date, 1603, marks not only the death of Elizabeth I, but also the end of a period when the age, infirmity or gender of a monarch led to increased authority and visibility of the Privy Council. Although a study of the Privy Council clerks could certainly be carried into the Stuart period, the interests of brevity and cohesiveness have limited this time scale. While this time frame defines the number of clerks studied, it does not exclude material or events discussed- this relates primarily to the lives and careers of the earliest and last clerks whose careers and/or clerkships extend outside this designated year range.

In format, the following study can be primarily categorized as a group study- the group defined by the men appointed to the office of clerk of the Privy Council between 1540 and 1603. Although the information regarding each man forms the foundation of the study, conclusions focus on the group, not individuals. The reason for this is to define what characteristics of these men and their careers were standard or common, thereby identifying what about each is unique. This is the primary benefit of any group study and particularly relevant for a period in which the highly personal nature of office and court life has produced more exceptions than rules. A clearly defined group study can locate both, while also avoiding the monotony and confusion of nineteen biographies. Although each man is interesting in his own right, this is not a dissertation of biographies. The office of clerk of the Privy Council is as much a focus of this study

as the men who held that office, and by studying the office and the men together, a fuller understanding of both, and the nature and operation of the Council they served, can be achieved.

Within these selected chronological limits, the activities of the clerks have been explored as widely as possible. Family, education, work and foreign experience, patronage ties, writings, land, office and grant acquisition and key personal and political events are all discussed in an effort to understand the career progression and lifestyle of these men. Discussions on the Privy Council register, the administrative and extraordinary duties of the clerks relating directly to Council work, as well as analysis of the other court and government offices, individually assigned duties and role in political events, all serve to demonstrate the nature of the office of clerk of the Privy Council and how the office related to their work with and on behalf of the Council. The number of areas covered eliminates the possibility of an in-depth analysis of each within the constraints of a dissertation, and indeed in some areas, lines of research and areas of study, though not ignored, were excluded. Religious belief, family relationships and life at court were excluded for both lack of material and for distracting from the focus of this assessment. Details regarding their personal relationships with individual patrons, noblemen, the Principal Secretary and Privy Councillors, as well as their professional interactions with other clerks and government departments, while interesting and amply evident in extant resources, are topics worthy of a separate and larger discussion which the constraints of the present study do not allow. This dissertation aims instead to present the key elements and factors in the careers of these men and the office they held, supported by as much evidence and documentation as possible.

A study of the clerks of the Privy Council is by no means a singular study separate from recent historical research and areas of inquiry. Considering the wide variety of sources available for a study of the clerks of the Privy Council, it is surprising that historians have largely ignored them. The lives and work of the clerks relate to a variety of larger historical debates, the principal topic being the Privy Council itself. From the administration, routine, and operational procedures to the personal dynamics and effect of political, economic and social circumstances, the clerks elucidate all of these issues. Their unique perspective, working within the Council chamber, drafting key documents and performing other extraordinary duties, lends credence to their insight and comments which survived in their letters and papers. Further, the duties they performed and records they kept detail the variety of work undertaken by the Privy

Council and in many cases, explain how the work was accomplished. The interaction of the clerks with other officials and Council members not only provides additional information on these men, but on the family, patronage and political ties with the Council in which the clerks became involved. Additionally, their involvement in key events, from the overthrow of the Lord Protector to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, provide more information on these situations and the decisions relating to them. Overall the more that we understand the clerks and their office, the more we will understand the Privy Council and its members. Considering the vast array of historiographical debates about the Council, from leadership assessments to faction and function analysis, it is vital to understand the role of all individuals and offices which form part of these debates and it is this discrepancy that this analysis seeks to address.

About the office of clerk of the Privy Council very little has been written. Although mentioned in passing in biographies or studies of other offices or the Privy Council itself, the clerks have been largely ignored. Only one article is directly on point, "The Elizabethan Clerk of the Privy Council" by F. Jeffrey Platt.¹ This article deals entirely, as the title implies, with the Elizabethan clerks and, while some commonalities between the men are noted, it is not a detailed discussion on any particular aspect of their lives or office. Indeed, it is primarily a series of short biographical paragraphs with information gathered from the older *Dictionary of National Biography*. While the article does not provide much in terms of analysis, it highlights the need for research in the area and the potential value of such a study. Besides Platt's article, virtually nothing has been written on the clerkship, although several works have been written about the clerks individually. These primarily deal with those clerks who became Privy Councillors or were otherwise noteworthy. The most well-known of these is the biography by Samuel Rhea Gammon of Lord William Paget.² Unfortunately, although the work as a whole is excellently written, the discussion of Paget's appointment as the first Privy Council clerk is rather short, though admittedly he did not hold the office long. Other works on Paget, such as the doctoral dissertation by Andrew Johnston, offer only limited discussion of his work as clerk, and instead focus on his time as Principal Secretary or Privy Councillor.³ The same is largely true of works on Sir Thomas Smith 1. His principal biographer

¹ F. Jeffrey Platt, "The Elizabethan Clerks of the Privy Council," *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*, 3 (1982), 123-142.

² Samuel R. Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William, First Lord Paget, Tudor Minister* (Newton Abbott, 1973).

³ Andrew Johnston, "William Paget and the late Henrician polity, 1543-1547," Unpublished PhD. Thesis, (St. Andrews, 2004).

Mary Dewar, who has written monographs on Smith as well as edited his most famous discourse, glosses over his time as clerk as a quick stepping stone to the Privy Council.⁴ Even the biography of Sir John Mason, who spent a similar amount of time as clerk to Paget or Smith, contains very limited information about his clerkship; the focus is instead on his later career.⁵ Similarly E.R. Adair's short biography of William Thomas, as the "Forgotten clerk of the Privy Council," discusses Thomas' life while a clerk, but does not discuss the office or how it affected him.⁶ The lack of discussion of the clerkship of the Privy Council within these biographies is not necessarily a fault of the biographer; none of these men were clerks for more than four years and each had larger roles to play both during and after their clerkships. However this oversight only further emphasizes the need for study on the subject to put the careers of these men and others in a more accurate light.

Besides those clerks already mentioned only one other has drawn any particular attention: Robert Beale. The focus of at least two dissertations, Beale has found notice primarily because of the wealth of documents he left behind and which comprise the majority of the Yelverton collection now preserved in the British Library.⁷ Both the documents and Beale's career span a wide array of subjects, from his time as acting Principal Secretary and relationship with his brother-in-law Sir Francis Walsingham, to his negotiations and presence at the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. One of the Beale dissertations, "Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity" by Taviner is of particular note because it contains what is perhaps the best discussion of the clerkship of the Privy Council.⁸ Discussed as a key part of Beale's career (Beale held the office for nearly thirty years), Mark Taviner draws together the key elements of the office and the man himself into a discussion that notes some of the same areas which will be discussed in greater detail below. Taviner saw the necessity of linking man and office and this dissertation will proceed with the same goal in mind.

Although the clerks and clerkship of the Privy Council have been largely neglected by historians, they were part of an institution which has certainly not been

⁴ Mary Dewar ed., *De Republica Anglorum* (Cambridge, 1982); Mary Dewar, *Sir Thomas Smith, A Tudor Intellectual in Office* (London, 1964).

⁵ D. G. E. Hurd, *Sir John Mason, 1503-1566* (Abingdon, 1975).

⁶ E. R. Adair, "William Thomas: a forgotten clerk of the Privy Council" in R.W. Seton-Watson ed., *Tudor studies presented... to A. F. Pollard* (London, 1924), 133-150.

⁷ Patricia Brewerton, "Paper Trails: Re-reading Robert Beale as Clerk to the Elizabethan Privy Council," Unpublished PhD. Thesis, (University of London, 1998); Mark Taviner, "Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity," Unpublished PhD. Thesis, (St. Andrews, 2000).

⁸ Taviner, "Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity," 127-153.

ignored. The Privy Council is the area of scholarship for numerous historians whose studies form part of the foundation for any study of the clerks. Early studies on the history of the Privy Council by Pollard, Gladish and Percy have led to others regarding the details of administration and personal interactions.⁹ From G.R. Elton's works on administration, to those of Guy, Coleman, Starkey, Loades, and others, the Privy Council as an institution has continued to receive recognition.¹⁰ The analysis of individual councillors studied by historians from Read to more recent works by Hammer and Alford, demonstrate the complicated connections between these men and the various offices they held.¹¹ Additional insight and similar lines of research are also found in works focusing on other clerks and government departments, particularly the clerks of Parliament and the Crown, as well as studies of individual office holders effectively presented by historians throughout this century and the last.¹² These works, along with others focusing on areas such as the court, factions and key Privy Council events, all form an essential backdrop of information and scholarship that this study could not have proceeded without.

The sources for the research of this topic are familiar to Tudor historians. The most central sources are of course the original Privy Council registers, held at the National Archives, with the *Acts of the Privy Council* as a printed reference and aid to

⁹ Lord Eustace Percy, *The privy council under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1907); A. F. Pollard, "Council, Star Chamber, and privy council under the Tudors," *EHR*, 37 (1922), 337-60, 516-39; 38 (1923), 42-60; Dorothy Gladish, *The Tudor privy council* (Retford, 1915).

¹⁰ These include G. R. Elton, *The Tudor revolution in government: administrative changes in the reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1953); G. R. Elton, "Tudor government: the points of contact, 2: The Council," *TRHS*, 5th ser., 25 (1975), 195-211; G. R. Elton, "Tudor government," *HJ*, 31 (1988), 425-34; David Starkey, "A reply: Tudor government: the facts?," *HJ*, 31 (1988), 921-31; Christopher Coleman and David Starkey eds., *Revolution Reassessed: revisions in the history of Tudor government and administration* (Oxford, 1986); Claire Cross, David Loades, J.J. Scarisbrick eds., *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge, 1988); David Loades, *Tudor government: structures of authority in the sixteenth century* (Oxford, 1997); John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988); Steven J. Gunn, *Early Tudor government, 1485-1558* (London, 1995).

¹¹ These include Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1955); Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford, 1925); Stephen Alford, *Kingship and politics in the reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge, 2002); Stephen Alford, *The early Elizabethan polity: William Cecil and the British succession crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge, 1998); Paul E. J. Hammer, *The polarisation of Elizabethan politics: the political career of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999); Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's wars: war, government, and society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Houndmills, 2003).

¹² These include Andrew Thrush, "The House of Lords' record repository and the Clerk of the Parliament House: a Tudor achievement," *Parliamentary History*, 21 (2002), 367-73; Maurice Bond, "Clerks of the parliaments, 1509-1953," *EHR*, 73 (1958), 78-85; A. F. Pollard, "The clerical organisation of Parliament," *EHR*, 57 (1942), 31-58; Christopher Challis, Christopher Edgar, "Mint officials and moneyers of the Tudor period," *British Numismatic Journal*, 45 (1975), 51-76; A. F. Pollard, "The Clerk of the Crown," *EHR*, 57 (1942), 312-33; Lawrence Stone, "Office under Queen Elizabeth: the case of Lord Hunsdon and the lord chamberlainship in 1585," *HJ*, 10 (1967), 279-85; Arthur J. Slavin, *Politics and profit: a study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-47* (Cambridge, 1966).

those volumes.¹³ The next most important resources are the state papers, both foreign and domestic, in both original and calendar form.¹⁴ Associated with these are the printed *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, as well as numerous other original letters and papers, held primarily within the Lansdowne and Additional manuscript collections in the British Library, supplemented by other library collections such as those at the Huntington and Folger Shakespeare Libraries. Additional primary sources include exchequer records, patent rolls, probate and court records, parliamentary records and sources, and numerous other original documents, both published and in manuscript such as the clerks' personal published works and the personal papers of contemporaries like Sir Anthony Bacon. To supplement the large volume of primary source material, several reference works were routinely consulted and their content confirmed, the most valuable of which are the *Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives*, the original and newer *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and the House of Commons biographies edited by Bindoff and Hasler.¹⁵ Additionally, secondary sources were invaluable for explaining situations and providing information.

Utilizing these sources and after vast amounts of research, reading and consultation with the work of other historians, the following study has emerged. This author does not contend that the completed work is of such weight as to alter past assumptions or produce new theories of Tudor administration. That said, this work aims to provide a greater understanding of both a group of men and an office which was of necessity at the centre of power in the Tudor period. Areas such as career paths, family and education backgrounds, patronage advancement and extant writings are all addressed. Details regarding the office of clerk of the Privy Council, some as minute as the inclusion of signatures in the registers or the handling of funds for "special services" are also included to explain the mechanics of the office itself. Brought together and placed in context, these seemingly diverse areas of study form an understanding of an office and its officers in the latter half of the Tudor period, an understanding which can contribute to the study of administration, court life and career advancement.

Before proceeding to the body of this work, some specific points must be mentioned. First, it is important to note the presence among the clerks of two Thomas

¹³ NA PC 2/1-26, *APC*.

¹⁴ Principally NA SP 1,2,10-13,15,49-53,59-63,69,70,75,77,78,80-85,94; *CSPD*; *CSPF*, *Edward VI*, *Mary*, *Elizabeth I*; *CSP Mary Queen of Scots*, *Scotland*, *Spain*, *Rome*, *Ireland*, *Milan*, *Borders*.

¹⁵ *Diplomatic Reps.*, *DNB*, *OxfordDNB*, Bindoff, Hasler.

Smiths, both eventually knighted. To avoid confusion these two men are designated 1 and 2, the first being older and preceding the other in the clerkship. Unfortunately, as they were not related, the designations of junior and senior did not apply, and historically other men have received the designation of I and II, hence the use of Arabic instead of Roman numerals to distinguish between them. The other Smith, William, was not related to either man, and is referred to with his full name to avoid further confusion. The only clerks related to one another are Armagil and William Waad, father and son respectively.

All men are referred to by the title which they held at the time period which is being discussed. For example, William Cecil is referred to at various points as William Cecil, Sir William Cecil and William Cecil Lord Burghley. The same is true of those clerks who were eventually knighted – their title is only designated if they had already been knighted at the time referred to. This is done primarily to aid in identification and to ensure accuracy, granting each title and the man holding it the appropriate significance for the period discussed.

Regarding quotes within the text, quotes from original documents which include written abbreviations such as wth for with, l: for lordship, and Ma^{tie} for Majesty, have been expanded to appear as w[i]th, l[ordship] and Ma[jes]tie. Such editorial inclusions always appear within brackets []. Additionally, some quotations included in the text are from printed calendars, such as the calendars of foreign papers. This was done primarily because many of these documents are in languages other than English. In cases where the calendar and not the original document is the source of the quotation, these quotes are cited in footnotes with both the calendar and original document reference.¹⁶ Finally, men in the Tudor period used the traditional Julian calendar and consequently listed dates ten days behind the modern Gregorian calendar. These dates have been preserved, however unlike the Tudors, all years are treated as beginning on 1 January rather than 25 March.

¹⁶ For example, NA SP 83/14/54; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1581-2, 119-20. In this case the original is in French.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CLERKS AND THEIR APPOINTMENT

The office of clerk of the Privy Council was granted directly by the sovereign with the men selected “by thadvise of His Highnes Privy Counsell.”¹ Thus the appointment, although nominally from the crown, was in fact filled primarily by the Privy Council. Due to this fact the circumstances within and affecting the Privy Council had the largest impact on the selection of its clerk. The official most directly tied to the clerkship was the Principal Secretary and this officer held the primary influence over the office, yet as we will see, other Councillors could also sometimes influence the filling of any clerkship vacancy. Numerous factors affected the office of clerk of the Privy Council, and vacancies within that office. Regime change, death or retirement, and political and administrative necessity all led to a change or addition to the ranks of the Privy Council clerks, while timing, patronage and personal qualifications enabled the selection of these nineteen men to fill these vacancies in the Tudor period. Both the circumstances surrounding each appointment, as well as the qualifications of the men granted the office, reveal salient details about the office of clerk of the Privy Council itself and how the office was on occasion manipulated in response to a situation within the Council. Of course many aspects of the office and the specific qualifications of the clerks themselves changed over time and these changes are readily visible in a chronological examination of the clerkship appointments.

The first and most significant clerkship appointment was on 10 August 1540 when it was recorded in the first Privy Council register that “Unto the which office William Paget, late the Queenes Secretary, was appointed by the Kings Highnes, and sworne, in the presence of the said Counsell, the day and yeare abovesaide.”² Paget recorded his own appointment as well as the declared reason for it.

That ther shold be a Clerke, attendant uppon the sayde Counsell, to write, enter, and regester all such decrees, determinations, letters and other such things as he should be appointed to enter in a booke, to remaine alwaies as a leeger, aswell for dischargin of the said Counsellors, touching such things as shold pass, from tyme to tyme, as also for memoriall unto them, of their owne proceedings.³

¹ *State papers published under the authority of His Majesty's commission: King Henry the Eighth*, I, ii (London, 1830-36) 646-7.

² *State Papers*, I, ii, 646-7; NA PC 2/1/1. For full text see Appendix 3.

³ *Ibid.*

The statement is a simple description of administrative need – a way to aid in the daily work of the Privy Council. Yet the simplicity of the statement masks the dramatic changes within the Privy Council that led to this change.

By the time of Henry VIII, the King's Council was an accepted institution, yet an informal one. Although this Council played an important role, primarily in advising the king, it remained largely undefined and transitory. In 1526, following complaints of Henry VIII, his chief advisor Cardinal Wolsey wrote the Eltham Ordinances, and included ideas to streamline the Council, such as reducing the number of councillors from forty or more to twenty, and requiring that a certain number of these councillors constantly attend the king at court. Wolsey also made suggestions in the Ordinances regarding the designation of powers of both the Privy Council and the Star Chamber. Wolsey's ideas were temporarily set aside due to the pressing matter of the king's divorce, yet from that time Henry VIII began to depend more on a smaller, select group of trusted councillors.

Cardinal Wolsey fell from favour in 1529 and was soon replaced by Thomas Cromwell. During his tenure as Henry's principal minister, he restructured government offices, particularly those dealing with finance, and led what Elton called the "Tudor revolution in government."⁴ It was at this time that a recognizable bureaucracy emerged, with increasing authority delegated to various organs of government. Within the king's own group of advisors, however, Cromwell was still prominent, although Henry relied on the others to perform varying tasks and to give advice. In 1536, facing a revolt in the form of the Pilgrimage of Grace, Henry VIII faced criticism regarding the counsel he received, particularly regarding his reliance on Thomas Cromwell. As a response to this, Cromwell revisited the general ideas laid out by Wolsey and limited the number of councillors who continuously surrounded the king and defined their positions. However, no official Council was formed at that time. It was only after Cromwell was removed from government, primarily through the coalition of his enemies in the Council, that the remaining nineteen councillors, under the orders of Henry VIII, formed the new Privy Council, a Council in which no single minister would hold control.⁵ Cromwell was the last of Henry VIII's principal ministers and from 1540 until his death in 1547, the king

⁴ G.R. Elton, *Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (New York, 1966).

⁵ For more on this see Jacqueline Vaughan, "The Trusted Privy Council of Henry VIII," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University (Provo, UT, 2002) 14-28.

governed with the aid of the Privy Council as a whole, eventually naming them as a Regency Council for his son.

While the salient facts regarding the creation of the Privy Council are undisputed, historians have argued over the motivation and driving influence behind the changes involved, ascribing credit to circumstance and evolution over time, or to individuals including Cromwell, Wolsey and Henry VIII. Conyers Read focused on the evolutionary development, stating that the Council formalized over time, changing from the large, unwieldy King's Council to a smaller, more organized unit as the Privy Council, particularly following Henry VII's measures to increase bureaucracy and Wolsey's Eltham Ordinances, and by 1540 this process was complete.⁶ The argument that Thomas Cromwell was the originator of the idea to form the Privy Council, just as he had formed other new organs of government in the 1530s, is primarily supported by G.R. Elton. His book, *The Tudor Revolution in Government*, asserts that Cromwell took advantage of his position and the opportunity presented by Henry's marital problems to shift government from personal servants to departments of state.⁷ Cromwell created a system to handle royal finances, reorganized the Council into a more formally constituted board of government, and promoted his role of principal secretary. Elton clearly states that Thomas Cromwell caused the organization of the Privy Council, and that it was a purposeful step made sometime between 1534 and 1536 in order to strengthen his position as Henry VIII's main advisor.⁸ These are just two aspects of the debate, which includes supporting arguments for the contributions of Wolsey and Henry VIII from several prominent historians, yet all agree that the Privy Council was officially organized

⁶ Conyers Read, *The Tudors* (New York, 1937), 85-6. The evolutionary argument is supported by John Guy, who stated that due to the circumstances of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII required a small Council that could advise him and assist him in the necessary legal and religious changes, and that this was what led to the limiting of Council membership. Guy also asserted, and David Starkey concurred, that the emergency Council that was called from 1536-7 to deal with the revolution of the Pilgrimage of Grace led to the dominance of the political councillors, and separated them from men who were councillors due only to their titles, other positions or tradition. See John Guy, "Privy Council: Revolution or Evolution?" and David Starkey, "After the Revolution," in Christopher Coleman and David Starkey, eds., *Revolution Reassessed: Revision in the History of Tudor Government and Administration* (Oxford, 1986), 59-60, 73-85, 199-200, 207.

⁷ G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, (Cambridge, 1953), particularly pages 60-5, 316-369; G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Constitution* (Cambridge, 1982), 88-116, 163-99.

⁸ Various debates occurred between Elton and G. L. Harris, Penry Williams, David Starkey and J. P. Cooper in the pages of *Past and Present*. Others including R. B. Wernham, B. W. Beckingsdale and J. J. Scarisbrick debated Elton in reviews and books. These criticisms ranged from discussions on how specific units of government were "revolutionized" by Cromwell, to critiques on Elton's view that Cromwell had acted alone. Elton's work since his initial publication has been to eliminate the inaccuracies and to reassert his essential argument. See G. R. Elton, "Henry VIII: An Essay in Revision," in Joel Hurtsfield, ed., *The Historical Association Book of the Tudors* (New York, 1973), 46-71.

in its smaller and administrative form in 1540.⁹

From August 1540 onward, the Henrician Privy Council as a group steadily increased in power, and it was at this critical juncture that the office of clerk of the Privy Council was created. The timing is not a coincidence. Henry VIII's various personal ministers, Wolsey, More and Cromwell, had personal servants to help them keep track of business and handle correspondence. Now this task was placed in the care of the clerks, under the general supervision of the Principal Secretary. What were the tasks of an aide to the king's personal ministers, were now the designated duties of an office, granted by the king and supervised by the Privy Council. The duties of the clerkship, including keeping the register, handling correspondence and a myriad of other functions, will be discussed later. For now it is of primary importance to note that in 1540, just as daily government administration went from the control of one man to the hands of a group, so the job of assisting in administration went from the hands of personal servants to those of paid officials: the clerks of the Privy Council.¹⁰

No known surviving letters mention or imply the importance of the clerks in this change from personal to corporate government, and as personal aspects still remained, the change was neither as clearly defined or immediate as placing a date on it suggests. The new office of clerk was indicative of the change, rather than a key factor of it. Yet even if viewed in the most insignificant light, the new office with its associated duties of handling group records, meetings and correspondence signified that the Privy Council became a corporate body, or at least it had the functioning apparatus to allow it to be so. From 10 August 1540 onward, the Privy Council clerks acted as the Council's principal aides, working not for one but for all, and as subject to the precariousness of politics and events as the Councillors themselves. Despite or perhaps because of this, several clerks of the Privy Council eventually joined the Council board, including and most significantly the first clerk of the Privy Council, William Paget.

⁹ For some of the additional arguments see John Guy, "Privy Council: Revolution or Evolution?" in Coleman and Starkey's *Revolution Reassessed*, 59-60, 73-85; David Loades, *Tudor Government* (Oxford, 1997), 23-26; David Loades, *Power in Tudor England* (New York, 1997), 52-56; Sir Almeric FitzRoy, *The History of the Privy Council*, (London, 1928).

¹⁰ For more on administrative duties shifting to the Privy Council see G. R. Elton, *The Tudor revolution in government*, 317-351; G. R. Elton, "Tudor government: the points of contact, 2: The Council," *TRHS*, 5th ser., 25 (1975), 195-211; Steven J. Gunn, *Early Tudor government, 1485-1558*, (London, 1995), 48-53; A. G. R. Smith, *Tudor government*, (London, 1990); John Guy, "The Privy Council: Revolution or Evolution?" in Christopher Coleman, David Starkey eds., *Revolution reassessed: revisions in the history of Tudor government and administration*, (Oxford, 1986), 59-86; W. R. D. Jones, *The mid-Tudor crisis, 1539-63*, (London, 1973), 35-45.

William Paget, later Lord Paget of Beaudesert, set both the qualifications and precedents that the clerks after him followed. Paget was born in London in 1505, the son of a serjeant at mace to the sheriffs of London. As a child he received his education at the St. Paul's school, and had such school fellows as future Privy Councillors Edward North, Anthony Denny and Thomas Wriothesley.¹¹ Following St. Paul's school he entered Trinity Hall Cambridge.¹² At the time Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and secretary of Henry VIII's principal advisor Cardinal Wolsey, was master of the college and although Paget was supported in his studies by Thomas Boleyn, it was Gardiner who first assisted him in attaining a place at court.¹³ After completing his degree in civil law, Paget travelled to Paris to improve his language skills, and possibly accompanied Gardiner in his negotiations with Francis I in 1527 and 1528.¹⁴ By June of the latter year he entered the Bishop's household, who in July 1529 became the king's secretary.¹⁵ Through Gardiner's influence Paget received his first royal assignment to canvas universities and principalities for opinions regarding Henry VIII's impending divorce, and from 1531 to 1534 he made several trips to France, the German Provinces and Poland in the effort.¹⁶ He was so well regarded that in 1535 Edward Foxe, who travelled with him on several of these missions, wrote to Cromwell and stated "there is no fitter man for the purpose than Pachett."¹⁷ His success also prompted his first office at court, the clerkship of the Signet, granted by October 1531.¹⁸ The clerkship not only secured him a salary, but also a constant place at court close to the king and other ministers who might help to further his advancement.

Upon returning to England after his various missions in Europe, William Paget discovered that Bishop Stephen Gardiner had fallen out of favour at court due to his opposition to the king's policy. Fearing for his future, Paget became a follower of the rising minister Thomas Cromwell. In a letter that he wrote to Cromwell from Hamburg in 1534 he stated: "Unfeignedly, I am more bound to you than to any other but the King; for although others have heretofore somewhat advanced me, you restored me to the

¹¹ Bindoff, III, 42; "Paget, William, First Baron Paget (1505/6-1563)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹² John Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge, 1922-1954), III, 296.

¹³ Bindoff, III, 43; "Paget" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁴ Bindoff, III, 43.

¹⁵ *L&P*, IV, 4440; Bindoff, III, 43; "Paget" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁶ *L&P*, V, 363,427,548,791,807,1290,1292,1531; VI, 89, VII, 21, 137, 148, 220, 257, 333, 584. *Diplomatic Reps.*, G4, G6, G9, P12.

¹⁷ *L&P*, IX, 242.

¹⁸ *L&P*, V, 559(9), p.254. This patent issued to Paget on 18 October 1531 refers to Paget as Clerk of the Signet, but no Patent remains for the clerkship appointment.

King's favour."¹⁹ As William Paget stayed at court, he successfully advanced in royal service and professional acknowledgement. In 1537 he was admitted, apparently honourarily, to Gray's Inn.²⁰ At approximately the same time he received three critical appointments that led him directly to the Privy Council: queen's secretary for Jane Seymour in 1537, queen's secretary for Anne of Cleves in 1539, and the clerkship of the Privy Council itself in 1540.²¹ The office of secretary to the queen shows that Paget was known in the Royal household and trusted with intimate correspondence, and perhaps these qualities as much as his foreign diplomatic experience led to his appointment as the first clerk of the Privy Council.²²

While this chronology explains how Paget rose from one post to another, his key qualifications need restating as they set the pattern for the clerks to follow. In terms of his basic qualifications, Paget was university educated with both secretarial and foreign experience, as well as progressively more significant royal service. Paget's basic education and work background qualified him for the clerkship, yet dozens if not hundred of other men filled the same criteria. The distinction between William Paget and the others lies in the former's personal and patronage contacts and his fortunate position when the clerkship originated. His ties to rising officials as well as established Councillors gained him access to offices while his work as queen's secretary demonstrated his capability and discretion. The final key was timing – just as the office of secretary to the now discarded Anne of Cleves became irrelevant, a new office began for which Paget was eminently suited. In Paget's example the key factors for all the clerks emerge: education, foreign, secretarial and service experience, contacts (both among peers and on the Privy Council), and timing. The relative importance of these factors was different for each clerk, altered by circumstances of both the men and the Privy Council, yet all appear and are vital to understand why these nineteen men out of hundreds had the right criteria to work for the Privy Council.

Following his appointment as clerk of the Privy Council, two other events occurred in Paget's life which reflect on the clerkship: his appointment as ambassador

¹⁹ *L&P*, VII, 220.

²⁰ George Edward Cokayne ed., *The complete peerage, or, A history of the House of Lords and all its members from the earliest times* (London, 1940) X, 276.

²¹ Cokayne, *Peerage*, X, 276; Bindoff, III, 42-3; "Paget" in *OxfordDNB*. For Paget's appointment as clerk of the Privy Council see NA PC 2/1/1.

²² For more on Paget's further career see Samuel Rhea Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William, first Lord Paget, Tudor Minister* (Newton Abbott: 1973); Andrew Johnston, "William Paget and the late-Henrician polity, 1543-1547," Unpublished PhD. Thesis, (St. Andrews, 2004).

and promotion to the Privy Council. Paget became ambassador to France less than a year after becoming clerk, and joined the ranks of the Privy Council just two years after becoming ambassador. These events highlight several key points regarding the clerkship. First, being clerk did not exclude these men from holding other government positions, frequently including posts outside of England, a situation that was true for Paget and became more frequent during Elizabeth's reign. These additional offices and duties will be discussed later. Second, the clerkship often led to promotion, both in diplomatic office and in central government. This is true of most of the clerks, and holds true even for those who remained clerks until retirement or death. Paget's rise to the Privy Council is particularly significant because it set the precedent for other clerks to do likewise, yet the rise to ambassador while still a clerk was more common and here Paget's precedent is also important. Finally, Paget held his clerkship for a mere three years, and while his was not the shortest term in that office, the example was set, particularly among the Henrician and Edwardian clerks, for the office to be temporary. As we will see this changed in later years, but in this, as in other areas, Paget's career set the mould that the clerks who followed fell into.

In William Paget a set of requirements and expectations for both the clerks and the clerkship was established. Although these changed slightly over time, the predominant features of these precedents are as clear in the appointment of the last clerk as with the first. Although these precedents helped determine who filled the clerkship, need and timing remained the dominant factors regarding when a new clerk was appointed. It is through these factors that we can trace the changes in the clerkship throughout the Tudor period and, knowing the circumstances involved, evaluate why specific men were selected to become clerks of the Privy Council.

In 1542 England renewed hostility with Scotland, including border raids and culminating in the victory at Solway Moss on 23 November. Despite a brief peace, hostilities continued, increasing the strain and workload of the Privy Council. In addition, in February 1543, Henry VIII made an agreement with Charles V to invade France, with the first English troops arriving that June. Naturally the coordination of the war effort both on the continent and along the northern border required a substantial increase in time and effort, not to mention paperwork, on the Council's behalf. The workload necessitated two clerks of the Privy Council instead of one, and in April 1543, just as William Paget ceased his work as ambassador to France and joined the Council, both John Mason and William Honing were named clerks of the Privy Council.

The selection of Mason and Honing was not arbitrary. John Mason owed his appointment to the post to similar circumstances as William Paget. Of equally obscure origins, it is commonly thought that he was the illegitimate son of the sister of Thomas Rowland, the abbot of Abingdon, where he was born.²³ It was probably through his uncle's assistance that he secured a place at university, where he, like Paget, made his first contact with a member of the royal court. While receiving his degrees at Oxford, Mason attracted the attention of Sir Thomas More, who used his influence with Henry VIII to have Mason appointed King's Scholar.²⁴ Soon after, he was presented to the parish church of Kingston in Salisbury.²⁵ His travels make it unlikely that he ever personally fulfilled his office. In this Mason was unique, as the only clerk of the Privy Council to ever have a church appointment.

As a King's Scholar, John Mason went to Paris, like Paget, for further study, with the crown supporting his education.²⁶ In 1532 Mason arrived in Calais and witnessed the meeting between Henry VIII and Francis I.²⁷ From 1532 to 1536, travelling particularly through France, Spain and Italy, he gathered news for the Council and furthered his diplomatic and language studies.²⁸ In October 1536 Mason returned to England and almost immediately afterward went to Spain as secretary to Sir Thomas Wyatt, envoy to the Emperor.²⁹ Not long afterward, however, Edmund Bonner, diplomat and future Bishop of London, brought various charges against Wyatt, Stephen Gardiner, and Mason himself in 1538.³⁰ Mason was accused of being in communication with Cardinal Reginald Pole, then working to further a Franco-Habsburg alliance to invade England.³¹

²³ Bindoff, II, 582; "Mason, Sir John (c.1503-1566)" in *Oxford DNB*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; John Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford 1500-1714* (Oxford, 1891) III, 983. Mason graduated BA from All Souls in 1521, and received his MA in 1525. *L&P*, V, 747,751,754,757, g.119(49).

²⁵ *L&P*, V, 119(49), p.57. Mason followed this benefice on 25 February 1540 with a presentation to the conary and prebend of Themysbury in Winchester diocese. *L&P*, XV, 282(120), p.116. He received a license later that year, on 29 December 1540 to keep his prebends even though he was married. *L&P*, XVI, 379(55), p.177.

²⁶ *L&P*, V, 747,751,754,757, g.119(49).

²⁷ Richard Turpyn, *Chronicle of Calais*, Camden Society, 35 (London, 1846) 118; Bindoff, II, 582; "Mason, Sir John," *OxfordDNB Archive* (*DNB*, XXXVI, 425).

²⁸ Mason wrote an account of his travels in a letter to his friend, Dr. Starkey, Dated 16 December 1535, BL Cotton MS Vitell. B. xiv. 157; *L&P*, IX, 313,329.

²⁹ Bindoff, II, 582; "Mason" in *OxfordDNB*; *L&P*, XII, ii, 843,1087, 1098, 1249.

³⁰ Bindoff, II, 582; "Mason" in *OxfordDNB*. S. Brigden, "The shadow that you know": Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Francis Bryan at court and in embassy," *HJ*, 39 (1996), 8-10, 14-5, 20.

³¹ Pole was the grandson of George, Duke of Clarence the brother of Edward IV, and therefore a legitimate heir to the throne of England, but he was also a Catholic Cardinal exiled from England, and a potential threat to Henry's newly Protestant rule. For more on Pole and his attacks on Henry VIII see Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge, 2000).

Fortunately for both John Mason and Thomas Wyatt, they were protected by Thomas Cromwell, and continued to serve the king in Spain and then in Ghent.³²

After Cromwell's fall from power and execution, Bonner's accusations revived and the Privy Council sent Wyatt to the Tower of London. Although not immediately implicated with Wyatt, Mason later joined him in the Tower.³³ After two months in the Tower Mason received a "pardon for treason, on his spontaneous submission, and at the intercession of Queen Katherine."³⁴ Mason learned a lesson that Paget learned before and other clerks learned afterward; their fate was closely tied to the patron who helped them. Mason escaped from harm and soon afterwards his career became closely tied to Paget himself. William Paget, just a year after his appointment as clerk of the Privy Council, worked as Ambassador to France in September 1541.³⁵ To keep the clerkship post filled, "this day was John Masyn... admitted and sworne Clarcke of the Pryvye Cownsell during the absence off Master William Pagett."³⁶ Paget had also by this time been appointed as clerk of the Parliament, and beginning in January 1542, Mason also acted as his deputy in that post.³⁷ Not long afterward, on 20 September 1542, Mason became the king's secretary for the French tongue, and on 13 April, when William Paget joined the ranks of the Privy Council itself, Mason took his place as clerk.³⁸ Mason was selected not only because he had similar skills and background to Paget, but primarily because he was already fulfilling the office. He was the only clerk appointed for this reason, but his appointment highlights an important structural technique involving these appointments. There was always at least one clerk working continuously as new men advanced to the clerkship. When Mason became clerk he already held the administrative memory of the post, and when the next clerk was appointed, Mason stayed in his position long enough for the new clerk to learn the job and then act as the continuing clerk for the next appointment. Through these rotating advancements, someone always remained to teach the newest clerk his duties, allowing the office to run smoothly and efficiently and not impede the work of the Privy Council itself.

³² L&P, XIII, i, 257, 282, ii, 144.

³³ L&P, XVI, 482, 639-41.

³⁴ Mason was pardoned 21 March 1541. L&P, XVI, 678(41), p.329.

³⁵ L&P, XVI, 1198; *Diplomatic Reps.*, F70.

³⁶ *PPC*, 248.

³⁷ "Mason" in *OxfordDNB*. Paget was appointed clerk of Parliaments 15 July 1541. L&P, XVI, 1056(64), p.504.

³⁸ Mason was appointed Secretary for the French tongue with an annuity of £40 on 20 September 1542. L&P, XVI, 1012(24), p.565. Mason became clerk of the Privy Council on 13 April 1543: *APC*, I, 188.

Mason became clerk of the Privy Council in 1543 as a replacement for William Paget. Evidently, although it was just three years after the establishment of the office, the amount of work was already too much for a single man to handle. To fix this problem, on the same day that John Mason changed from deputy clerk to full clerk of the Privy Council, William Honing was appointed to the same office. From that time forward, at least two men held the clerkship at any given time, with their numbers eventually swelling to as many as five. Mason, like Paget, was promoted by a patron with whom he came in contact at university. Indeed, most of the clerks of the Privy Council built their careers upon contacts made at university or the Inns of Court. However, a few of the clerks, such as Honing, were fortunate enough to have a family connection to help them advance. Born in London, William Honing's great-uncle was Thomas Wriothesley, namesake and cousin of the Thomas Wriothesley who became a Privy Councillor and Earl of Southampton.³⁹ It is fairly certain that it was through the efforts of the second Thomas that Honing received the post of Serjeant of the Acatry in the royal household.⁴⁰ As serjeant he handled fish and game for the household and although the position appears on the surface to be minor, it was a place at court among courtiers and their servants.

The first reference to William Honing as the Serjeant of the Acatry is in 1535, and in 1536 Honing's place in the court became very important. In May the court's focus was on the forthcoming trial of Queen Anne Boleyn for treason through adultery.⁴¹ The jury that tried the queen consisted of her peers, but the jury that first indicted her was comprised primarily of members of the household staff, among them William Honing.⁴² While Honing did not play a large part in the trial, his presence on the jury which heard damaging and scandalous testimony suggests a high level of trust in him to, at the very least, do as he was told. Two years later, with Wriothesley's help, Honing was appointed the secretary to Edmund Bonner on his embassy to France.⁴³ The appointment is somewhat surprising since Honing had no formal education. There is no record of Honing attending university or an Inn of Court, yet somehow he acquired the necessary training for the position.

³⁹ Bindoff, I, 383.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; *L&P*, VIII, 478.

⁴¹ NA KB8/8-9; M. Schauer and F. Stone, "Law as the engine of state : the trial of Anne Boleyn," *William & Mary Law Review*, 22 (1980), 49-84.

⁴² *L&P*, X, 876(7).

⁴³ Bindoff, I, 383; *L&P*, XIII, ii, 60, 993, p.427.

William Honing spent the next two years in France, with a brief return home for Bonner's election as Bishop of London in 1539.⁴⁴ Bonner was fond of Honing, and worked with Wriothesley to advance him at court.⁴⁵ In April 1539 Bonner asked Wriothesley "what he should write to the King or Cromwell in favour of Honnyng, who has taken much pains with him."⁴⁶ The scheme apparently worked, because in 1541, after Wriothesley was appointed to the Privy Council, Honing was granted the next reversion to one of the four clerkships of the Signet, of which William Paget was then one.⁴⁷ During 1542 Honing continued to be referred to as a servant of Wriothesley, and in April 1543, presumably with his kinsman's aid, William Honing was appointed clerk of the Privy Council.⁴⁸ Honing was appointed with John Mason, filling the gap left by William Paget while also adding a clerk to handle the increasingly large work load of the Council. In the case of William Honing, his experience in France, with whom England was then at war, as well as his ties to Wriothesley, Bonner and Paget, most likely separated Honing from others as a good candidate for the position.

John Mason and William Honing worked together as Privy Council clerks for two years. During this time Mason continued to be secretary for the French Tongue and Paget's deputy as clerk of the Parliaments. On 29 September 1545 he joined Paget as Master of the Posts, a prestigious and very time-consuming position. Apparently holding so many offices overburdened Mason, because in November Thomas Chaloner was appointed to replace him as the newest clerk of the Council. It is important to note that although Mason performed the duties of a clerk for four years, he only held the office for two. He, like Paget, used the office as a stepping stone to other positions, in this case, positions closely tied to Paget himself. For Mason the office was only temporary, and like Paget it eventually led to a place on the Privy Council. Although replacing Mason was the primary force behind Chaloner's appointment in his stead, other factors contributed to Chaloner's selection.

Thomas Chaloner was born in 1521 in London, and upon entering St. John's College Cambridge was a contemporary of a group of scholars and humanists that included William Cecil, the future Lord Burghley, and John Cheke and Roger Ascham,

⁴⁴ *L&P*, XIV, ii, 619(44), p.224.

⁴⁵ 29 April Honing wrote to Wriothesley "As you have thanked my master (i.e. Bonner) for the goodness he shows me for love of you, I will not fail to do my duty." *L&P*, XIV, i, 888.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 831.

⁴⁷ *L&P*, XVI, 1308(28), p.604; Bindoff, I, 383.

⁴⁸ "Jhon Mason and William Honninges wer appointed Clarckes off the Pryve Cownsell and this day received theyre oth for the same.": *APC*, I, 188.

both of whom became tutors to the young Edward VI and Elizabeth I.⁴⁹ By 1534 John Cheke was already King's Scholar and a fellow at St. John's, and Chaloner was one of his students.⁵⁰ That same year Thomas Cromwell was named High Steward of Cambridge and in 1535 became its Chancellor, and it was possibly then that, through Cheke, Thomas Chaloner came to his notice.⁵¹ By 1538 Chaloner was one of Cromwell's servants, and the connection through Cambridge is the only available possibility of how the two men came in contact with one another.⁵² Two years later, in 1540, Chaloner accompanied Sir Henry Knyvet on his embassy to Emperor Charles V, and made such a good impression on Charles that he accompanied him to Algiers the following year.⁵³

When Chaloner returned to England his work, *A book of the office of Servants* translated from Gilbert Cognatus, was printed in 1543 and dedicated to Sir Henry Knyvet.⁵⁴ The following year he translated into English John Cheke's work *An Homilie of Saint John Chrysostome*.⁵⁵ These works and others by Chaloner will be dealt with in more detail later. The same year he accompanied the army then sent to France, and upon his return, was appointed one of the Tellers of the Exchequer, although he fulfilled this office primarily through a deputy.⁵⁶ Just a year following this appointment, Thomas Chaloner became the newest clerk of the Privy Council.⁵⁷ His work in France and with Charles V, along with his experience in the exchequer during a period of continuing inflation, made him an ideal candidate to help the Council deal with these issues. The appointment was due mostly to his ability and experience but it is also likely that John Cheke, now a tutor to Edward VI, assisted him in getting the appointment. Although he was fortunate in his friend and his patron, and certainly lucky, it appears that it was Chaloner's own abilities and experience abroad and as a writer that secured him his clerkship.

⁴⁹ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, I, i, 315; Charles H. Cooper and Cooper Thompson, *Athenae Cantabrigienses* (Cambridge, 1858-1913) I, 235-7. It has been further conjectured that Chaloner attended Oxford, but there is no proof of that.

⁵⁰ W. S. Hudson, *The Cambridge connection and the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559* (Durham (NC), 1980) 54.

⁵¹ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, I, i, 423.

⁵² *L&P*, XIII, ii, 1184; Bindoff, I, 611.

⁵³ Bindoff, I, 611; "Chaloner, Sir Thomas, the elder (1521-1565)" in *OxfordDNB*. Unfortunately he was wrecked on the Barbary Coast, but his luck held and he survived, it is said, by catching hold of a cable with his teeth.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, I, 236-7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *L&P*, XIX, i, 273; *L&P*, XIX, ii, 690(22), p.412.

⁵⁷ *L&P*, XX, ii, 1068(38), p.541.

The work of the Privy Council increased dramatically beginning in 1547 with the death of Henry VIII and the formation of the Regency Council.⁵⁸ The installation, by the membership of the Regency Council, of Edward Seymour Duke of Somerset as Lord Protector, and the authority of the Council to rule for the king, dramatically changed the role of the Council from its more subservient placement under Henry VIII.⁵⁹ It was from this time forward that the Privy Council had its most profound influence, yet councillor dynamics and jealousies led to rivalries and changes in power. With struggles occurring within the Privy Council, coincident with war, religious tension and economic decline, it is unsurprising that the clerks and clerkship were effected. The five years of Edward VI's reign began with William Honing and Thomas Chaloner as clerks. Four new clerks were added and then either promoted or dismissed, and at Queen Mary's accession, only one Edwardian clerk out of six remained to continue the clerkship into the next reign. Before discussing the series of regime changes and how they effected the clerks, it is important to note that, while timing and connection to men in power were now more critical than ever before in the determination of which man became clerk, the same essential qualifications first established with Paget remained constant. Aspects of the clerkship itself also remained the same. The office was still a very temporary one and remained closely tied to the Council. However, the office now became part of a larger political game, with the clerks as pawns. It is therefore unsurprising that only one clerk survived into the next reign.

Following his ascendancy to power upon his nephew's accession, the Duke of Somerset sought to consolidate his power, both through his own influence and with the help of Sir William Paget. Through the grants of land and titles, Somerset consolidated his hold on the Privy Council.⁶⁰ Following this he appointed one of his own followers,

⁵⁸ The Regency Council was specifically called for under the will of Henry VIII, however the appointment of Seymour as Lord Protector was not, although the Council as a whole had the requisite authority to make the change. For more on this change and the historical arguments regarding its validity and the intent of Henry VIII, see Jacqueline Vaughan, "The Trusted Privy Council of Henry VIII," 69-79.

⁵⁹ For more on the Council under Edward VI see Dale Hoak, *The king's council in the reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1976); Dale Hoak, "Re-writing the history of Tudor politics and government: the regimes of Somerset and Northumberland," *Journal of the Rutgers University Library*, 40 (1978), 4-13; Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI*, (New Haven, 1999), 39-134; Simon L. Adams, Ian W. Archer, George W. Bernard, "A 'journal' of matters of state... [and] Certain brief notes of the controversy between the Dukes of Somerset and Duke of Nor[t]humberland," in Ian W. Archer, ed., *Religion, politics, and society in sixteenth-century England* (Camden, 5th ser., 22) (Cambridge, 2003), 35-136.

⁶⁰ The authority to do this stemmed from a clause in Henry VIII's contested will. See Eric W. Ives, "Henry VIII's will: the protectorate provisions of 1546-1547," *HJ*, 37 (1994), 901-14; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, "Henry VIII's will: a comment," *HJ*, 37 (1994), 894-99; Eric W. Ives, "Henry VIII's will: a forensic conundrum," *HJ*, 35 (1992), 790-1; H. Miller, "Henry VIII's unwritten will: grants of lands and honours in 1547," in Eric W. Ives, R. J. Knecht, J. J. Scarisbrick eds., *Wealth and power in Tudor England: essays*

Thomas Smith 1, to be a clerk of the Privy Council. Whether the appointment came at Paget's suggestion or not is unknown, yet as a former clerk Paget likely understood the value of placing one of Somerset's followers in that position. Just like Thomas Chaloner, Thomas Smith 1 owed much of his advance to his scholarly work, and like both Chaloner and Paget, his time at Cambridge was critical to his advancement. Unfortunately, Thomas Smith, with a name that is exceptionally common, is easily confused with other Thomas Smiths of his day, including the second Thomas Smith who became clerk of the Privy Council decades after the first.⁶¹ Luckily, since the first Thomas was well-known in his day, and Strype wrote a biography of him in 1698 using documents no longer available, a reasonably accurate picture of his life can be produced.⁶²

Thomas Smith 1, born in Essex in 1513, was the son of John Smith, a small sheep farmer.⁶³ He entered St. John's College Cambridge, then transferred to Queen's College, completing his BA in 1530 and MA in 1532, and thereafter lecturing on natural philosophy and Greek.⁶⁴ Smith first came to the attention of the court in 1527 when he was appointed King's Scholar.⁶⁵ Smith remained at Cambridge, becoming friends with the above-mentioned King's Scholar John Cheke. In 1538 they wrote a dissertation together which they presented to Henry VIII regarding the question of whether the king should marry an Englishwoman or a foreigner.⁶⁶ Later that same year he was sent by the university to ask Henry VIII to grant ex-monastic lands in order to found a new college which would, of course, be named after the king himself.⁶⁷

In 1540 Thomas Smith 1 left Cambridge to study abroad. He travelled through France to Padua where he graduated DCL in 1542.⁶⁸ Upon his return to Cambridge he was granted his LID by the university.⁶⁹ Resuming life at the university, Smith attracted

presented to S.T. Bindoff (London, 1978), 87-105; Samuel Rhea Gammon, *Statesman and schemer: William, first Lord Paget, Tudor minister*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), 130-133; Lacey Baldwin Smith, "The Last Will and Testament of Henry VIII: a Question of Perspective," *Journal of British Studies*, 2 (1962), 14-27.

⁶¹ Smith is also commonly confused with another Thomas Smith who was a page of the chamber and secretary to the Queen in 1540-1, but dates abroad and other evidence confirm that these were two different men.

⁶² John Strype, *The life of the learned Sir Thomas Smith Kt. doctor of the civil law; principal secretary of state to King Edward the Sixth, and Queen Elizabeth*, (London: A. Roper, R. Basset, 1698).

⁶³ "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁶⁴ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, IV, 110

⁶⁵ "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid. L&P*, XIII, 496.

⁶⁸ Bindoff, III, 338; "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

the attention of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, a member of the Privy Council and Chancellor of Cambridge, by advocating a change in Greek pronunciation. The debate became lively, and in a condescending letter written by Gardiner to Smith, Gardiner refers to Smith's "little book" on the subject.⁷⁰ Gardiner, as Chancellor, won the argument, but Smith was thereafter noted for his learning and eloquence and for protecting Protestants at the university from Gardiner's hostility.⁷¹ Thomas Smith 1 became vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1544, and soon after became chancellor to Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely.⁷²

Shortly before Henry VIII's death, Smith returned to the court to secure Queen Katherine Parr's influence in preventing the king from seizing college property.⁷³ After the king's death he returned to court as secretary to the new Lord Protector Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset.⁷⁴ It is unclear whether Somerset brought Smith into his household because of his Protestant views and competition with Gardiner, because of his friendship with John Cheke and Roger Ascham, who were now tutors to the young King Edward VI, or because of Somerset's brother-in-law Sir Clement Smith of Essex who was possibly Thomas Smith's relative.⁷⁵ Additionally it is possible that Thomas Chaloner, also a friend of Cheke and Ascham from his Cambridge days and already a clerk of the Privy Council, suggested his advancement. Smith entered Somerset's service in February of 1547, and was almost immediately appointed clerk of the Privy Council.⁷⁶ Although it was presumably Somerset's rise to power that led to Smith's appointment, it was his work at Cambridge that secured him the notice of the court and reputation for learning appropriate for a clerk of the Council.

Thomas Smith 1 was not the only clerk appointed shortly after the accession of Edward VI. Armagil Waad joined the ranks of clerks in June of 1547, just as the Lord Protector began his campaign against Scotland. Somerset's policy was risky, in that any attack on Scotland led to increased hostility with France, with whom peace was finally established just a year earlier. The fighting required more work for the Council, now ruling for the king and not just in his name, and another clerk was needed to assist with

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; *L&P*, XVII, 482-3, 611, 803. One of the letters was published in 1542.

⁷¹ "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷² *Ibid.*; Bindoff, III, 338.

⁷³ *L&P*, XXI, i, 279, ii, 572.

⁷⁴ Bindoff, III, 338; "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷⁵ "Smith, Sir Thomas (1513-1577)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; Bindoff, III, 338. Various dates are given for the start of Smith's clerkship of the Privy Council. It is certain that he was clerk before 3 January 1548. "Sir Wimund Carewe had warraunt to be delivered to Thomas Smyth, Clerc of the Counsaile.": *APC*, II, 156.

the workload. In this tense situation, English holdings in France, particularly Calais and Boulogne, were in danger and it was due to this situation and the need for an additional clerk that Armagil Waad became a clerk of the Privy Council in 1547.

Waad had some similarities in his early career to that of other clerks. He attended university, had a patron to help him, had clerkship experience and travelled overseas. What makes him a striking example is that although he had similar experiences to the others, the nature of those experiences was dramatically different. Armagil Waad was born by 1518 in Yorkshire, possibly in the town of Kilnsey.⁷⁷ His parents' names are unknown, and we know nothing of his early days until he arrived at university in Oxford. He graduated from the university, presumably from Magdalen College, in 1532.⁷⁸

Without records it is not certain what Waad did after his education, but he reappears in records as joining Robert Hore's voyage to North America from April to October 1536.⁷⁹ Later in life Waad was given the title "the English Columbus" as a reminder of his exploits, although he was no more deserving of the title than the men he sailed with.⁸⁰ Some time later Armagil Waad had his first employment for the king, apparently as a messenger.⁸¹ It has been suggested that his introduction to court came through Sir Richard Gresham, who was granted the monastery in Kilnsey where Waad was born.⁸² Waad was known to have knowledge of languages, including Spanish and presumably also French, because by 1540 he was employed as a servant to Henry Lord Mautravers, the Lord deputy of Calais.⁸³ Mautravers then took it upon himself to assist Waad, and personally petitioned the king to grant Waad the clerkship of the Council in Calais, which was granted in November 1540.⁸⁴ Mautravers attempted to advance Waad further with a position as French secretary in Calais but failed, however he succeeded in

⁷⁷ Bindoff, III, 531; "Waad [Wade], Armagil (c.1510-1568)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, IV, 1550. It is thought that he then attended the Middle Temple, although the records from this period of time are missing.

⁷⁹ Bindoff, III, 531; "Waad, Armagil" in *OxfordDNB*. Richard Hakluyt wrote a description of the voyage years later titled *The voyage of M. Hore and divers other gentlemen, to Newfoundland, and Cape Briton, in the yeere 1536, and in the 28 yere of king Henry the 8*. It was first printed in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* in 1600. The journey was a grim one. The men barely survived after finding no food or assistance from the natives. Some of the men even resorted to cannibalism before sighting a French ship, which they plundered and seized before sailing back to England.

⁸⁰ "Waad, Armagil" in *OxfordDNB*. Among his fellow adventurers was Thomas Butts, the son of Sir William Butts, the king's surgeon. Although it is not known if Waad ever used this connection at court, it is certainly possible that the young Thomas Butts regaled his father and the court with the tales of the adventures he and his companions had on their voyage to Newfoundland.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Bindoff, III, 531.

⁸³ *Ibid.*; "Waad, Armagil" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; *L&P*, XVI, 239, 305(78), p.144.

gaining Waad the post of collector and receiver of customs and tolls at Newenham Bridge in Calais, which helped Waad financially.⁸⁵

In September 1546 Armagil Waad returned to London and reported his return to William Paget, then Principal Secretary.⁸⁶ Waad's service as clerk of the Council in Calais served him well and demonstrated his abilities to the Privy Council, leading to his appointment as clerk of the Privy Council in June 1547.⁸⁷ His life may not have followed the exact same line as the other clerks, his overseas experience was definitely more adventurous than that of the others, but it was eventually his ability as a clerk and linguist, and the support of Lord Mautravers that secured Waad his place as clerk of the Privy Council. His ability along with his experience in Calais, an area of concern at the time, made Waad a superior candidate to work for and assist the Privy Council.

By 1549 the Lord Protector was in an increasingly tenuous position. Rebellions, the cost of war and the actions of his brother all led to censure, culminating in his formal removal from office confirmed by act of Parliament in January 1550. Supporters of the former Protector, including Sir Thomas Smith 1 and Lord William Paget were under suspicion, as well as Council clerk William Honing. Following questioning by "The busshopp of Ely and Mr. Secretarie Wotton" on 20 April, Honing was deprived of his clerkship.⁸⁸ The day before "William Thomas was this day sworne and admitted one of the Clerks of the Counsail" in Honing's place.⁸⁹ The circumstances surrounding Thomas' appointment, although similar to that of other clerks, have some significant differences, in particular his notoriety and heritage. Of unknown parentage, he was born sometime before 1524 in Llanthomas, Breconshire, the only non-English clerk.⁹⁰ Nothing is known of his early life, although it is supposed that he attended Oxford because of his mastery of Latin.⁹¹ With a name equally common as Thomas Smith's, identification can sometimes be difficult, but some pieces of his life have been established. The first record of his service comes in 1542 when he was named clerk of the peace and of the crown for the counties of Brecon, Montgomery and Radnor in

⁸⁵ *L&P*, XVI, 239, XVIII, ii, 125; *Bindoff*, III, 531; *L&P*, XX, i, 624(8), p.327.

⁸⁶ *Bindoff*, III, 531.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; "Waad, Armagil" in *OxfordDNB*; Waad served without salary from June 24, 1547, granted salary on 10 May 1548. *CPR* Edward VI, II, 3-4.

⁸⁸ *APC*, III, 7.

⁸⁹ *APC*, II, 433.

⁹⁰ *Bindoff*, III, 439; "Thomas, William (d.1554)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Wales.⁹² There is no way of knowing how Thomas got the position, but apparently it was around this time that he moved to London.

London brought him into contact with his future patron Sir Anthony Browne, a member of the Privy Council. It is presumed, due to later circumstances that Thomas was a tenant of Browne in a house in Southwark in September 1544, and, if true, this explains how Thomas met his patron.⁹³ Thomas was certainly a servant of Anthony Browne by 1545 when his actions gained him the notice of the entire Privy Council, although not in a positive way.⁹⁴ On 13 February 1545 Stephen Vaughan, the royal agent at Antwerp reported the passing of one of the Earl of Hertford's (later Somerset's) servants who was sent to fetch William Thomas who ran off with his master's money.⁹⁵ Thomas fled to Venice, where he met with the English ambassador and begged for mercy. The ambassador was touched by Thomas' penitence and convinced the Council to show him pity. Clemency was granted, although Thomas wisely stayed in Italy for the next three years.⁹⁶

During the intervening time, Thomas made contact with local gentlemen, and improved his skills in Italian.⁹⁷ While there word arrived of Henry VIII's death, and shortly afterward Thomas published *Peregryne*, a political dialogue, written in Italian, in defence of Henry VIII and highly flattering to Edward VI.⁹⁸ The work spread through Europe eventually arriving back in England. Shortly thereafter a Mr. Tamworth, impressed with William Thomas' skills in Italian, contacted Thomas and commissioned him to write the *Principal Rules of Italian Grammar*.⁹⁹ Continuing his writing, Thomas completed *The Historie of Italy* in 1548, the first English book on Italy, and published in 1549 when Thomas had returned to England.¹⁰⁰ Thomas timed his return well, because while never exiled, he knew that, due to his previous exploits, it was wise to remain out

⁹² *L&P*, XVI, 1488(20), p.698.

⁹³ Bindoff, III, 440.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *L&P*, XX, i, 515, 649; *APC*, I, 176; Bindoff, III, 440; "Thomas" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁹⁶ Bindoff, III, 440.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*; "Thomas" in *OxfordDNB*; BL Cotton MS, Vespasian D. xviii.

⁹⁹ Bindoff, III, 440; "Thomas" in *OxfordDNB*. Tamworth was probably John Tamworth, kinsman of Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, who was likely aware of William Thomas' budding writing career. William Thomas, *Principal rules of Italian grammer, with a dictionarie for the better understanding of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante*, (London, 1550).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* William Thomas, *The historie of Italie, a boke excedyng profitable to be redde: because it intreateth of the astate of many and diuers common weales, how thei haue ben, [and] now be gouerned*, (London, 1549).

of England. However, Sir Anthony Browne died early in 1549, leaving the way clear for his return.

William Thomas' return was fortunate in another way. The Privy Council was poised on the cusp of change, as the Duke of Somerset was quickly losing control. John Dudley, then Earl of Warwick was planning to take control of the Privy Council, and when Thomas' history was published, he dedicated it to Dudley.¹⁰¹ It has been conjectured that John Mason, formerly a clerk of the Privy Council and an adherent of Dudley, advised Thomas to dedicate his work appropriately.¹⁰² After Somerset was ousted from power and sent to the Tower of London, Honing was removed as clerk, Mason was promoted to the Council board, and on that same day William Thomas was sworn as the new clerk of the Privy Council.¹⁰³ For Thomas, like Thomas Smith 1 before him, timing was critical for his appointment to the clerkship. His abilities as a writer made him notable, but by arriving at such a critical moment, and wisely supporting the rising John Dudley, he took full advantage of his fortunate timing and received his office.

The case of William Thomas and William Honing reiterates the important point that during the Edwardian period the clerks and clerkship were so closely tied to the Privy Council and Council politics that events within the Council largely determined what happened to the clerks. The point may seem obvious, however it demonstrates the importance of the clerkship and its proximity to and participation in the inner workings of the Council. Honing would not have lost his position had he been viewed as merely a secretary, a man without access or information. Unfortunately for Honing that proximity left him vulnerable and he lost his clerkship, however William Thomas' good timing allowed him to fill Honing's place.

Following the downfall of Protector Somerset and the ascension of John Dudley, now Duke of Northumberland, efforts were made to halt the very expensive war with Scotland and establish a peace. In May 1551 Sir Thomas Chaloner was sent as an envoy regarding disputed border lands, and remained there for several months.¹⁰⁴ From that point forward Chaloner pursued a diplomatic career, eventually becoming ambassador to France, Spain and the Netherlands, and ceased working as a Privy Council clerk. In his stead "Barnard Hampton was by theyre Lordeships admitted one of the Clerkes of the

¹⁰¹ Bindoff, III, 441; "Thomas" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁰² Bindoff, III, 441.

¹⁰³ "William Thomas was this day sworne and admitted one of the Clerks of the Counsaill.": *APC*, II, 433.

¹⁰⁴ *Diplomatic Reps.*, SC 24.

Kings Majesties most honourable Privie Counsell and sworne by Mr. Secretarye Cecill” on 24 September 1551.¹⁰⁵

Barnard Hampton, who served as clerk of the Privy Council from 1551 until his death in 1572 is a mystery. There are no records of him attending university or an Inn of Court, he never sat in Parliament, he only served abroad once (and that was after his appointment), and the few scattered references to him only occur after his appointment as a clerk of the Privy Council. Even his will only provides the names of his wife Katherine, a daughter and a niece and nephew.¹⁰⁶ He eventually owned property in Essex and Devon, but he does not appear in the heraldic visitations.¹⁰⁷ It is unfortunate that we know so little about him, but he is a perfect example of why the clerks of the Privy Council have been overlooked. It is easy to think that he must not have been important, but somehow he reached a position in court. Unfortunately we simply do not know how. We do at least know why he was appointed at that time. Barnard Hampton replaced Sir Thomas Chaloner as clerk and joined Armagil Waad and William Thomas as the final group of clerks under Edward VI.

The accession of Mary I brought about another set of changes for the Privy Council. Not only did Mary remove several Council members, she also added numerous more, the majority of whom either believed or were prepared to endure Catholicism.¹⁰⁸ The removal of some Edwardian officials included the removal of two Council clerks, Armagil Waad and William Thomas. Hampton was allowed to remain, possibly due to his knowledge of languages, including Castilian, and later served as a witness of Mary’s will.¹⁰⁹ Waad and Thomas, however, were fired, presumably due to their religious sympathies. Waad left government service under Mary, and only began to perform periodic service after the accession of Elizabeth. William Thomas, on the other hand, was implicated in Wyatt’s rebellion, charged at the King’s Bench for high treason, and executed.¹¹⁰ Waad and Thomas were replaced by two new clerks, Francis Allen and

¹⁰⁵ *APC*, III, 362.

¹⁰⁶ NA, PROB 11/54/346.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*; *APC*, IV, 685.

¹⁰⁸ See Dale Hoak, “Two revolutions in Tudor government: the formation and organization of Mary I’s Privy Council,” in Christopher Coleman, David Starkey eds., *Revolution reassessed: revisions in the history of Tudor government and administration* (Oxford, 1986), 87-115; Ann Weikel, “The Marian council revisited,” in Jennifer Loach, Robert Tittler eds., *The mid-Tudor polity, c. 1540-1560* (London, 1980), 52-73.

¹⁰⁹ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1563, 249; J. M. Stone, *The History of Mary I: Queen of England*, (London, 1901) 507-20; from a transcript in the BL Harleian MS 6949. The original is no longer extant.

¹¹⁰ NA KB 8/30.

William Smith, whose timing and fortunate placement at Mary's accession led directly to their appointment.

Francis Allen, born in 1518 or 1519, and possibly a younger son of Richard Allen of Grantham in Lincolnshire.¹¹¹ In 1540 he became a licensed public notary and tabellion in Norwich, and was described at the time as a scholar, giving rise to the speculation that he attended university, presumably Cambridge, since by 1543 he became secretary to Bishop Gardiner, the university Chancellor.¹¹² In 1543 Gardiner was a fairly powerful man at court and being his secretary provided Allen with exposure to other courtiers and possibly the king himself. Unfortunately, Gardiner was excluded from Regency Council by Henry VIII, and kept out of the government of Edward VI.¹¹³ Disagreeing with the Council on religious matters, Gardiner was placed in the Tower of London in 1548 where he remained until Mary's accession.¹¹⁴ There are no records of what Francis Allen did after the Privy Council placed his patron in the Tower, although at Gardiner's trial in 1551, he testified on Gardiner's behalf.¹¹⁵ At some point he entered the service of Princess Mary because at Edward VI's death, he was with her at Framlingham and accompanied her on her progress to London.¹¹⁶ Immediately on her accession at the end of July, he was rewarded with a "grant for life to Francis Allen, esquire, in consideration of his service to the queen.... of the office of one of the clerks of the privy council."¹¹⁷ It is likely that, due to his loyalty after Gardiner's arrest, he was given the position as a reward. There is no evidence that he had any extraordinary qualifications for the clerkship, and had Edward VI lived, he probably would not have received the post. Fortunately for Francis Allen and his patron Gardiner, Mary acceded to the throne and advanced them as a reward for service.

Mary's accession to the throne was fortunate for more than just Francis Allen and Stephen Gardiner. William Smith was rewarded, like Allen, for his services to Mary at Framlingham with a clerkship of the Privy Council. Unfortunately, due mostly to the fact that William Smith, with a name like that of William Thomas and Thomas Smith that was so exceptionally common, is virtually impossible to trace in the various records

¹¹¹ Bindoff, I, 309.

¹¹² Ibid. A tabellion is a type of scrivener, secretary or notary.

¹¹³ Thomas Rymer, *Foedera, conventiones, litterae, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliae* (London, 1816-69) XV, E30, 100-117.

¹¹⁴ "Gardiner, Stephen (c.1495x8-1555)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹¹⁵ Bindoff, I, 309.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ *APC*, IV, Appendix I, 419; *CPR, Mary*, II, 189.

that survive. According to a grant of arms to the William Smith who was clerk of the Council, he was from Hereford. If he was approximately the same age as his fellow clerks, he was born around 1520.¹¹⁸ It is likely that he attended either Oxford or Cambridge but establishing this for certain is impossible. The first certain record remaining for William Smith is a list of “subjects sworn to the Queen’s Majestie” on 16 July 1553.¹¹⁹ A fortnight later, Smith, along with Francis Allen, was made a clerk of the Privy Council.¹²⁰ Like Allen it was a reward for his services to the queen, but unfortunately there is no way of knowing how he came into her household, or any details whatsoever about his early service.¹²¹ William Smith, like Barnard Hampton, remains mostly a mystery.

Prior to 1558, the pattern set by William Paget was followed by the clerks appointed after him. They had similar backgrounds and skills, including attending university, foreign, royal and secretarial experience and occasionally notoriety. The clerkship was a temporary appointment, with lengths of service ranging from one to seven years, with the average being only four years. Regime changes led to changes in clerks and timing and personal connections, particularly during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary I, were of primary importance in securing the clerkship. Following 1558, several of these aspects of the clerkship changed. The most important change was that the clerkship became a lifetime appointment, with Hampton as the first clerk to die in office. While the clerks held additional offices, primarily handling diplomatic missions, the clerkship was no longer utilized as a stepping stone to higher office. Only one Elizabethan clerk appointee joined the Council, and that was after fifteen years as clerk and a long diplomatic career under James I. The longer terms of service allowed the clerks to hold a variety of other offices at the same time, some for financial benefit and others to correspond with their work for the Council, and all of which provided them with well-rounded careers and expertise in a variety of areas. Part of the reason why the clerkship became life-long and not temporary was that no dramatic regime changes occurred within the Privy Council. While individual Councillors rose and fell from favour, occasionally helping clerks as they did so, none held or lost complete control,

¹¹⁸ W. Harry Rylands ed., *Grantees of arms named in docquets and patents to the end of the seventeenth century* (London, 1915) 236.

¹¹⁹ *APC*, IV, Appendix II, 431.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*; Appendix I, 419.

¹²¹ *CPR, Mary*, II, 189.

effectively eliminating the clerkship as a factor in political machinations of Councillors, although this aspect of the clerkship did not disappear entirely as we will see.

Since political manoeuvring declined as a factor in securing a clerkship, other factors became more prominent. Under Elizabeth I personal and professional experience, particularly relating to key events and foreign concerns, were more important as criteria to make the clerks more striking in comparison to other potential clerkship candidates. Additionally, a personal or professional relationship with a Councillor, particularly the Principal Secretary was the most useful in securing advancement and eventually a clerkship. Despite changes in length of service and the factors that led to the availability and selection of new clerks, the significant factors that did not change were the basic background and qualifications, both of education and service, that remained true for the clerks. The same criteria filled by William Paget in 1540 were met by the last clerk appointed in 1599. Despite the changes of time, politics and necessity, the same type of men were selected to fill the office of clerk of the Privy Council throughout the Tudor period.

Until 1558, new clerks were appointed at the start of each new regime, whether it was under the Somerset and Northumberland regimes during Edward VI's reign, or under Mary I. It is interesting that each of these individuals felt it necessary to change the clerks of the Council, just as they changed members of the Privy Council itself. What is more interesting, however, is that this did not happen at the accession of Elizabeth in November 1558. Although Elizabeth changed the makeup of her Privy Council after her sister's death, she did not replace the clerks of the Council, even though she was advised to do so. Sir Nicholas Throckmorton advised Elizabeth to have as clerks Barnard Hampton, William Honing and two others.¹²² It is intriguing that he suggested Honing returning to his former position, and that both Allen and Smith be replaced, yet Elizabeth did not take his advice. Instead she chose to keep the men serving as clerks, and did not appoint a new clerk until 1571, thirteen years after her sister's death. It seems that Elizabeth's new Principal Secretary, in particular, Sir William Cecil, either did not seek to replace the Marian clerks with obvious Protestants like himself or was unable to prevail upon the queen to dismiss the incumbents.

Nine of the clerkship appointments occurred during the reign of Elizabeth I, just short of half the total number of nineteen. These appointments did not occur because of

¹²² J.E. Neale, "Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's Advice to Queen Elizabeth on Her Accession to the Throne," *EHR*, 65, (1950), 91-98.

regime change; death or absence from court (primarily due to disagreements with leading Councillors) led to vacancies within the office, with only one exception. The number of clerks serving at a time also increased from two at the outset of the reign to four at the end, with a brief period where nominally five men held the clerkship at once. These vacancies and additions allowed for more men to fill the post, but the criteria for the office focused more on key Elizabethan issues, particularly in the area of foreign policy, than political manoeuvring within the Privy Council. Spain and the Low Countries, Mary Queen of Scots and France, even Ireland and support for the Protestant cause were all areas of concern and focus for the Privy Council, and the clerks appointed during this time had both knowledge and experience related to these areas. Despite their appropriate expertise to aid in their candidacy for royal service, the clerks as always needed the support of a patron, preferably a Councillor, to gain office and the Elizabethan period is no exception. As we will see, the strongest of these ties were to the former and current Principal Secretaries, particularly William Cecil, Francis Walsingham and Thomas Smith 1, and occasionally to other leading Councillors as well. These connections, accompanied with their expertise and fortunate timing, led to these nine clerkship appointments.

By 1556 William Smith had either retired or died and no longer worked as a Privy Council clerk. In 1570 the death of Francis Allen left only Hampton as clerk. With the removal of clerks who were either appointed by or served under the Catholic Mary I, new clerks, primarily men of conspicuous Protestant belief, filled the clerkship vacancies. In this the clerks were part of a larger and inevitable trend in the 1570s of Catholic and conformist officials being replaced by Protestants. Among the new clerks were Marian exiles, a martyr's son, and the sons of men who worked under Edward VI. Edmund Tremayne, appointed a year following the death of Francis Allen, was among these clearly Protestant clerks. Tremayne was one of several sons born to Thomas Tremayne and Philippa, daughter of Roger Grenville of Stow.¹²³ Philippa Grenville was related to the Courtenay family, and was a cousin, albeit a distant one, to Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, the great-grandson of Edward IV.¹²⁴ Edmund Tremayne

¹²³ Hasler, III, 526; "Tremayne, Edmund (c.1525-1582)" in *OxfordDNB*. On his father's side, Tremayne was related to Sir Francis Warre.

¹²⁴ Edmund Tremayne's fifth great-grandfather was Hugh de Courtenay, the third great-grandfather of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon. Philippa was related, through her fourth great-grandparents, Hugh de Courtenay and Maud Beaumont, to Edward I (through Hugh) and the Plantagenets and Henry III through Maud. Edward Courtenay was an important but also a hazardous man to work for since, as a royal heir of the legitimate Plantagenet line, a potential threat to any Tudor heir, a potential husband for Elizabeth, and a

entered Courtenay's service in the autumn of 1553, just after Mary's accession, and within months he found himself imprisoned in the Tower of London.¹²⁵

Tremayne and Courtenay were implicated, along with the Princess Elizabeth, in Wyatt's rebellion and the attempted overthrow of the queen.¹²⁶ In an effort to gain evidence against Courtenay and Elizabeth, Tremayne was racked in the Tower, but gave no evidence against his master or the Princess.¹²⁷ Tremayne was held until January 1555, when he was finally released and joined Courtenay in Italy.¹²⁸ Edward Courtenay died in Padua in September 1556, after which Tremayne entered the service of Francis, the second Earl of Bedford, a Protestant exile and fellow West Country man in Venice.¹²⁹ After Elizabeth's accession, Bedford went on numerous diplomatic missions to France and Scotland and it is possible, although uncertain, that Tremayne accompanied him. In 1561 Tremayne was appointed deputy butler of Devonshire under Sir Nicholas Throckmorton likely due to Bedford's influence as Lord-lieutenant of the county and a Privy Councillor.¹³⁰ Bedford also served (from 1564-7) as warden of the East marches of Scotland, handling a variety of negotiations between Elizabeth and Mary, and later served in Wales.¹³¹ During this time it is highly probable that Tremayne remained with Bedford, since his appointment in 1561 as duchy of Lancaster receiver in nine counties would not have tied him to any one place.¹³²

Edmund Tremayne received his first royal assignment in 1569, sent by Sir William Cecil on a special mission to Ireland to report on the state of affairs there.¹³³ The appointment was probably due to experiences with Bedford in Scotland, Wales and Europe, and the support of Bedford himself, who was a close friend of Cecil. Tremayne

Protestant, he was a particular threat to the Catholic Queen Mary. See also Jasper Ridley, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1987), 52-61; Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1991), 36-40, 43.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*; *APC*, V, 144.

¹²⁶ See David M. Loades, *Two Tudor Conspiracies* (Cambridge, 1965).

¹²⁷ "Tremayne" in *OxfordDNB*. See also John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London: John Day, 1563).

¹²⁸ "Tremayne" in *OxfordDNB*; *APC*, V, 197. Tremayne was released January 18, 1555.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*; Hasler, III, 526; *APC*, V, 207. While Edmund Tremayne was in the Tower and then Italy, his brothers Andrew, Nicholas and Richard were implicated in a variety of nefarious dealings. Andrew and Nicholas (twins) were imprisoned with Sir Peter Carew on suspicion of piracy in 1555 but escaped to France. While there they were implicated (along with their brother Richard) in Anthony Kingston's plot in 1556. Richard Tremayne was actually named a traitor, but the three remained safely in France until Elizabeth's accession. After Elizabeth became Queen it appears that the Tremayne brothers returned to England. Nicholas, in particular, appeared to be a favourite of Elizabeth, and was frequently employed in carrying important dispatches between France and England. When England went to war against France, the twins joined the cavalry and Andrew led the charge against Leith in 1560. Both brothers were present at the siege of Le Havre in 1562, where both were killed.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*; Hasler, III, 526.

¹³¹ "Russell, Francis, second earl of Bedford (1526/7-1585)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹³² Hasler, III, 526.

¹³³ *Ibid.*; "Tremayne" in *OxfordDNB*.

remained in Ireland for nearly six months, during which time he frequently wrote to Cecil- who was crated Lord Burghley in 1571- about affairs there.¹³⁴ A year and a half after his return “Edmund Tremaine, esquire, was sworne and admitted by the Lord Burghley to be one of the Clerckes of the Privey Counsell.”¹³⁵ Although it is not certain that Tremayne had the formal education for such a post, his foreign experience, his work with Bedford and his proven loyalty to Elizabeth made Tremayne an ideal candidate.

Although Tremayne was qualified, he would not have been appointed if there was not a place to fill. Fortunately William Smith was no longer acting as clerk after 1566, and Francis Allen had died. The following year in 1572 Barnard Hampton, the last of the Marian clerks, died in office. The man who replaced Hampton was another gentleman who, like Tremayne, lived as an exile abroad during Mary’s reign. Robert Beale was born in 1541, educated at Coventry and possibly Cambridge and in his teenage years he went abroad to study in Strasbourg.¹³⁶ While there he lived with puritan diplomat Sir Richard Morrison.¹³⁷ Beale resided with Morrison until Morrison’s death in 1557, at which time he went to Zurich to live with John Aylmer, the future Bishop of London, until they returned to England in 1559 after Elizabeth’s accession.¹³⁸ According to Beale, Aylmer largely ignored him when they returned, but having connections to the reforming bishops was probably very useful to Beale when he arrived at court.¹³⁹

It is uncertain what Beale did for the following two years, but he presumably stayed in contact with the court if he was not actually there. In 1561 he was employed by Lord John Grey to determine the validity of the marriage of Grey’s niece and royal heiress Lady Catherine Grey to the Earl of Hertford. Beale consulted with lawyers and theologians on the continent and came to the conclusion that the marriage was valid.¹⁴⁰ His determination was overruled by Elizabeth, who was upset by the secret marriage, but Beale was not punished in any way for his actions.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ NA SP 63/29/4,12; NA SP 63/30/42, 71, 88, 99.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*; Hasler, III, 526; *APC*, VIII, 57.

¹³⁶ Hasler, I, 411-2; “Beale, Robert (1541-1601)” in *OxfordDNB*.

¹³⁷ It has been conjectured that Morrison was his maternal uncle, but there is no certain proof of that.

¹³⁸ Hasler, I, 412.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 412; “Beale” in *OxfordDNB*. Cambridge University Library, “A large discourse concerning the marriage between the earl of Hertford and the Lady Katherine Grey,” *Cambr. li.5.3*, art. 4.

¹⁴¹ Hasler, I, 412. Beale claimed later that he was never paid the promised £40 annuity for his efforts from Lord Grey and later referred to the Earl’s “pretended marriage.”

Around 1564, Beale's knowledge of Europe, and presumably also his ability to speak French and probably German and Italian, helped him get a job working for the embassy in Paris.¹⁴² In 1570 he was appointed secretary to the new ambassador, Sir Francis Walsingham, the future Privy Councillor and spy master who later became his brother-in-law.¹⁴³ While in Paris, Beale served under a variety of important courtiers, such as Sir Thomas Hoby, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and Sir Henry Norris.¹⁴⁴ More significant, however, is that he worked under Sir Thomas Smith 1, the former clerk who was now a Privy Councillor.¹⁴⁵ It was Smith who probably held the greatest influence of any of the men then in Paris, and it was likely due to that influence that in July 1572, Beale became a clerk of the Privy Council.¹⁴⁶ It was just four days after Beale swore his oath as clerk of the Council that Smith was appointed Principal Secretary, a post which he held until his death five years later. The clerks worked closely with the Principal Secretaries, like Smith, and although the Secretary did not have a "right" to appoint clerks, they presumably influenced clerkship appointments. Robert Beale was given the post to replace Barnard Hampton who had recently died, and his colleague was Edmund Tremayne, a fellow Marian exile. With Hampton's death and Beale's appointment, the Marian clerks were gone, accompanying the larger and inevitable trend of Marian officeholders being replaced by definitively Protestant Elizabethan officials.

Throughout the 1570s Mary Queen of Scots, marriage negotiations and continental religious unrest were the primary focus of the Privy Council's attention, requiring more work and an increase in the number of clerks.¹⁴⁷ In 1576 two men joined Tremayne and Beale as clerks of the Privy Council: Thomas Wilkes and Henry Cheke. While Robert Beale gained an advantageous patron through his time abroad, Thomas Wilkes was one of the clerks who gained a patron not only through his time abroad, but also through his time at university. Like Paget and Mason before him, Wilkes benefited

¹⁴² Ibid.; "Beale" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F100-F122. Throckmorton was first cousin by marriage to the queen, Hoby's half-brother, Sir Philip Hoby, was a Privy Councillor, and Norris was treated favourably by Elizabeth because his father had died for supposed treason with Anne Boleyn, and his father-in-law had treated Elizabeth well during her Marian imprisonment.

¹⁴⁵ "Beale" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁴⁶ "The othe of Robert Beale, esquire, to be one of the Clerkes of the Privy Counsell": *APC*, VIII, 106.

¹⁴⁷ See Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and foreign policy, 1558-1603* (London, 2000), 25-44; Pauline Croft, "'The state of the world is marvellously changed': England, Spain and Europe 1558-1604," in Susan Doran, Glenn Richardson eds., *Tudor England and its neighbours* (Basingstoke, 2005), 178-202; Simon L. Adams, "Elizabeth I and the sovereignty of the Netherlands 1576-1585," *TRHS*, 6th ser., 14 (2004), 309-19; Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's wars: war, government, and society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Houndmills, 2003), 54-120.

greatly from a university connection. Of Thomas Wilkes' background and early years nothing is known, and his birth date can only be approximated to about 1545.¹⁴⁸ It is actually a letter of Wilkes' written years later that tells us most of what we know about him. From 1564 to 1572 he travelled through Europe, primarily to France, Germany and Italy.¹⁴⁹ This required a sufficient amount of funding, but without knowing for certain where he was from or who his parents were, it is difficult to ascertain where the money came from.

In 1572, after concluding his travels, Wilkes attended Oxford, joining All Souls College, from which he received his BA in 1573.¹⁵⁰ While still a probationer of the college, he was summoned to Paris by Dr. Valentine Dale, a fellow of All Souls, newly appointed as ambassador.¹⁵¹ Dale was so certain that he wanted Wilkes as his secretary that he petitioned the Privy Council to write to All Souls and gain the requisite permission for Wilkes to leave the college early, which was granted.¹⁵² Dr. Dale's appointment was held up for quite some time due to lack of experience, and it is possible that Walsingham, who Dale was replacing, suggested Wilkes as a secretary since Wilkes had vast foreign experience and presumably met Walsingham on his travels.¹⁵³ While in France with Dale in April 1574 Wilkes was sent to give Elizabeth's assurances of support to Henry of Navarre and the Duc d'Alençon, who were being held by Catherine de Medici. Alençon apparently revealed Wilkes' visit to Catherine because she promptly accused Wilkes of fomenting rebellion and ordered him to leave France.¹⁵⁴ Eventually, through denial and expressions of contrition, Wilkes was allowed to return. Shortly afterward, he was sent to the Elector Palatine to convince him to send an army to aid the Huguenots in France.¹⁵⁵ Wilkes was successful, and remained with the Elector's army and the Huguenots under Condé until they made peace with Catherine in 1576.¹⁵⁶ Upon conclusion of the peace in June, Wilkes returned to England with the commendations of Condé and Alençon.¹⁵⁷ A month later he was appointed clerk of the Privy Council.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁸ "Wilkes, Sir Thomas (c.1545-1598)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Hasler, III, 619.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; *Reg. Univ. Oxon.*, III, iii, 25.

¹⁵¹ Hasler, III, 619; "Wilkes" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁵² *APC*, VIII, 133.

¹⁵³ Hasler, III, 619.

¹⁵⁴ "Wilkes" in *OxfordDNB*; *CSPF, Elizabeth, 1572-4*, 529, 538-40, 548-9, 552-4.

¹⁵⁵ "Wilkes" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *CSPF, Elizabeth, 1575-77*, 339.

Studying the clerks, particularly men like Thomas Wilkes, it is clear they needed the help of patrons. Yet patronage alone was not normally enough to ensure advancement. The pressure of Privy Council business and the sensitivity and variety of their duties required that these men be capable of the tasks before them and Wilkes proved himself capable of handling such tasks. In contrast one clerk was virtually guaranteed an office at court, regardless of his ability. Henry Cheke, born in 1548, was the son of Sir John Cheke, tutor to Edward VI and later Principal Secretary.¹⁵⁹ The elder Cheke died when Henry was only nine years old, and he was aided in his career instead by his uncle, William Cecil, later Lord Burghley and Lord Treasurer, and Sir John Mason, his step-grandfather, former clerk of the Privy Council, and Privy Councillor.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately Mason also died while Henry Cheke was young, and it was left to Burghley to look after him.

After having a tutor in his younger years, Henry Cheke went to King's College Cambridge in 1565 and after three years he was granted his MA at Burghley's request.¹⁶¹ Shortly afterward Cheke made a fortunate marriage alliance, which reflected his weighty court connections, marrying Frances, the daughter of Sir Humphrey Radcliffe.¹⁶² Her great grandfather was Henry Stafford Duke of Buckingham, her grandfather was Robert Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex and a former member of the Privy Council, and her brother was the current Earl of Sussex, also a Privy Councillor. It was a powerful alliance, particularly for a young man just out of university, with no lands or titles. This marriage brought Cheke various land holdings in Bedford and with the help of the Earl of Bedford, a friend of his father and uncle, he was elected to Parliament in 1571.¹⁶³ Cheke continued in the following years to appeal to his uncle for a position at court, possibly for financial reasons, and in 1576 he was appointed clerk of the Privy Council.¹⁶⁴ Cheke did little or nothing to merit the promotion. He was educated, but had no experience abroad or in service. The office was not entirely a sinecure, as evidence suggest he fulfilled the duties of the post on occasion. However the position seems to have meant little to

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; "This day were swourne Clarkes of the Counsell Mr. Thomas Wylkes and Mr. Henry Cheke, according to the copie of their othe remayninge in the Counsell Chest.": *APC*, IX, 50.

¹⁵⁹ Hasler, I, 596-7, 626-9; "Cheke, Henry (c.1548-1586)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁶⁰ Bindoff, III, 584.

¹⁶¹ Hasler, I, 596; "Cheke" in *OxfordDNB*; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, I, 327.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *APC*, IX, 50.

Cheke, who gave it up five years later in favour of an office with the Council of the North.

Cheke gave up his clerkship in 1581 and Tremayne died the following year. Beale and Wilkes remained in office. However, events occurred requiring additional clerks. In 1584 Beale began a series of negotiations with the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots.¹⁶⁵ His absence and the presence of only Wilkes at court to fill the clerkship led to the appointment of an additional clerk, in this case William Waad. William Waad was the son of Armagil Waad, the clerk of the Privy Council discussed above.¹⁶⁶ He is another example, like Cheke, of the Elizabethan regime's practice of rewarding men who served under Henry VIII and Edward VI. Unfortunately for William, Armagil died before he even finished his education, and he, like Cheke before him, relied on William Cecil, his father's friend, for advancement. Apparently Waad first began working for Lord Burghley sometime before 1576, after he finished his studies at Gray's Inn in 1571 and travelled on the continent.¹⁶⁷ Not long after he began working for Burghley he became secretary to Sir Amias Paulet, the resident ambassador to France.¹⁶⁸ It is clear from Paulet's letters that William Waad was still working for and reporting to Burghley.¹⁶⁹ He refers to Waad as "[your] Lordship's servant" and praises Waad repeatedly for his abilities and discretion.¹⁷⁰

Waad stayed in France until the end of 1579, during which time he travelled to Italy and Switzerland and served occasionally as a messenger between England and France.¹⁷¹ After completing his time working for Paulet, he travelled to Strasbourg to report to Burghley on the situation in Germany.¹⁷² It appears that he went back to England sometime in 1581 when he became secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham, then Principal Secretary.¹⁷³ Shortly thereafter Waad was sent abroad again, to Denmark in 1582, to the Emperor in Vienna in 1583 and to Spain in 1584 along with various other assignments.¹⁷⁴ It is clear that Waad was very much working for Walsingham and continued to hold his trust. Letters written to Walsingham show that Waad assisted in

¹⁶⁵ For example *CSP, MQS*, 1581-3, 356-7, 395-6, 467, 489, 505; *CSP, MQS*, 1586-8, 50-3, 264, 269-73.

¹⁶⁶ "Waad, Sir William (1546-1623)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Hasler, III, 560-1.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; *Diplomatic Reps.*, F132.

¹⁶⁹ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1575-7, 535-6.

¹⁷⁰ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1575-7, 481: "If [my] commendation of Mr. Wade may stand him in any stead, confesses that his honest and faithful dealing hath deserved it."

¹⁷¹ NA SP 78/1/56; NA SP 78/2/6; Hasler, III, 561; "Waad, Sir William" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁷² "Waad, Sir William" in *OxfordDNB* archive (*DNB*, LVIII, 402).

¹⁷³ "Waad, Sir William" in *OxfordDNB*, Hasler, III, 561.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; *Diplomatic Reps.*, E76, SP22.

Walsingham's information gathering on the continent.¹⁷⁵ He consistently reported back not only about his official duties, but also regarding potential informants and "inward secrets of state."¹⁷⁶ As a reward for his services both at home and abroad, William Waad was granted the office of clerk of the Privy Council. The appointment took place sometime near Midsummer 1584, during which period of time the records of the Council are missing. The official patent remains, however, and helps establish the timeline.¹⁷⁷

Waad was appointed clerk of the Council not only for his abilities but because of his ties to Walsingham and Lord Burghley. The clerks that he served with, Beale and Wilkes, also had ties to either Walsingham or Burghley. Clearly, for the clerks, ties to important men were valuable, but the most important men for them as career bureaucrats to tie themselves to were Walsingham and Burghley. This is a point that seems almost self-evident in Elizabethan history, but it is important to note that this is yet another example of that phenomenon. However, as we have already seen, Walsingham and Burghley were not the only men at court willing to assist men eager for advancement.

Following William Waad's appointment as clerk in 1584, war with Spain was closer on the horizon, requiring more work for the Privy Council and its clerks. By 1587, on the eve of the Armada, the Privy Council workload required at least two acting clerks to manage the office. However in 1587 Beale was out of favour following his participation in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and Wilkes was first working in the Low Countries and then out of favour for his criticism of Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester.¹⁷⁸ This left only William Waad as acting clerk. To ensure that the Privy Council could continue to work unhindered, two new clerks joined Waad in 1587, Anthony Ashley and Daniel Rogers. Both men had experience abroad, but more importantly, Rogers had lived in the Low Countries and Ashley had experience with navigation, both of which were critical to the forthcoming war with Spain. These vital qualifications as well as the Privy Council need for more acting clerks, led to their appointments in 1587.

¹⁷⁵ NA SP 12/148/30; NA SP 12/178/55.

¹⁷⁶ NA SP 78/5/33.

¹⁷⁷ "Grant, for life from midsummer last, for services, to William Wade, of the office of a clerk of the privy council; with an annuity of 50l., payable at the Exchequer.": *CPR, L&I* 287, 82.

¹⁷⁸ For more on these incidents and their backgrounds see Patricia Basing, "Robert Beale and the queen of Scots," *British Library Journal*, 20 (1994), 65-82; Alison Plowden, *Two queens in one isle: the deadly relationship of Elizabeth I & Mary, Queen of Scots* (Brighton, 1984), 192-3, 216-218; Jane Dunn, *Elizabeth and Mary: cousins, rivals, queens*, (London, 2003); R. B. Wernham, "The mission of Thomas Wilkes to the United Provinces in 1590," in J. H. Plumb ed., *Studies in social history: a tribute to G.M. Trevelyan*, (London, 1955), 423-55; Charles Wilson, *Queen Elizabeth and the revolt of the Netherlands* (London, 1970), 123-136; R. C. Strong, J. A. Van Dorsten, *Leicester's triumph*, (Leiden, 1964).

Anthony Ashley achieved his position with the strong support of a patron on the Privy Council. Born in 1551, Ashley was named after his father who was in the service of Sir Christopher Hatton.¹⁷⁹ Anthony Ashley completed his education at the New Inn and Middle Temple, and possibly at Oxford as well.¹⁸⁰ Like his father, he entered Hatton's service as a travelling companion of Hatton's heir, Sir William, in France in the early 1580s.¹⁸¹ It is possible that at this time he acted as Sir Francis Walsingham's agent, like William Waad, but there is no definitive proof. Sir William Hatton returned to England in 1586 to sit in Parliament, but it is unclear whether Ashley returned with him.¹⁸² At around the same time Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham, most likely looking toward the future naval conflict with Spain, requested of the Privy Council that a translation be completed of *The Mariners Mirrour*, which contained a collection of nautical charts, and Anthony Ashley was designated to carry out the project.¹⁸³ During this time Christopher Hatton was Lord Chancellor and a Privy Councillor, and it is probable that it was through Hatton's influence that "Mr. Anthony Asheley was sworne Clark of the Counsell" in March 1587.¹⁸⁴ When Ashley completed his translation of *The Mariners Mirrour* he dedicated it to Hatton, although his clerkship duties delayed its completion.¹⁸⁵

The clerk appointed with Ashley was Daniel Rogers, a man whose experience abroad nearly cost him his life. Daniel Rogers, like Henry Cheke, had a well-known father. John Rogers was a Protestant preacher who, assisted in the publication of Tyndale's Bible, held the pulpit at St. Paul's, and after imprisonment for his views, became the first Marian Martyr.¹⁸⁶ He died on 4 February 1555 in his family's presence; Daniel Rogers was seventeen at the time. After his father's death, Rogers left England to return to Wittenburg where he studied under Melancthon.¹⁸⁷ Like Beale and Tremayne, he spent Mary's reign with exiles abroad. Returning to England at Elizabeth's accession,

¹⁷⁹ Hasler, I, 354.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Ashley, Sir Anthony, baronet (1551/2-1628)," in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁸⁴ *APC*, XIV, 302.

¹⁸⁵ Anthony Ashley, Lucas Waghenaeer, *The mariners mirrour wherin First made & set fourth in diuers exact sea-charts, by that famous nauigator Luke Wagenar of Enchuisen and now fitted with necessarie additions for the use of Englishmen. Heerin also may be understood the exploits lately atchiued by the right Honorable the L. Admiral of Engla[n]d with her Maties. nauie: and some former seruices don by that worthy knight Sr. Fra: Drake*, (London, 1588).

¹⁸⁶ "Rogers, John (c.15000-1555)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁸⁷ Hasler, III, 299; "Rogers, Daniel (c.1538-1591) in *OxfordDNB*.

he proceeded to earn his bachelor and master's degrees from Oxford in 1561.¹⁸⁸ Shortly afterward he was introduced at court by a friend of his father's, Nicacius Yetsweirt, Elizabeth's secretary of the French tongue.¹⁸⁹ Rogers' knowledge of languages, particularly French, German and Dutch likely led to his post as a tutor to the sons of Sir Henry Norris, the ambassador to France.¹⁹⁰ Rogers remained in France from 1565 to 1575, the same time as two other clerks, Sir Thomas Smith 1 the Principal Secretary and Robert Beale, as well as Sir Francis Walsingham.¹⁹¹ While there he also did some unofficial government work like Beale, for Walsingham and Cecil.¹⁹²

Following his time in France, Daniel Rogers received his first official government employment as an envoy to the Netherlands from 1575 to 1577.¹⁹³ At the same time he served as secretary to the Merchant Adventurers in Antwerp, for whom his father was a chaplain in the 1530s.¹⁹⁴ The assignment extended and from 1577-8 he served as Elizabeth's envoy to negotiate a defensive agreement in Germany and the Netherlands with Sir Philip Sidney, the nephew of Elizabeth's favourite and Privy Councillor, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.¹⁹⁵ For his service he was granted an annuity by the crown of fifty pounds.¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, while travelling in Germany in 1580 he was imprisoned on the orders of Philip of Spain at Bucholtz, where he was held for four years.¹⁹⁷ It was not until 1582 that Elizabeth's government even tried to help him. Rogers wrote to Walsingham later "I am to crave your honours accustomed favour especiale in this my so hard fortune, after the long and extreme calamite suffered and trulie it is high time that some better consideration were had for my advancement."¹⁹⁸ He was finally released on ransom in 1584 and returned home. Tired of travel he used his imprisonment as an excuse to avoid working for Leicester in the Netherlands in 1585 and 1586.¹⁹⁹ The following year "Mr. Daniell Rogers was sworne of the Clerckes of her Majesties most honorable Privye Councill, appon signification of soch her Highnes'

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.; Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, III, 1273.

¹⁸⁹ "Rogers, Daniel" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.; Hasler, III, 299.

¹⁹¹ "Rogers, Daniel" in *OxfordDNB*; *Diplomatic Reps.*, F114-F128.

¹⁹² While there Rogers also developed a strong friendship with several Dutch humanists with whom he continued to correspond throughout his life. Hasler, III, 299. J. A. van Dorsten, *Poets, patrons, and professors: Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers and the Leiden humanists* (Leiden, 1962).

¹⁹³ Ibid.; "Rogers, Daniel" in *OxfordDNB*; *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC62, LC65; *APC*, IX, 374.

¹⁹⁴ Hasler, III, 299; "Rogers, Daniel" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁹⁵ *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC70, LC75, LC79.

¹⁹⁶ "Grant for life to Daniel Rogers, the Queen's servant, of an annuity of 50l, payable at the Exchequer, from Christmas last. For his service." *CPR, Elizabeth*, VII, 546.

¹⁹⁷ NA SP 81/2/6; Hasler, III, 299; *Diplomatic Reps.*, G44.

¹⁹⁸ NA SP 12/183/50.

¹⁹⁹ BL Cotton MS Galba C IV fol.364; Hasler, III, 299.

pleasure delivered unto their Lordshippes by Mr. Secretary Walsingham.”²⁰⁰ Due to his age and the difficulty of his imprisonment, it is likely that Rogers received the post in part as a reward for his service. Adding to this Roger’s language skill and years living in the Low Countries, an area of vital interest to England, strengthened his credentials for the office. The case of Rogers is significant because, although qualified and capable of performing the duties of the office, the office was primarily a display of royal gratitude and apology rather than an advancement in career.

Both Anthony Ashley and Daniel Rogers were excellent selections on the eve of the Armada. Rogers’ years living in the Netherlands and Ashley’s work on navigational charts directly aided the Council and the war effort, and although Rogers’ appointment was partly a reward following his imprisonment and Ashley’s appointment came from the help of the Lord Chancellor, both men had qualifications appropriate for the needs of the time. Following the Armada defeat in 1588, there were important personnel losses on the Privy Council. The queen’s three most dominant councillors, Lord Burghley, the Earl of Leicester, Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir Christopher Hatton all died. By 1598 younger councillors, including Burghley’s son Robert Cecil and Leicester’s step-son Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, as well as dashing figures such as Sir Walter Raleigh were at court and held the strongest influence on the aging queen. Death and court politics changed the ranks of the clerks as well. Daniel Rogers died in 1591 and Beale was away from 1593 to 1597 after arguing with Archbishop Whitgift regarding Parliamentary issues. The loss of Rogers and absence of Beale necessitated the appointment of a new clerk, Thomas Smith 2 in 1595. Just four years later Wilkes died abroad and at the same time Ashley remained out of favour following the 1597 Cadiz expedition.²⁰¹ This second series of death and absence required what was the last Elizabethan clerkship appointment of Thomas Edmondes in 1599. These final two clerks had very different careers and patrons, yet both had the same essential qualifications of all the clerks before them.

Thomas Smith 2 (not to be confused with the previous Thomas Smith, to whom he was not related) was born around 1556, at Abingdon in Berkshire.²⁰² The son and

²⁰⁰ *APC*, XV, 360.

²⁰¹ Paul E. J. Hammer, “New light on the Cadiz expedition of 1596,” *Historical Research*, 70 (1997), 182-202; Paul E. J. Hammer, “Myth-making: politics, propaganda and the capture of Cadiz in 1596,” *HJ*, 40 (1997), 621-42; Alan Haynes, “The Cadiz expedition, 1596,” *History Today*, 23 (1973), 161-9; Sir Walter Raleigh, *An abridgment of Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the world in five books, To which is added "A relation of the action at Cadiz, 1596,"* (London, 1700), pt. II, 19-25.

²⁰² “Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609),” in *OxfordDNB*.

namesake of a mayor of Abingdon, he received his education first at the local school and then at Oxford. Possibly Smith chose to follow the example of another clerk from Abingdon, John Mason, who also proceeded from Abingdon to Oxford, to a secretarial position and then to royal service. Smith matriculated at Christ Church College in 1573, and completed his BA in 1574, and his MA in 1578.²⁰³ Abingdon and Christ Church were strongly connected to Lord Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, and Smith sought to attach himself to the earl. Smith succeeded in gaining the earl's notice, and through him received the post of public orator in April 1582 and proctor in 1584. By 1589 and possibly as early as 1585-6 Smith became the secretary to Leicester's step-son, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. The connection to Essex led to Smith's election as MP in 1589 for Cricklade in Wiltshire where Giles Brydges, Lord Chandos was steward. This perhaps inaugurated Smith's contacts with the Brydges family, which ultimately resulted in his marriage to Chandos' niece.

In 1591 Thomas Smith 2 followed the earl of Essex on his expedition to Normandy, and made frequent trips to London in an effort to decrease Queen Elizabeth's anger at his master's actions. Additionally Smith tried to help gather support at Oxford for Essex to become the new university chancellor, but instead Lord Buckhurst received the office. Continuing in his role at Oxford as orator, Smith took a prominent part in Elizabeth's visit to the university in September 1592. The following year Smith was again returned to Parliament, this time for Tamworth through Essex's help, and for the next two years he acted as Essex's liaison to Antonio Perez, the Spanish exile. Soon thereafter, Thomas Smith 2's dedication to his master bore fruit. Upon rumours that Robert Beale died away from court, Essex worked to get Smith appointed as clerk of the Privy Council to replace him. Beale wrote complainingly to Robert Cecil that "his L. doethe me greate wronge" by pushing for Smith's appointment as clerk, although Beale conceded that he had "hearde well of the gentm[an]."²⁰⁴ The rumours proved false (Beale lived a further six years) but Essex successfully lobbied to have Smith granted the clerkship anyway, and by September 1595, he was a clerk of the Council.²⁰⁵ Thomas Smith 2 was fortunate to have a patron to assist him in gaining the post of clerk of the

²⁰³ Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, IV, 1381.

²⁰⁴ BL Add MS 481116 fol.339.

²⁰⁵ Although Beale was not dead, he was away from Court, having been dismissed from Court for a disagreement in Parliament with Archbishop Whitgift in 1593. Beale remained away from Court until 1597. Hasler, I, 413-4.

Privy Council. He is an excellent example of a clerk whose experience is almost entirely tied to his patron, like Anthony Ashley before him.

The final appointment in 1599 was a clerk not only with ties to several strong patrons, but also with extensive experience abroad. Thomas Edmondess, like the clerks before him, gained connections over time, yet he seems to have advanced primarily because he proved his ability to the government, particularly in the area of foreign affairs. Born in 1563, Thomas Edmondess was the son of a mayor of Plymouth, just as Thomas Smith 2 was the son of a mayor of Abingdon.²⁰⁶ He first appears in historical records as secretary to Sir Edward Stafford, the resident ambassador in France in 1583, although how he acquired the post is unknown.²⁰⁷ Thomas Edmondess continued to serve Stafford until the embassy was complete in April 1589. Sir Edward Stafford worked extensively with Walsingham at court in relaying information and Edmondess probably aided him in these efforts as part of his work.²⁰⁸ Immediately following the embassy he returned to England and assisted Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's spy master, in making ciphers.²⁰⁹

Edmondess contact with Walsingham was short-lived, as Walsingham died the following year. It is possible that Thomas Edmondess began to work for Sir Robert Cecil who fulfilled the duties of Principal Secretary after Walsingham's death, and it was Cecil who secured for Edmondess the appointment as secretary to Sir Henry Unton, the new ambassador to France, in June 1591.²¹⁰ His earlier time in France and proven ability, most likely aided in the appointment. Edmondess spent the next eight years in France in a variety of capacities, including secretary, agent, special ambassador, and chargé d'affaires.²¹¹ Unton was not in France for much of this time, and Edmondess had the authority through these posts to act independently. In this circumstance, he corresponded closely with the court, and likely handled intelligence gathering for the

²⁰⁶ BL Add MS 4244 f17.

²⁰⁷ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F142, F95. Possibly his father, as mayor of Plymouth, had contact with Charles Lord Howard of Effingham, the future Lord Admiral, and Stafford's brother-in-law, but this is simply conjecture.

²⁰⁸ See J.E. Neale, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford," *EHR*, 44 (1929), 203-219; also Mitchell Leimon and Geoffrey Parker, "Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy: The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford Reconsidered," *EHR*, 111 (1996) 1134-1158. Tremayne had the opportunity to meet a variety of people from the court while in France, including Sir Philip Sidney, Edward Wotton, and the clerk William Waad. Presumably Edmondess worked in some intelligence capacity while in France and thereby came in contact with Walsingham, possibly through William Waad, but this is not certain.

²⁰⁹ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1589, i, 198.

²¹⁰ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F158, F98.

²¹¹ *Diplomatic Reps*, F158, F160, F164, F167, F170.

region.²¹² Probably as a reward for his good service, he was appointed secretary of the French Tongue in May 1596, and when he returned to England temporarily in April 1598 the queen received him with special favour.²¹³ Thomas Edmondson came into contact with a number of important people during his time in France, including Sir Thomas Wilkes, clerk of the Privy Council, who was in France as special ambassador in 1593 and who returned with Robert Cecil in 1598.²¹⁴ Wilkes died while on this second embassy to France. Wilkes had become a diplomatic expert, and due to his similar skills in this area to that of Thomas Edmondson, Wilkes replaced him as clerk of the Privy Council the following year.²¹⁵

The clerks of the Privy Council had a wide variety of experiences and qualifications that led to their appointments. It is difficult when only looking at the men individually to see the similarities between them, and yet a number of striking similarities, and some fascinating differences appear. When analyzing their connections, their education, their service at home and abroad, their patrons and the circumstances that led to their appointment, some very interesting conclusions can be drawn that help explain the general qualifications needed in order to become a clerk of the Privy Council.

A key factor for all of the clerks was the connections they established at court. This was not a situation specific to them – patronage ties were common and necessary at court for everyone who hoped for position and advancement from the crown and Privy Council. Yet for men who had only their skills to recommend them, like the clerks, connections were vital to their careers. In their later lives the connections came through their service and patrons, but when first starting their careers, they needed someone with either influence or position to help them get their first employment. Some clerks had family connections. Edmund Tremayne was distantly related to Edward Courtenay Earl of Devon, who gave him his job in his household, thereby placing him at court. Henry Cheke and William Waad had the advantage of fathers in royal service, Cheke having the added advantage of an extremely powerful uncle, William Cecil, who helped establish him in service as well. These men were the exception rather than the rule, however. Establishing strong ties at court was difficult. Some other clerks had ties to powerful men, but these were weaker. Anthony Ashley's father was in the service of Sir

²¹² Ibid.; "Edmondson, Sir Thomas (d.1639)" in *OxfordDNB*. He also completed such assignments as arranging a conference in the Netherlands, and acted as a commissioner at Boulogne.

²¹³ NA SP 12/257/86; "Edmondson" in *OxfordDNB*.

²¹⁴ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F159-171, F99-101.

²¹⁵ "This daie Thomas Edmondson, esquire, was by her Majesty's commandement sworne one of the Clerks of the Councell Extraordinarie." *APC*, XXIX, Appendix, 740.

Christopher Hatton, who later employed him, and Daniel Rogers' father was close friends to Nicacius Yetsweirt, Elizabeth's secretary of the French tongue.

A few clerks wisely saw the advantages available in marrying a woman of noble birth or with court connections in order to enhance their position. While most of the influential marriages that the various clerks made followed their appointment, a few men made advantageous marriages beforehand. In 1569, Henry Cheke married Frances Radcliffe, the daughter of Sir Humphrey Radcliffe, who was the son (by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Stafford Duke of Buckingham) of Robert Radcliffe, Lord Fitwalter and Earl of Sussex, who was a member of the Privy Council. This was seven years before Cheke's appointment as clerk in 1576. Both John Mason and Daniel Rogers made advantageous matches just prior to their appointments. Mason's wife, Elizabeth Isley was a distant relative of John Dudley, then Viscount Lisle and later Duke of Northumberland, and Rogers' wife, Susan Yetswiert, was the daughter of Nicasius Yetswiert, his father's friend and Elizabeth I's French secretary.

Although these types of connections were useful, they were also more tenuous. Yet they certainly gave the men an advantage over other clerks who had no connections. Because these men were not noble and could therefore not have the right to a place at court, they were forced to rely on these types of connections for their early careers. Additionally, because these men were not born gentlemen, they had to work hard to merit a position. It is important to remember that these men were essentially unknown. Indeed, John Mason was illegitimate. Thomas Edmondes and Thomas Smith 2 had fathers who were mayors of provincial towns, and Thomas Smith 1's father was a sheriff, but even this did not establish these men as gentlemen. The way that the clerks gained the status as gentlemen while at the same time acquiring the training that they needed for royal service, was to attend university.

Of the clerks most attended university, although lack of records means that attendance cannot be confirmed for five clerks. A university education provided numerous advantages. It trained the men appropriately in languages and writing skills, and gave them the status of scholars and gentlemen.²¹⁶ As Sir Thomas Smith 1 stated,

²¹⁶ "For those in the half world of yeomen, agriculture and trade, the decision whether to become a gentleman or not was one which affected the future life-chances of a family. At issue was a question status rather than power though of course an acceptable social status did mean the general opening of possibilities in politics and elsewhere... Several ways were open by which this could be achieved. The army was one route, the court another, but for most a year or two at the university and the Inns of Court became the cheapest and the easiest route." Hugh Kearney, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Universities and Society in Pre-Industrial Britain 1500-1700* (London, 1970), 26-27. See also Mark A. Curtis, *Oxford and*

As for gentlemen, they be made good cheap in England. For whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, who studieth in the universities who professeth liberal sciences, and to be short, who can live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master, for that is the title which men give to esquires and other gentlemen..²¹⁷

Additionally, attending university provided an opportunity to develop contacts with men at court. William Paget, for instance, was supported at Cambridge by Thomas Boleyn and, after completing his degree, he entered the household of the master of the college, Bishop Stephen Gardiner. Thomas Smith² made a key connection at university. He attended Christ Church, Oxford, which was closely tied to the Earl of Leicester, and it was through Leicester that Smith received posts in the university and a position with the young Earl of Essex, Leicester's nephew. These were the types of connections that these young men aspired to in order to start them on the road to advancement at court.

Some of the clerks gained the additional advantage of going abroad to study. William Paget and John Mason both studied in Paris, while others went as far as Zurich, Wittenberg, Strasbourg and Padua. Studying on the continent not only provided these men with additional skills in languages, but gave them the opportunity to expand their circle of contacts on the continent and gain some first hand experience in continental politics and culture. These experiences were important because it helped prepare the clerks for positions abroad. Of the all the clerks of the Privy Council, approximately half of them had significant overseas experience before they became clerks. The extent of these experiences varied. John Mason travelled through France, Spain and Italy gathering news for the Privy Council and eventually gained a post in Spain. William Waad gained a position in France, and while there completed additional embassies and missions that took him to Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Denmark and Vienna. Other clerks simply travelled on their own, like Thomas Wilkes, or confined their experiences to a single country like William Thomas in Italy, but all of these experiences increased their qualifications for work at the royal court, or at embassies throughout the world. When they later served as clerks, many continued their work overseas, becoming experts in their field and invaluable to the Privy Council.

Of course, not all of the clerks spent time overseas. Many concentrated on gaining positions in England that enabled them to stay in close physical proximity to the

Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between the English Universities and English Society (Oxford, 1959).

²¹⁷ Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, edited by Mary Dewar (Cambridge, 1982) 71-2.

court. The most common post that the clerks gained, either at home or abroad, was as a secretary to an influential official. Like the variety of overseas experiences, the usefulness of these posts varied, but at the very least it provided these men with additional training and the opportunity to come into contact with additional courtiers. Thomas Edmondes served as secretary to both Sir Edward Stafford and Sir Henry Unton in France, while William Paget had the more prestigious post of secretary to both Queen Jane Seymour and Queen Anne of Cleves, holding the second post immediately prior to his appointment as clerk of the Privy Council.

Certainly secretarial positions held value, but so did other positions, particularly positions within the court itself, even if those posts were relatively minor. William Honing, for instance, had his first court employment as Serjeant of the Acatry, handling fish and game for the royal household. Others achieved more lucrative and visible posts. Both William Paget and William Honing were clerks of the Signet, and John Mason and Thomas Edmondes were appointed secretary for the French Tongue. All of these posts had the value of a permanent place at the court, and the possibility of interaction with members of the Privy Council or the monarch, but also proved that they could perform important jobs well. Coincidentally, of the four men who were clerks of the Signet or secretaries of the French Tongue, three eventually became Privy Councillors. These jobs were valuable, not only because it provided training, but primarily because it led to close and continual interaction with the Principal Secretaries, like Walsingham and Burghley, who played a large role in advancing these men at court. Some of the clerks, however, gained notice in jobs that were not as closely involved with the court. Both Thomas Smiths held positions at universities, and Thomas Chaloner and William Thomas were writers. John Mason was even an ordained priest, although he did not follow that vocation long. Although these positions were probably less valuable than positions at court or abroad, it brought them to the notice of the court, which was the most important aspect of any of these appointments.

It is important to quickly interject a note on what positions these clerks did not hold. Not a single clerk of the Privy Council was a soldier. Thomas Wilkes accompanied an army once, but that was the only vaguely military appointment that any clerk held. Also, of the nineteen clerks, only two had experience in Parliament before becoming clerks. These were Henry Cheke and Thomas Smith². Although eventually the clerks took part periodically in military ventures, several sat for Parliament, and at

least two became clerks of the Parliament, this was not the type of experience that they gained before becoming clerks of the Privy Council.

Even with all of the experience these men gained in their variety of positions and through their education both at home and abroad, it was not possible for them to gain their positions as clerks without a powerful patron to assist them. Without someone with influence at court to put their name forward for the position, none of these men would have become clerks of the Privy Council. These patrons, like every other aspect of the clerks' careers, varied in terms of their status and position at court. Many of the clerks eventually had Privy Councillors as patrons, that being the ideal situation. Men like Walsingham, Burghley, Cromwell, Gardiner and others helped these men advance. Others were helped by ambassadors or noblemen whom they worked under. William Honing, for example, had two patrons, Thomas Wriothesley and Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London. Wriothesley was a Privy Councillor, and Honing served as Bonner's secretary in France when Bonner was the resident ambassador. Armagil Waad was helped at first by Sir Richard Gresham, a gentleman at court who purchased land near his birthplace, and was later advanced by Lord Henry Mautravers, whom he served in Calais. Again, not every patron was as helpful as others were, but they were the key to gaining a position at court.

Of course being tied to a patron could prove hazardous. John Mason, Edmund Tremayne and Francis Allen watched their patrons be incarcerated in the Tower of London. Mason and Tremayne had the misfortune of joining them there. Others like William Paget, skilfully switched allegiances as the situation suited in order to survive. Yet conversely Edmund Tremayne was so devoted to his patron the Earl of Bedford that he named his first son after him. Devotion itself served some of the clerks very well. Francis Allen and William Smith were so devoted to Princess Mary that, upon her accession, she appointed them clerks of the Council in gratitude. The situation of Allen and William Smith is similar to that of Rogers and Cheke who acquired their clerkship as a reward or gift. The rarest reason for a man being appointed clerk of the Privy Council was as a reward for service, or essentially a way to grant the man an annuity from the crown. Daniel Rogers was appointed clerk very late in life, and although he filled the duties of the office for a time, the appointment also served as a reward from the queen in recompense for being left by the government in a jail in Germany for four years while on the queen's errand. Another example is Henry Cheke. Although he had the qualification of education, he was essentially gifted the clerkship by his uncle William Cecil. Daniel

Rogers worked for years before becoming clerk, while essentially Henry Cheke did not work for it at all. These type of circumstances were abnormal, but reflect the fact that advancement in office and at court was uncertain.

Equally fickle yet very important was the matter of timing. As mentioned before, Francis Allen and William Smith were with Princess Mary at Framlingham just prior to her accession to the throne. Considering the sweeping changes that Mary instituted, including dismissing two clerks of the Privy Council, Allen and Smith were fortunate, as was Thomas Smith 1. He became secretary to Edward Seymour the Duke of Somerset directly after the accession of Somerset's nephew Edward VI to the throne, and just as Somerset consolidated his position as Lord Protector, Thomas Smith 1 became a clerk of the Privy Council and almost immediately promoted to the Council board itself. William Thomas was also fortunate in attaching himself to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick just before Warwick seized control of the king and Privy Council from Somerset and became Duke of Northumberland. These men still had all the necessary qualifications for being a clerk of the Privy Council, but working for the right person at the perfect moment secured them their positions. What made the moment right was not just a change in regime. Just as important was that there was, for whatever reason, a clerkship to be filled at that time. Francis Allen and William Smith were advanced because Mary removed the clerks who had served under Edward VI. Most of the Elizabethan clerks advanced because another clerk died. For either reason and others mentioned above, there was a clerkship vacancy at that time and, because they had a powerful patron and the necessary qualifications, their patron was able to exert his influence to place them in the available slot.

It is important to reiterate that, although one clerk was replaced by another, this change did not interrupt the work of the clerks or the Privy Council. A senior clerk always remained to continue the work forward, acting as a type of institutional memory and eliminating any difficulties arising from the change from clerk to clerk. Throughout the history of the Tudor clerkship the circumstance of at least one clerk remaining with experience in the office continued, even when regimes changed, and the practice continued into the Stuart period. While for the most part this was the result of circumstance and not a conscious decision by the monarch or Privy Council, it enabled work to continue smoothly and without interruption.

The continuity of clerkship knowledge is similar to the continuity of clerk qualifications. From William Paget in 1540 to Thomas Edmondson in 1599, the clerks

had the same basic qualifications of education and professional experience, and their progression to the clerkship had similar characteristics of timing, patronage and specialized knowledge. The precedent set by Paget in all of these areas is visible in the lives and appointments of the clerks who followed, most particularly those clerks, like Edmondes, who eventually joined the Privy Council. Although the temporary nature of the office and the relative importance of timing, connections and work experience changed over time, the essentials of Paget's example remained.

The similar backgrounds and circumstances of appointments elucidate several important aspects of the office of clerk of the Privy Council. Primarily, the office was as subject to the tenuousness of timing, events and patronage ties as the Council itself, which is most clear in the latter Henrician and Edwardian periods. This was primarily due to the clerks' proximity to power, and knowledge of and involvement in, key events that affected the Council and them individually. The clerks' participation in events, whether voluntary or not, reiterates the importance of their education and work experience. Their knowledge of law and languages gained at university along with their experience, both personal and diplomatic, in foreign countries, made them superb candidates for the clerkship, not because these qualities made them look more intelligent or hardworking, but because their skills would be put to use by the Privy Council as part of their office as events unfolded. Had the clerks worked merely as stenographers or secretaries their work experience would have been irrelevant and the position could have been filled by any Oxford or Cambridge graduate. The participation in events and proximity to power of the office itself required the selection of multi-talented clerks, and the importance of their selection and placement is reiterated by the change of clerks after a change of regime.

Finally, the office of clerk of the Privy Council was never intended to be a solitary office. Once again the example of William Paget reiterates this. Just a year after becoming clerk the Privy Council sent him on a diplomatic mission, despite the fact that, as clerk, he needed to be with the Council. As time passed and more clerks worked simultaneously the amount of additional offices and diplomatic missions filled by the clerks increased. The office was never stagnant, nor did it merely consist of keeping a record. From the first appointment to the last, the clerks of the Privy Council worked in numerous capacities both at home and abroad on behalf of the Council and to serve their own interests. The offices they held and the work they did will be discussed later.

Before proceeding to that discussion the core functions of the clerkship as a secretarial position must be established.

CHAPTER TWO

WORK IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

The clerkship of the Privy Council was by no means a sinecure: the office was demanding, and the men appointed needed the skills and experiences they acquired before their appointment in order to perform their duties effectively. The office of clerk of the Council had an interesting mix of fluidity and routine in both duties and personnel, and over time a set of standard responsibilities and procedures developed. The primary duty of the clerks was to keep the Council register, yet their role hardly stopped there. They performed a variety of different duties which principally served to aid the Privy Council in its functions and handling of daily business. These were the routine functions of the clerks who at any particular time attended to the Council, and yet the Privy Council, in response to problems that arose, changed aspects of the office to suit the needs both of the Council and the clerks. A variety of changes, instituted throughout the Tudor period, related both to the men in the office and the duties and procedures of the office. These ranged from an increase in the number of clerks and their service and salaries, to details of recording letters in the register and making copies of register entries. While not drastic, these changes demonstrate that the clerkship as an office continued to evolve throughout the sixteenth century.

The basic duties performed by the clerks were straightforward. Their most important responsibility was the Privy Council register, which evolved as much as the clerkship did. An examination of the register's characteristics, from its format to its contents, reveal a great deal of information regarding how the clerks performed this duty. Beyond the register, they handled correspondence, ensured appropriate attendance of outside individuals at Council meetings, reported to the Council in private suits, examined individuals and paid others. The clerk attendant on the Council performed the duties of the office, which also involved acting as a type of institutional memory for the Council, and passing on information on the current matters before the Council to the next serving clerk. These tasks appear mundane, but they ensured the Privy Council functioned, and work of the government continued unhindered, from month to month and clerk to clerk.

Privy Council clerk Sir Thomas Wilkes explained the circumstances of both the clerkship and its duties in his treatise regarding the office of a councillor:

In the later end of the Rigne of King Hen. the 8th, the Authoritie of this counsell was established by commission under the Great Seale of England... And then established the Office of the Clerke of the Counsell, to the end that Acts and Records might be kept of their doings and consultacons, for the benefitt of the Kings service, commoditie of his Subiects whose causes should come before them, and discharge of themselves in the course of their proceedings.¹

The Privy Council further defined the primary role of the clerk of the Council in the official appointment of William Paget to that position: “that ther shold be a Clerke, attendant upon the sayde Counsell, to write, enter, and regester all such decrees, determinations, letters and other such things as he should be appointed to enter in a booke.”² This register acted as a minute book of the business of the Council, used for reference and to establish precedents. Twenty-six extant volumes of the registers are preserved in the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) at Kew.³

Historians have raised questions over the years about the volumes themselves: whether the volumes constitute “rough” or “fair” copies and, indeed how they were created by the clerks.⁴ The designation of “fair” describes the volumes well as copies of the original registers, re-written in clearer handwriting, with mistakes removed almost entirely. For these volumes it appears that the clerk in attendance on the Council kept notes of each meeting as they occurred, and afterward wrote out the determinations in full in the register. The “rough” volumes contain incomplete entries, or entries clearly written speedily and with irregular handwriting, as if entries were written into the register during the meetings. Fortunately most of what survive at the National Archives under PC 2/1-26 are “fair” volumes, easy to read and fairly complete.

The register was a bound book, purchased specifically for that purpose, with only occasional inclusions inserted. The clerks noted the costs of these books and other supplies in the volumes themselves, when the Privy Council ordered the Treasurer of the

¹ BL Stowe MS 296, fol.11.

² NA PC 2/1/1.

³ Similar records were kept by the Clerks of the Parliament. For more see Andrew Thrush, “The House of Lords' record repository and the Clerk of the Parliament House: a Tudor achievement,” *Parliamentary History*, 21 (2002), 367-73; G. R. Elton, “The rolls of parliament, 1449-154,” *HJ*, 22 (1979), 1-29; Maurice F. Bond, “Clerks of the parliaments, 1509-1953,” *EHR*, 73 (1958), 78-85; Maurice F. Bond, “The Formation of the Archives of Parliament, 1497-1691,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 1 (1957), 151-8.

⁴ A. F. Pollard, “The lords' journals and the privy council register,” *EHR*, 30 (1915), 304; E. R. Adair, “The Privy Council Registers,” in *EHR*, 30 (1915), 698-704; “The Rough Copies of the Privy Council Register,” in *EHR*, 38 (1923), 410-422.

Chamber to pay the clerks for these purchases.⁵ For example, on 4 April 1547 a “warrante was addressed to Sir William Cavendishe, Treasurer of the Chambre, for payment of the summes following: ...and to the Clerkes of the Counsaill for paper and ynke and other necessaries expended in writing, for oone quarter of a year.”⁶ Presumably the Treasurer paid clerks for the purchase of the “fair” copy books as well, although the records in the register do not make this clear either way. The registers extant in the National Archives were not the only records of the Privy Council. Unfortunately some registers did not survive the fire at Whitehall in 1698, leaving gaps in the timeline.⁷ The remaining registers survive in their original state and also in a modern printed version known as the *Acts of the Privy Council*.⁸ The printed version does not however portray the style formats or the character of the volumes, although the editor gives a brief explanation in the prefaces of each volume.⁹

The registers show signs of multiple clerks contributing to their contents, clearly visible in the various handwriting styles, from formal and secretarial hands to rushed and disordered scrawl. The numerous differences in samples and styles make establishing a particular clerk’s contribution difficult, but also reflects the continuous changes that occurred as the record grew. Although some volumes are untidy, several volumes stand out for their neatness and formal appearance, and are considered some of the “fair” volumes. Volumes nine through eleven, but particularly volume ten, and additionally volume eighteen are all neatly written with few corrections and a consistent style. Most of the other volumes, however, appear more chaotic in their format, with handwriting changing from neat and orderly to fast and abrupt as the entries progress. For example, the entry for 30 October 1540 is orderly, while the following entry is much more unruly. The same is true for the entries 5 and 6 November in the same year.¹⁰ Through signs like this in the register, we can guess when the clerks were particularly busy or rushed, or

⁵ *APC*, III, 107; XVII, 95; XXIV, 561.

⁶ *APC*, II, 80-1. For further examples from 1547 to 1549 see *APC*, II, 102, 135, 156, 179, 218, 224, 240, 277, 297-8.

⁷ These gaps are from 22 July 1543 – 31 January 1547; 12 May 1559 – 10 January 1562; 2 May 1567 – 24 May 1570; 26 June 1582 – 19 February 1586; 21 April 1599 – 23 January 1600; 7 December 1600 past 1603.

⁸ *Acts of the Privy Council of England*; New Series (London, 1890-1964). The years 1540-2 are covered in Harris Nicolas ed., *Proceedings and ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, (London, 1834-1837).

⁹ For more on record keeping see Vanessa Harding, “From compact city to complex metropolis: records for the history of London 1500-1720” in M. V. Roberts ed., *Archives and the metropolis* (London, 1998), 86-92; W. N. Sainsbury ed., “Documents on the state paper office,” in *Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*, 30, Appendix (1869), 212-93; Anon, “Calendar of documents relating to the history of the State Paper office to 1800,” *Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*, 30 (1868).

¹⁰ NA PC 2/1, 30 and 31 October 1540, 5 and 6 November 1540.

even nervous. A rather funny example is the first entry by John Mason on 28 September 1541 when he recorded his appointment as William Paget's temporary replacement. He made four mistakes within the first paragraph, and forgot to include his own surname, which he added in later.¹¹

Despite these little errors and the occasional chaos evident in the writing, a general format quickly developed for register entries. In the beginning, almost every page was folded into four columns lengthwise, with the folds acting as margins. Occasionally, the pages were unfolded or folded in half, but this occurred more rarely. The clerks utilized these margins to keep the entries relatively uniform. The clerks included in each entry the date, the location of the Privy Council meeting and the names of those in attendance. Robert Beale explained that the "Clercks of the Councell keepe a perfect booke of the L[ord]s' sittinges, of the place, daye and number and likewise of their l[ett]res signed..."¹² Additionally small paragraphs summarised the business conducted. The most common format that appears in the registers, hereafter referred to as Style A, had a centred heading of the date and place followed by the paragraphs, indented to the second margin. This style is dominant through the first eleven volumes, after which time another style began to appear more and more. This style, Style B, also had the paragraphs indented to the second margin, but the information of date, place and attendances were recorded within the first quarter of the page. Both styles appear from volume twelve onwards, with Style B becoming more common by volume fifteen and continuing to appear with approximately the same frequency as Style A throughout the rest of the volumes.¹³

Because of the continuous shift back and forth between the two styles, it appears each clerk contributed to the register in whatever format he preferred, so long as the entry included all pertinent information. Only two distinct departures from these formats occurred. The first was that on rare occasions, and mostly only in the early registers, some entries include only the date and names of those attending and nothing else. This occurred in the early days of November 1540, for example, but this rare practice quickly disappears.¹⁴ The second departure occurred mostly in the latter end of 1548 and the

¹¹ NA PC 2/1, 28 September 1541.

¹² Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth, I*, Appendix, (Oxford, 1925), 426.

¹³ An example of Style A and Style B is included in the appendix.

¹⁴ NA PC 2/1, 8-11 November 1540.

first half of 1549.¹⁵ The entries in this period are brief and vague, and on each Sunday a new page is begun, regardless of the position of the last entry. The entries began to switch back to a more standard format in September 1549, after which time the Sunday entry system disappears.¹⁶ Despite these departures from standard format styles, the clerks utilized similar styles and had the freedom to choose between them.

Beyond the styles created by the clerks, other format concerns appear in the registers. The presence of signatures, marginal marks, gaps within paragraphs and inserted documents all occur at varying times in the records. The least common of these occurrences are signatures. Only rarely did Privy Councillors sign the registers, and so the presence of signatures at the end of an entry adds significance. For instance, in the first months after Edward VI became king, Councillors frequently signed entries, implying the necessity of the members to indicate their agreements with the day's decisions and to cement the authority of the Privy Council itself. Similarly, in the summer of 1550, the signatures of the Privy Council occur after the entries for virtually every meeting.¹⁷ The presence of signatures during these times seems to denote the need for a confirmation of authority, even in the record books. Their appearance also indicates a practice held by the clerks. We know the Council renewed the clerks' entries the following day by the Council. This practice was confirmed in Sir Julius Caesar's memorandum in 1625. He wrote "that all orders.... of Councell decreet at one sitting, bee read at the Board at the next sitting, to receive approbation, and avoyd errors, and mistakinge, etc."¹⁸ This is confirmed by the presence of signatures at the end of an entry clearly written after the following day's entry. This is obvious in entries such as 7 June 1547, because a lack of space required the signatures to overlap the next entry.¹⁹

These scribal practices show that these were working volumes. Although the "fair" copies were neatly written out, this does not mean they were set aside never to be used again, or that they are in a perfect form. The presence of markings, gaps, and insertions help us see the process of record making. The clerks included a variety of marks, most of which signified the end of an entry or noted the type of information

¹⁵ NA PC 2/2. The reason for this is unknown. Armagil Waad, William Honing and Thomas Chaloner were all at court at the time, so any could have begun this new style format. Although religious and politically significant events such as the Interim of Augsburg and the incarceration of Stephen Gardiner Bishop of Winchester in the Tower occurred at this time, neither event likely caused the change to a Sunday oriented entry format.

¹⁶ NA PC 2/2, 2 September 1549.

¹⁷ NA PC 2/4, the entries for 8,10, and 13 June and 8,11,13,15 and 19 July 1550.

¹⁸ NA SP 16/8/81, 13 October 1625.

¹⁹ NA PC 2/2, 7 June 1547.

included. For example hash marks which appear in some volumes, particularly in the second and third registers in Edward VI's reign, either filled the empty space between paragraphs or at the bottom of pages, presumably designating a complete entry and preventing additions.²⁰ Possibly this occurred due to an abundance of caution during the turbulent government changes in Edward VI's reign, and shows that events in government affected even small details of the clerkship. Other markings appear in the left margin through numerous volumes. These marks vary, from those resembling a large four, to those resembling clover or the suit of clubs on a set of face cards. Additionally plus signs, the letter x, a paragraph notation and squiggly lines appear. We do not know what all of these signs mean, but the meanings of some, like the paragraph symbol are fairly clear. Others can be deduced by simply noting what they appeared next to. The large four symbol signified a letter to be written, while the clover symbol signified a warrant to be issued.²¹ These marks likely helped the clerks and Privy Councillors locate information. Since the register was intended "to remaine alwaies as a leeger, aswell for dischargin of the said Counsellors, touching such things as shold pass, from tyme to tyme, as also for memoriall unto them, of their owne proceedings", the markings assisted the clerks in confirming for the Council what work they ordered, or clarify how a situation was handled in the past.²² Although simple devices, the marks helped the clerks and the Privy Council to do their job more effectively.

The marks acted as additions to help the clerks, yet gaps left by the clerks appear in the same records. These gaps show where information was withheld, and is almost always the absence of a name, date or amount.²³ The reason for this seems fairly clear: apparently the Council had not decided at the time of the meeting the details of a particular order, and after the decision was made, the clerk failed to record the information in the space provided for it. We do not know how often the practice of leaving gaps in an entry occurred, because presumably the clerks filled some of those gaps with the necessary information as intended, but the gaps left behind seem to indicate the practice was common. The gaps allowed a means of inserting information at a later date, yet one practice allowed for the inclusion of information later: the insertion of entire documents into the register. This happened occasionally, and some volumes,

²⁰ NA PC 2/2 and 2/3. For example see NA PC 2/2 2 September 1549.

²¹ For particularly good examples of this phenomenon, see NA PC 2/4.

²² NA PC 2/1/1.

²³ For example see NA PC 2/2, 2 September 1549.

such as volume twelve, are particularly good examples of this practice.²⁴ That volume holds inserted documents next to entries in February, April and July.²⁵ These are mostly additional notes or letters deemed important enough to include. On one striking occasion, documents inserted at a particular date were from a variety of years. The entry for 12 April 1598 includes inserted notes from 9 July 1557, 17 Mar 1557, 16 Aug 1590, 11 Sept 1593, 9 Nov 1595, and 28 April 1597.²⁶ The addition of documents to the register is fairly rare, yet important as evidently the clerks felt some documents required preservation and inclusion, either for their own merit, or to clarify a situation discussed in the registers. All of these additions and changes to the register show it was not just a minute book, but a living record of the Privy Council, and it was viewed as such by the clerks in charge of it.

The official record contains vast amounts of information, both in the original entries and in the documents included in the registers. These include instructions for ambassadors, letters to rulers, warrants for payments, grants and patents, and numerous other types of official correspondence, all of which the clerks handled. Although the registers do not contain the actual letters written, they provide the content of these documents. They also show the type of issues the Privy Council dealt with at a given time, which would be harder to trace through letters and state papers. However, there are many important things the registers do not contain. As noted by virtually every Privy Council historian, the registers do not mention debates, or the opinions of individual councillors, only the final decisions of the Council, frustrating historians forced to search through private papers for a clue as to what happened behind the closed doors of the Privy Council chamber.

The registers also provide little information on many matters of vital national interest, such as foreign policy or treason plots, because in some rare cases the clerks were kept out of the room, and so no record exists.²⁷ Sir Julius Caesar explained “the Clerke of the Counsell attendant is to bee present at all meetings, and attend the Board dureing the sitting of the Counsell, unless the Lords uppon hundling of any private busines of importance shall find cause to have none present but those of their owne

²⁴ NA PC 2/13.

²⁵ Inserted documents NA PC 2/12, 15 February 1578 (fols 399-402), 13 July 1579, 5 and 10 April 1580. NA PC 2/13 has numerous insertions.

²⁶ NA PC 2/23, 12 April 1598.

²⁷ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity*, (Cambridge, 1998), 10-11; Michael Pulman, *The Elizabethan Privy Council in the 1570s*, (Berkeley, 1971) 52.

body.”²⁸ Although it is clear this occasionally occurred, proof is difficult to find, simply because the clerks did not record when they were kept out of the room. However, other surviving records confirmed this occurred:

The Queen thereupon summoned the whole of the Council to again give their opinion with regard to the marriage. They met many times... without stirring from the room, having sent the clerks away, which, as I have told your Majesty, is very rarely done, and only when something very secret and important is being discussed.²⁹

This also occurred in June 1541, and in the weeks prior to the death of Edward VI.³⁰ Information on these private meetings is not the only thing lacking from the registers. Interestingly, the attendance of the clerks themselves is not recorded.³¹ Although their signatures occasionally appear at the beginning of a volume or the end of an entry, the registers do not provide details of what clerk attended the Council and when.³² Even a cursory handwriting examination shows that in each volume multiple hands contributed to the register, and as clerks rarely signed entries they completed, establishing their writing is difficult. Additionally clerks and assistants aided in the writing of Council and personal letters, further complicating the issue. Mark Taviner in his doctoral dissertation “Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity” created a chronology circa 1588 of clerk attendance based on patents and the handwriting of register entries.³³ While completing such a task for a limited time period is possible, as demonstrated by Taviner, the various styles each man employed in the registers and personal letters indicate that handwriting conclusions are problematic. Although this makes establishing attendance on the Council difficult, it is also a blessing since some clerks, Robert Beale in particular, had atrocious and nearly illegible handwriting.

The registers have frustrated historians because they do not focus on the working operations of the Privy Council, only their decisions. The clerks recorded the Council’s orders regarding different government offices, and this included their own. The registers

²⁸ NA SP 16/8/81.

²⁹ NA SP 94/1/606; *CSP, Spain*, 1568-79, 702; 16 October 1579.

³⁰ NA SP1/166/f65-66; “The king of England has sunk so rapidly since my last letter of the 15th, that the physicians no longer dare to answer for it that he will last one day more... The Council meet daily, and withdraw into a secluded chamber from which the clerks and secretaries are shut out.”: *CSP, Spain*, 1553, 57; 19 June 1553. Edward VI died on 6 July, 17 days later.

³¹ The only known instance where an attendance was particularly recorded was in 1589. The entry stated “Here cam Tho: Whilkes Clerke of the Counsail in ordinary after 2 yeres absence to give his attendance on the ll: of the Counsail.”: NA PC 2/16, 7 August 1589.

³² Anthony Ashley signed the front page of the fifteenth volume, and William Waad signed the bottom of three entries in August of 1597. See NA PC 2/15 and NA PC 2/22, 1, 14 and 17 August 1597.

³³ Mark Taviner in his dissertation “Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity,” Unpublished PhD. Thesis (St. Andrews, 2000) Appendix 3.

provide a wealth of information about the clerkship, and the orders made regarding its duties and operations. As strange as it must have been for William Paget to meticulously record on the opening page of the first volume his own appointment, so other clerks recorded the regulations and agreements that governed the clerks themselves. By reading the register itself, we find the best information about what the clerks did. Beyond the primary duty of keeping the Council registers, the other main duty of the clerk was to handle the majority of correspondence generated by the Privy Council. According to Sir Julius Caesar, the clerk “wright such letters, or answers as their Lo[rds]hips shall give to petitions delivered at the table or sent thither from his Majesty, & what their Lo[rds]hips shall command them.”³⁴ In formulary books left behind by various clerks, particularly Beale, we see the scope of correspondence they handled.³⁵ In Beale’s 1575 formulary, he included a table of contents of subjects covered. These included “commissions, recognisances and obligations, passports and placartes, warrauntes, apprehendinge examininge and committing of offenders, musters, messages and letters written to Rebelles in the time of warre and commotions, instructions for Ambassadors” and “orders in certaine matters taken vpp and determined by the Lords. of the counsell.”³⁶ These were just some of the areas covered, but clearly the correspondence was vast and diverse.³⁷

The writing of correspondence was the one area where the clerks worked under the direction of the Principal Secretary. That the clerks of the Council worked under the Secretary, just as the clerks of the Signet and languages did, seems relatively obvious, yet nothing in the official appointment of the clerk, in the individual clerk’s patents, or in the registers themselves states this specifically. However Robert Beale explained:

When any businesses cometh into the Secretarie’s handes, he shall doe well for the ease of himselfe to distribute the same and to use the helpe of such his Majesty’s servants as serve underneath him, as the Clercks of the Councell, ye Clercks of the Signett, the Secretarie of the Latin and of the French tongue, and of his own servants.³⁸

³⁴ NA SP16/8/77r.

³⁵ BL Add MS 32323, BL Egerton MS 3048; For more on formularies see Angel Day, *The English Secretarie: or, the plaine and direct Method, for the enditing of all manner of Epistles or Letters*, (London, 1592); C. A. F. Meekings, “A King’s Bench formulary,” *Journal of Legal History*, 6 (1985), 86-104; James Marriott, *Formulare instrumentorum: or, A formulary of authentic instruments, writs, and standing orders, used in the high courts of admiralty of Great Britain*, 1802.

³⁶ BL Add MS 48018 fol. 10v.

³⁷ On a side note, the formularies are additionally useful because there are many letters and documents copied in the formularies that do not exist elsewhere, and their preservation is very fortunate.

³⁸ Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, 426.

Among the few documents that support this are Sir Julius Caesar's notes from 1625, and a register entry in 1587. Caesar stated that "the resolucons of the Table are put in execution by the Clerke attendaunte, either by settinge downe the Orders agreed upon: draweing minutes of letters, of the Boarde, w[i]th relation alwaies to the direccon of the Secretarye."³⁹ The only example we have of the Principal Secretary actually ordering a clerk to do something occurs in 1587, when "...by the said right honourable Mr. Secretarie order was geven unto me, Robert Beale, one of the Clerkes of her Majesties Privy Counsell, that it should be entred into the Booke of her Majesties Counsell..."⁴⁰ Although the supervision of correspondence and entries was probably vague and informal, it was the only area of the clerks' office overseen by any official in particular, rather than by the Council as a whole.

In addition to the duties of the register and correspondence, the clerks ensured the required people entered the Council chamber, a task not difficult but necessary. In order for the Privy Council to work smoothly, they frequently desired to question individuals, or give them orders directly. Frequently the Council called individuals to attend a Council meeting, and the clerks were the logical choice to see this occurred, both because of their presence in meetings, and their knowledge of the concerns of the day. And so, in November 1553, the Council ordered "that the Clerkes of the Counsaill shall from hencefourth see that none be present in the Counsaill Chamber (the Counsaill sytting), but only suche as be of the Counsayll and suche as shalbe called."⁴¹ The clerks used recognizances to handle this task. This meant that, if ordered by the Council, an individual came to the court each day and presented themselves to the clerk, who, when requested, recorded their attendance in the Council book, and when appropriate, took them to Council meetings. For example, in June 1587, Ralph Sheldon, esquire, "being by their Lordships' direction bound to make his personall appearance before them, this daie resorted to the Clarke of the Counsell desiring to have his appearance recorded, whereuppon he was enjoyned to give his attendance, and not to departe till by their order he shall be dismissed."⁴² The Council issued a similar order in 1566:

The condicion of this recognizaunce is suche that if the abovenamed Christofer Askewe do fromhensfourthe contynuallie ones a daye exhibite and shewe himself unto oone of the Clerkes of the King and Quenes Majesties' Privie Counsaill, so as he be alwaies fourthcoming taunswere suche matter before the Lords as they

³⁹ NA SP 16/8/79.

⁴⁰ *APC*, XV, 366.

⁴¹ *APC*, IV, 45.

⁴² *APC*, XV, 377.

have to objecte unto him, that then this recognizaunce to be voide and of none effecte, orelles to stand in his full force and virtue.⁴³

As individuals presented themselves to the clerks as ordered, the clerks recorded it in the register, and similarly recorded when the recognizance was lifted. Unfortunately for the individual, this cost five shillings for each record of their appearance, and six shillings and eight pence when they were discharged.⁴⁴ This procedure was standard, and the clerks monitored all those under this obligation and ensured their attendance.

Beyond the duties of keeping the register, writing correspondence and taking recognizances, the clerks performed additional functions related to Council business. The most important and frequent of these functions was reporting to the Council on various suits brought to their attention. By having the clerks sift through the suits themselves and report back on their findings, the councillors remained informed without overburdening themselves with additional work. The suits covered a wide array of issues, from ensuring that William Bulmer paid his wife alimony,⁴⁵ to dealing with Thomas Dibney, one of the bailiffs of Colchester, “having byn complained upon for his evill behaviour in matters of religion.”⁴⁶ Most of these suits were rather insignificant, and by having the clerks handle them, the Council remained free to deal with more important matters.

Another key area in which the clerks assisted the Council outside of their normal duties was to examine individuals. Roughly put, to “examine” someone was, in modern terms, to cross-examine or depose them. Generally those examined were either imprisoned or detained and accused of some wrong-doing. The examinations occurred not in suits of individuals brought to the Council for judgement, but rather circumstances in which the Council itself wanted the information. The clerks, and others assigned to assist them, questioned these individuals and obtained written statements of their activities. For instance, the register notes “a letter to Mr. Doctor Cesar, Judg of th’ Admiralltie and Mr. Robert Beale, that whereas a matter in controversie between Mr. Roger Windham and certein Scottish merchautes was recommended from their Lordships to their carefull examynacion...they [have] duly considered and examined the same.”⁴⁷ Another such letter was sent out to three men, including “William Waad,

⁴³ *APC*, V, 414.

⁴⁴ BL Add MS 48018 fol. 670.

⁴⁵ *APC*, I, 48, payment received *APC*, II, 81.

⁴⁶ *APC*, V, 255.

⁴⁷ *APC*, XVII, 449.

Clerke of the Cownsell, to examine one Duffild, a sea capitain, lately committed to the Towar of London.”⁴⁸ After the examination, the clerk who witnessed it certified the statement and included this with their determination. By having the Clerks deal with these situations, like the suits, the Privy Council was spared the effort of questioning individuals themselves. Additionally, since the clerks, like the councillors, knew of matters throughout the realm, they were better equipped than others to ask appropriate questions and take the relevant action. This showed not only the ability of the clerks in handling standard judicial matters, but also the trust the Council had in the clerks.

The ability and trustworthiness of the clerks was also demonstrated in their handling of financial matters. The payment of individuals by the clerks for the Council was also part of their duties, albeit a less regular part. Periodically the clerks handled the payment of individuals, from servants to soldiers. In 1551 the Privy Council issued a warrant “to theschequier for c^{li} to Barnard Hampton, to be by hym delyvered to the King of [Poland’s] servaunt in way of the Kinges Majesties rewarde.”⁴⁹ The following year the Council issued another:

to Mr. [Armigil] Waade, one of the Clerkes of the Privie Counsell, to delyver to Flod of the Garde five poundes five shillings and nine pence for the borde of John Rybalde, who was prisoner in his howse; and to Richard Holmes, for bringing up two prisoners from Ipswiche to London, liij^s viij^d; and to Thomas Turner and Richard Baker, for bringing up hither one Fraunces Wiche, xx^s; amounting in hole to ix^{li} iij^s iiiij^d.⁵⁰

Additionally some instances occurred when one clerk received money without a designated recipient. Barnard Hampton received such funds several times, “to be by him defrayed as by the Counsaill shalbe from time to time appointed.”⁵¹ These matters tended to be minor in nature, and fell outside the normal pattern of payments within departments. Having the clerks handle such items was probably a simple matter of convenience for the Council.

All of the matters the clerks handled, from the register to payments, first required one very simple thing: attendance. The clerks needed to be physically present at court in order to perform the duties of their office. According to Sir Julius Caesar:

the privie Counsell haue had allwayes, and soe nowe, a faire chambre in every standinge howse, where the kings M[ajes]ties abode is where they keepe the Counsell table: w[i]th a littele roome thereto adioyninge, where the Clerkes of the

⁴⁸ *APC*, XXII, 403.

⁴⁹ *APC*, III, 424.

⁵⁰ *APC*, III, 515.

⁵¹ *APC*, V, 140, 148, 196.

Counsell & their servants sitt and wright. The privie Counsell is attended on by 3 or more ordinary Clarks to enact their orders, & wright such letters, or answers as their Lo[rdshi]pps shall give to petitions delivered at the table or sent thether from his m[ajes]tie, & what effer their Lo[rdshi]pps shall command them.⁵²

By having a room next to the Council chamber where they worked, the clerks were physically present and locatable when needed. At any given time at least one clerk attended Council meetings and kept the register, and in later years it was standard to have two present. These clerks were referred to as the clerks attendant. Having designated clerks attendant was not always the practice of the Privy Council, since originally there was only one clerk, but as additional clerks served the Council, this came into practice. It was the duty of the clerk attendant to “put in execution” the “resolucons of the [Council] Table.”⁵³ This took the form of performing the duties discussed above, and since handling correspondence, keeping the register, and ensuring the appropriate individuals appeared before the Council took up an abundance of time and required such hard work, one clerk alone could not handle the load, and a change needed to be made.

Throughout the Tudor period, as various difficulties arose, such as the inability of only one man to carry out all the duties required, the office of the clerk changed. These changes were in response to the needs of both the clerks and the Privy Council. The changes related to and affected the men who filled the office, and the duties and procedures of the office. Over time an increase in the number of clerks, the years of service, and salary occurred. Seniority of the clerks was established, as were rotation schedules to keep the men from being overburdened, while allowing the Privy Council to function unimpeded. At the same time, the details involved in how the clerks performed their functions changed. The handling of the register, the transmission of warrants and letters, and copies of register entries were all affected. Additionally the clerks received their own copy of the Privy Council seal, and later began to swear an oath of office. These procedural changes helped define the office of the clerk of the Privy Council as an administrative position.

Some of the most important changes that occurred relate to the men who held the office. The first of these was an increase in the number of clerks employed at any one time. As discussed above, the clerk had many responsibilities and one man could not carry the weight of the office alone. This became evident very early. In 1540, William

⁵² NA SP 16/8/77r.

⁵³ NA SP 16/8/79.

Paget was the only clerk. However, by 1543 it was decided that two clerks, Mason and Honing, were needed to fill the office, and the number increased from there. From 1547 until the death of Barnard Hampton in 1572, there were always three clerks. For three years Tremayne and Beale laboured together, until two more clerks, Wilkes and Cheke, joined them in 1576. From that time onwards, there were always at least three clerks, with the number periodically increasing to four and five clerks at one time. At the end of Elizabeth I's reign there remained four living clerks, with another immediately appointed by James I. Part of the reason for the increased number of clerks was that the number of clerks at court varied depending on circumstances. For instance, Anthony Ashley spent almost half of his tenure under Elizabeth away from court while out of favour, and Thomas Wilkes spent years out of the country and subsequently out of favour as a result of his service in the Low Countries. On one occasion, in 1587, Thomas Windebank acted as a temporary clerk during the absence of the others.⁵⁴ As the clerks served both at home and abroad in a variety of areas, there was a constant rotation of clerks attending the Council. By increasing the number of clerks, and even appointing a temporary clerk, the Council assured their work continued unhindered, regardless of which clerk was actually present.

Just as the number of clerks increased over time, so did the length of service of the clerks. None of the first seven clerks served for more than seven years, with the most common length of service being three years.⁵⁵ However, of the eleven clerks appointed under Mary and Elizabeth, seven died in office, two retired, one resigned, and another advanced to the Privy Council.⁵⁶ Daniel Rogers served the shortest amount of time, dying after five years in office. All the other clerks remained in office for at least a decade, and four served over twenty years.⁵⁷ Two main reasons explain this phenomenon. First, the series of regime changes after Henry VIII through Mary caused significant turmoil, leading to frequent changes in clerks, whereas under Elizabeth this did not occur. Additionally, the earlier changes allowed for clerks to advance to the Privy Council, which Paget did under Henry VIII, and Mason and Thomas Smith 1 did under Edward VI. No other clerk advanced to the Privy Council until Thomas

⁵⁴ *APC*, XIV, 247.

⁵⁵ Paget, Mason, and Thomas served three years. Honing served seven, Chaloner six, Armigil Waad five and Thomas Smith 1 just over one.

⁵⁶ Allen, Beale, Tremayne, Wilkes, Cheke, Rogers and Thomas Smith 2 died in office, William Smith and Ashley retired, William Waad resigned, and Edmond advanced.

⁵⁷ Beale served twenty-nine years, Wilkes twenty-two, William Waad twenty-seven and Anthony Ashley twenty-three.

Edmondson in 1616 under James I. The result of the changes in clerks and the length of their service was that the clerkship became less of a step in advancement to the Privy Council, and more of a lifelong position.

As additional men became clerks of the Privy Council, and continued in that position for increasing lengths of time, the problem arose of who should attend the Council, and when. The problem first appeared in 1552, when there were three clerks, and apparently all three remained at court all of the time. “Upon the humble sute of the Clerkes of the Counsell,” it was decided that “a thyrde of them may always be absent for a fortnight, that is to saye, one of them in course after an other, so as two of them be allwayes present.”⁵⁸ This served the purposes of the Council, by ensuring the presence of at least two clerks were present, but also allowed time for the third to rest. Unfortunately it occasionally occurred that one clerk was left to handle the office alone. Edmund Tremayne, attending the Council alone while his fellow clerk Robert Beale was away, wrote to his colleague to complain that:

You may see also [tha]t my travell is not very easy by y[ou]r absence when besides my continuall attendance to serve the place alone I am driven to write all this w[i]th my own hands to the great injury of my blind eyes... Of this wee may deal more when you shall be return'd w[hi]ch God send very shortly.⁵⁹

In order to relieve the pressure on any individual clerk, the clerks themselves eventually determined a rotation of attendance. In 1579 the four clerks of that time, Henry Cheke, Robert Beale, Edmund Tremayne and Thomas Wilkes, agreed “among them selves for the times and termes of their severall waitenges as is conteyned in the note following... [It] was by their Lordships ordered that the same shold be entred into the Counsell Booke, there to remain of record and be observed by them accordingly.”⁶⁰ The rotation meant each clerk attended the Privy Council for three months of the year, with two clerks attending at the same time, ensuring none would again, like Tremayne, have to struggle alone. The organization assured that one clerk in attendance remained who served the previous month as well. By doing this, the clerks ensured a continuity of information, and decreased the potential confusion when they rotated.

The rotation agreement by the four clerks in 1579 was possibly based on another established by the clerks of the Signet in 1557, which included former clerk William Honing. “For waiting Honing shall begin in May, Yetswert in June, Clyff in July and

⁵⁸ *APC*, III, 576.

⁵⁹ BL Add MSS 48149 fols 41v-42, June 1576.

⁶⁰ *APC*, XI, 354-5, 8 January 1579; the full document to appear in the appendix.

Yaxley in August; the first to wait September and October, the others also two months till May. For that month and the three next, each to wait one month.”⁶¹ Whether the Signet clerks held to their rota or not is unknown, and it does not appear that the rotation decided by the clerks of the Privy Council in 1579 was actually adhered to. It is probable that the clerks abandoned the idea of a firm rota, however, we know the practice in general continued because when Caesar wrote his notes on Council practice in 1625, he described in detail the rotation of the clerks:

It is therefore requisite, that at every meeting of the Lords two Clerkes of the Councell in ordinary doe attend the Board, and to that purpose that the Clerke of the Councell after the expiration of his moneth doe attend the Board one whole weeke at the least, to performe such services as are requisite, and informe his successor in the Busines that have passed in his moneth. And alsoe that each Clerke before his moneth of wayting doe come give his diligent attendance, at least a weeke before the beginning of his moneth, that hee may the better acquaint himself w[i]th the business that depend at the Board, and be ready in them when his terme comes.⁶²

The value of passing on information from one clerk to the next continued onward from Tudor times, and although the Stuart Privy Council clerks attended for six weeks instead of two months at a time, the idea of rotating attendance and a clerk attendant continued. The issue of rotating attendance is not important so much in the decision that the clerks made to agree to a schedule, but in the fact that they could establish such a schedule, even if they did not keep to it. This separated them from personal retainers and other household servants who resided at court, and allowed them the distinction of being officers and not servants of the Privy Council.

The clerks of the Council were not only differentiated by who served the Council and when, but also who held the higher seniority. Seniority among the clerks was based on the amount of time they held the post, and until 1553 this was reflected in their salaries, after which time all salaries became standard.⁶³ When William Paget was appointed in 1540 he received an annuity of thirty pounds as his fee for the post.⁶⁴ When Paget advanced to the Privy Council itself, John Mason split the office with William Honing in 1543, the first instance where seniority appears. Paget received thirty pounds, yet in 1543, the salary, like the post, was split, with Mason receiving the larger portion as

⁶¹ NA SP 11/10/7, 16 March 1557.

⁶² NA SP 16/8/81.

⁶³ *CPR, Mary*, I, 283, II, 189.

⁶⁴ *L&P*, XVI, 51.

senior clerk of twenty pounds, with Honing receiving the other ten pounds.⁶⁵ After these appointments, the seniority of clerks is clearly discernible in their salaries. The best examples of this are the appointments in 1548, 1550 and 1552. In 1548, William Honing was paid fifty pounds, Thomas Chaloner forty, and the newly appointed Armigil Waad received fifty marks.⁶⁶ When Honing was removed in 1550, Chaloner advanced to receive fifty pounds, Waad forty, and the new clerk William Thomas got fifty marks.⁶⁷ Again in 1552, after Chaloner left for a commission to the North, Waad advanced to the fee of fifty pounds, Thomas forty, and the junior clerk Bernard Hampton received fifty marks.⁶⁸

Until 1553, salaries were based on length of service, with the senior clerks being paid the most. However, after 1553, all salaries were fifty pounds. No record indicates why this changed, but it probably relates to the fact that on Mary's accession two new clerks, Francis Allen and William Smith, were appointed at the same time, neither being senior, and therefore neither deserving a higher salary.⁶⁹ Regardless of the reason, salaries became standard and soon other fees were added to the base salary as a way of compensating the clerks who performed their duties for the longest period of time. In April 1575, the Privy Council "of their owne good motions...have for some better relief of the saide Clerks towarde their charges caused this order to be sett downe to remayne from tyme to tyme as a recorde of soche somes and rates and allowances as it shalbe lawfull for them to demaunde..."⁷⁰ Included in these fees were charges for taking recognizances, copying register entries, passports, private letters and for recording the taking of the oath of a new member to the Privy Council.⁷¹ Individuals involved in these transactions were required to "paie unto the Clerkes for the tyme attending" the designated sum, which was presumably divided up among the clerks, although this is never directly stated.⁷² Although none of these fees were large amounts, they enabled clerks to add to their standard salaries and have a reasonably comfortable life.⁷³ The clerks also benefited financially through other means of assistance from the crown

⁶⁵ *L&P*, XVIII, i, 623(41, 65).

⁶⁶ *CPR*, *Edward VI*, II, 2-4. See also *APC*, II, 183-4.

⁶⁷ *CPR*, *Edward VI*, III, 187-8.

⁶⁸ *CPR*, *Edward VI*, IV, 285-6.

⁶⁹ *CPR*, *Mary*, II, 189.

⁷⁰ BL Add MS 48018 fol. 670.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fols 670r-v.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ A similar agreement was set by the clerks of the Signet in 1557. See NA SP 11/10/7.

including grants, monopolies, favourable land acquisitions, wardships, annuities and gifts, all of which will be discussed further later.

Changes, such as increase in salary or length of service, reflect issues related to the lives of the men who served as clerks, and not to the duties they performed. Yet the Privy Council registers record numerous procedural changes that occurred over time and affected the office of the clerkship. Most of the changes were relatively minor, and relate to the registers themselves, yet they reflect the ever changing nature of the position, and the problems of the Council. One such change dealt with which clerk handled the register. In 1550 William Thomas, appointed the newest clerk of the Privy Council, was given a special task:

It was agreed that, forasmuch as the due observacion of the Registre of all such thinges as shulde passé by Ordre of the Counsaill is an office that shall require a speciall diligence, therefore the fore-named William Thomas is discharged of all other maner of business, to thentent that having nothing elles to attend unto he may the better applie his chardge to see that nothing worthie to be registred be omitted or lefte unwritten.⁷⁴

Apparently the Privy Council chose for whatever reason to assign a single clerk to take special charge of the register, and as the junior clerk with no pending Council assignments or duties, Thomas was the convenient choice. The Council took special interest in insuring the record of their proceedings was complete, with “nothing worthie to be registred... lefte unwritten.”⁷⁵ Having one clerk in charge of the register and nothing else accomplished this, however, this practice did not continue for long, as is clearly visible in the numerous handwriting contributions in the registers themselves, and the lack of any other special designation to a clerk appointed later. The rotation assignment decided upon by the clerks in later years also negated this possibility.

Yet Thomas’ charge reflected a continuing problem the Privy Council faced. According to the record, in order to prevent that any “warrault shulde escape unregistered, it was ordred that letters shulde be written to the Treasurers not to paye any warrault though it be signed by the Counsaill, onlesse it be also subscribed with the hande of the said William Thomas.”⁷⁶ By ensuring that the clerk signified that each warrant was entered into the Council book, the Privy Council prevented individuals left unpaid, or paid twice, which seems to have occurred. A similar order to the one above was issued two years later, referring to letters. Apparently the same problem of warrants

⁷⁴ APC, III, 4.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

escaping unrecorded occurred with letters from the Privy Council. Robert Beale explained that “manie times l[ett]res are gotten in Chambers by Councillor’s Clercks goinge from one to another w[hi]ch often are called in question, wherof no Recorde is kept in the Councell booke.”⁷⁷ To deal with the problem “the Lordes did this day determyne that no letter nor other writing shuld passe at the Boorde to sygne by them, but that first the same shuld be subscribed by oone of the two Pryncipall Secretaries or one of the Clerkes of the Counsell.”⁷⁸ Although this practice was certainly more time-consuming than with warrants, since many more letters than warrants were sent out, it also ensured each was properly recorded in the register books.⁷⁹

The problem of recording all letters out from the Council recurred again and again. Despite the changes instituted in 1552, the problem arose again in 1575 and then again in 1582. In 1575, order was given “that from h[e]nsforth the Clerkes of the Counsaill that shall write anie letter to be signed by their ll[ordships] shall subscribe his name under a line in the uttermost margent belowe... and that they shall not Seale any that be not so subscribed and entred into the counsale booke accordingle.”⁸⁰ However, this solution did not work, because in 1582, a similar order was given, with more requirements on the clerk to ensure each letter was properly formatted and entered:

Yt pleased the Lordes thereuppon that from henceforth there should be no letters signed by anie of them from the Counsell Bourd onles the same letters should be brought unto them by one of the Clarkes of the Councell for the tyme attending, or at the least drawn by one of the said Clerkes, and for this cause it was likewise ordered by their Lordships that all such letters as shall hereafter passe from the Councell... shalbe brought unto them with the name of the Clerke of the Councell written in the very foote of the margent of every such letter... to the ende it may appeare that the said letters have bene written, or at the least examined by the said Clerke, and thought fitte for the forme to be offered unto their Lordships.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, 425.

⁷⁸ *APC*, III, 500.

⁷⁹ Lord William Paget further enforced how letters and entries should be recorded in his “Advice to the Kinges Counsaill” on 23 March 1550. “Item: that the Clearke having charge of the counsaill booke shall dayle entre all ordres and determynacions by the counsaill, all warrantes for money, the substance of all lettres requiring answeare; and the next daye following, at the furst meting, presenting the same by the Secretary (who shall furst consydre wether the entrey be made accordingle) to the boorde, the counsaill shall the furst thing theye do signe the booke of entrees, leaving space for the counsailors absent to entre theyre names whenne theye cum; and the clerke which kepeth the booke shall attende thereunto only, and be burthened with no other charge.”: Dale E. Hoak, *The King’s Council the Reign of Edward VI*, (Cambridge, 1976), Appendix 3; copied from BL Egerton MS 2603 fol. 34r.

⁸⁰ BL Add MS 48018 fol. 670v.

⁸¹ *APC*, XIII, 684.

Apparently the best efforts of the clerks after the original orders were not sufficient to ensure every letter was recorded. No doubt handling letters in these ways was cumbersome, but when the procedure was followed, it prevented confusion and “many inconveniences.”⁸²

These changes reflect the importance of the actions of the Privy Council being properly recorded. In fact, the register entries were used as proof of the Council’s actions, and were copied for this use with Council approval. The Council first allowed copies of register entries at a particularly delicate time. Shortly after Edward VI’s ascension in 1547 and the Regency Council took control, there was confusion, particularly regarding the Council’s authority. Just weeks later, it was recorded that the clerks could “deliver upon comandement from tyme to tyme to any of the saide executours and Counsaillours any Acte or thing passed by them and entred in the Register, under thand and signe of the said Clerke so delievering the same...”⁸³ Clearly some Councillors felt the need to protect themselves by having copies of decisions made and signed by the Council, should the need arise. Additionally these copies confirmed authority to others. Just a month following the order allowing for the copying of entries, the Council requested a new commission by Edward VI to establish their authority, which was then recorded in the register, and a copy ordered for the French Ambassador.⁸⁴ From that time onwards, the Council permitted the clerks to make copies of register entries, and the practice evidently continued and occurred frequently, because in 1575 a payment of twenty shillings was set for “the coppie of everie suche order and for all other speciall matters of recorde... in writing entred into the counsell booke.”⁸⁵

All of the changes that occurred to the office of the clerk, from the added duties of recording and copying entries, to the specified fees and schedules helped to define the office of clerk of the Privy Council and separate these men from the servants of the court. Their oath of office separated them even further. Like members of the Privy Council, the clerks swore an oath when appointed. As with many other practices we do

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *APC*, II, 11-12.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 64.

⁸⁵ BL Add MS 48018 fol. 670. This practice was in essence the reverse of the use of a dry stamp in the final months of Henry VIII’s reign, when orders were issued under the stamp, and were later recorded for confirmation. This process cause problems when Henry VIII’s will was signed with the stamp and recorded belatedly. See Mortimer Levine, “The Last Will and Testament of Henry VIII: a Reappraisal Reappraised,” *The Historian*, 26 (1964), 478-484; Eric W. Ives, “Henry VIII’s will: a forensic conundrum,” *HJ*, 35 (1992), 782-788; Samuel Rhea Gammon, *Statesman and schemer: William, first Lord Paget, Tudor minister*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), 128-9; Lacey Baldwin Smith, “The Last Will and Testament of Henry VIII: a Question of Perspective,” *Journal of British Studies*, 2 (1962), 22-25.

not know when this began, but it certainly started before 1572, because then Robert Beale was sworn in as clerk.⁸⁶ A copy of his oath was included in the register entry for that day, and Beale included another version in one of his formulary books.⁸⁷ The practice continued, and “this day were swourne Clarkes of the Counsell Mr. Thomas Wylkes and Mr. Henry Cheke, according to the copie of their othe remayninge in the Counsell Chest.”⁸⁸ The oath is most interesting in that it has nothing to do with their duties as clerks, and everything to do with their presence in the Council chamber. In the oath, the clerks swear to “kepe secret all matters committed and revealed unto you or that shalbe treated of secret in Councell...” and goes further in committing the clerks to allegiance to their queen and to “do as a faithfull and true servant and subject ought to do to her Majestie.”⁸⁹ In this we see a vital aspect of the office of Clerk of the Privy Council that is easy to forget: secrecy. By nature of their office the clerks were privy to communication vital to the government and exceptionally profitable if revealed to the wrong individuals. The Privy Council trusted the clerks to keep secrets even from Privy Councillors, designating that “if any of the same treaties or counsels shall touché any of the same Counsellours, you shall not reveale the same unto him.”⁹⁰ Further evidence of this trust lies in the fact that the clerks, beginning in 1555 were given a seal of the Privy Council “with which Seale all letters passing this Boorde shuldebe sealed, and the same to remayne in the custodie of theldest Clerc of the Counsaill.”⁹¹ The seal gave official sanction to letters and warrants originating from the Privy Council, and should they have chosen to, the clerks could have misused it in any number of ways to advance their position. However there is no record of any clerk breaking this trust, and in 1573 the Privy Council issued a warrant for payment for two new seals for the clerks to keep in their custody.⁹²

As the duties of the clerks grew and formalized through these recorded changes, the office became more defined and separated the clerks from courtiers and servants alike. All of the duties of the clerks of the Privy Council, from vital matters such as keeping decisions secret to simple matters such as drafting letters and taking

⁸⁶ Enid Campbell, “Oaths and affirmations of public office under English law: an historical retrospect,” *Journal of Legal History*, 21 (2000), 1-32.

⁸⁷ *APC*, VIII, 106; BL Add MS 48018 fol. 4.

⁸⁸ *APC*, IX, 50.

⁸⁹ *APC*, VIII, 106.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *APC*, V, 246.

⁹² *APC*, VIII, 128.

recognizances, required the clerks to utilize all of the training and skills they acquired before their appointment. As they kept the register, examined individuals, investigated private suits for the Council, and disbursed funds to a variety of people, the clerks demonstrated their ability and earned their salaries and the extra fees that came as well. Over time, and with the consent of the Privy Council, these men helped fashion the office they held into something larger and more defined than it was when it began. They recorded, in the register they laboured at, the decisions that affected their office, from their oath to their fees and schedules, yet these men performed many more labours on the Council's behalf than those they performed within the Council chamber, and it is to those duties that we will turn next.

CHAPTER THREE

WORK OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

The men who worked as clerks of the Privy Council did much more than fulfil the duties of that office. Some of their additional work was closely tied to the Privy Council, including diplomatic missions, negotiations, intelligence gathering and spying, most of which was at the direct behest of the Council. While employed as clerks, these men were also able to be used by their conciliar masters for other sensitive tasks which reflected both the skills and interests of individual clerks and the needs and opportunities for them to serve in these other functions. Their work abroad as diplomats and intelligence gatherers, paired with duties at home related to their foreign experience, demonstrate the additional roles that became a standard part of the duties of the clerks. However, some of their work in addition to their clerkships, although still somewhat linked to the Council and its work, was primarily for their personal benefit. This included smaller offices in government in addition to their clerkships, and commissions as Justices of the Peace for the counties, and demonstrate the factors that effected their position, including the importance of individual standing and initiative, paired with the necessity for aid from a patron, as well as issues of locality. A middle ground between these two was the presence of most of the clerks in Parliament. The factors in gaining a seat, accompanied with the need for the help of Councillors in securing it, explain how some clerks were included in government work peripheral to their clerkship, while at the same time illuminating the emergence of what could be termed standard policy or routine procedure for the clerks as a group. Overall their careers demonstrate that these men were not restricted to any one department or set of duties; rather their varied and versatile work provides context for the repetitive and structured duties of the office of the clerk of the Privy Council.

Due to their expertise and previous experience abroad, and above all, because they were personally known to and trusted by councillors, the Privy Council frequently sent its clerks abroad on individual tasks. These foreign assignments varied from expeditions, to treaty negotiations, to embassies in numerous countries and for varied periods of time. Additionally they met with foreign princes, handled border disputes, extraditions and numerous smaller matters, while simultaneously establishing contacts with potential patrons and sources of information. When at home, they utilized their

time abroad and the expertise they gained to meet with ambassadors on the Council's behalf and confer with the Privy Council on foreign policy. Although the clerks functioned as government agents, their varied roles and sometimes unclear status left them in a precarious position. Unlike their clerkship duties in England, these assignments were costly and potentially dangerous to their reputations and their physical well-being. They faced the possibility of physical harm and recall, and were scrutinized on any perceived departure from the monarch's policies. Although their efforts were at the Council's behest, the clerks received information and instruction infrequently and faced being discredited while abroad and unable to properly defend themselves. All of these challenges made their assignments difficult for the clerks, but for the most part they succeeded admirably and returned home with increased expertise and experience.

The Privy Council sent a clerk abroad as assignments arose. Their work and travel abroad prior to their clerkships, as discussed above, as well as their familiarity with Council work and concerns, made the clerks the logical selection for such missions. The majority of the clerks' assignments abroad came as problems arose, and not as a standard diplomatic rotation. By definition, the clerks were normally needed by the Privy Council, so sending a clerk overseas suggest that either the Council wanted direct oversight of the mission or that clerk had special personal qualifications for the task in hand. Two examples from Daniel Rogers' assignments demonstrate the type of circumstances that led to these missions. In December 1578 Sir Francis Walsingham, writing to William Davison, explained why Rogers was sent to Duke Casimir:

To satisfy Duke Casimir touching the offence he seems to have conceived against you, my Lord of Leicester has thought meet to dispatch this bearer Mr. Rogers to him... Mr. Rogers has also in charge to mediate a reconciliation between the Duke and the Prince of Orange, as a matter necessary for the maintenance of religion and the defence of the liberties of the country.¹

Rogers was an excellent choice for this assignment, having previously met Duke Casimir in 1576 and earlier in 1578, as well as the Prince of Orange in 1575.² Rogers continued to meet with these and other leaders during his numerous missions to Germany and the Low Countries, gaining personal relationships as well as increased professional insight which likely aided him in his negotiations.³ In November 1585, following lengthy incarceration in Germany, Rogers returned to Duke Casimir again on the queen's behalf.

¹ NA SP 83/10/58; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1578-9, 325.

² *Diplomatic Reps.*, G17, G42, LC62, LC65.

³ *Diplomatic Reps.*, G17, G41-44, LC61, LC62, LC65, LC70, LC79, LC82.

In the formal instructions regarding the negotiations with Germany and Denmark, it was determined that “Mr. Rogers is to go first to the Landgrave of Hesse and learn what answer he has had from the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, and then to Duke Casimir, from which two princes may best be learned what course to follow.”⁴ It was in the crown’s best interest to send skilled and experienced men like Rogers to complete these assignments as they occurred.

Although these missions occurred at the instigation of the Council and not the clerks, the clerks benefited, particularly in their early careers, from these assignments. Those clerks who worked abroad prior to their clerkships used the experience to gain contacts and move forward on the path of promotion. These posts primarily provided the clerks with contact with already influential courtiers who, if pleased with their work, might consent to recommend them to others. For example from March 1580 to April of 1581, Sir Henry Cobham, a long-time diplomat and then resident ambassador to France, wrote to Burghley, Walsingham and Queen Elizabeth in glowing praise of William Waad seeking his advancement, this prior to the latter’s appointment as a clerk.⁵ In March of 1572, Sir Thomas Smith 1, then a Privy Councillor and special ambassador to France, commended Robert Beale to Sir William Cecil, to whom Beale was sent, as a “rare man and of excellent gifts.”⁶ It was just three months later, after Beale reported to Cecil in London, that Beale joined the ranks of clerks of the Privy Council. Although patrons such as Smith and Cobham no doubt aided clerks and potential clerks in their ambitions, the missions alone enhanced the clerks’ résumés and increased the likelihood of upward progression. Gary Bell noted the following:

With notable exceptions, men seemed to desire, even to solicit diplomatic service. They did so with good reason. Diplomacy may not have been an assured path to greater preferment and influence in the government, but it clearly constituted one important component in the successful building of careers by Tudor-Stuart courtiers and officials.⁷

Possible career advancement explains the purpose of the clerks in their early diplomatic work, emphasized by the fact that at least twelve clerks had some experience abroad before their clerkship. However, following their appointments, the clerks continued working abroad. While their careers remained a factor it was most likely not the prominent factor, nor were financial motives which will be dealt with later. The primary

⁴ NA SP 81/3/83; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1585-6, 134-5; *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC82.

⁵ NA SP 78/4/85,88; NA SP 78/5/48.

⁶ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1583 & Addenda, 463.

⁷ *Diplomatic Reps.*, 13.

reason that clerks of the Privy Council worked repeatedly on diplomatic missions was the need of the crown to have experienced and knowledgeable servants familiar to them act as representatives abroad. According to the research of Bell, it was unusual for an ambassador to serve just once on a mission. In fact, the majority of diplomats served an average of 3.8 missions each, a fact reflected in the extensive diplomatic service of the clerks of the Privy Council.⁸

Of the nineteen Privy Council clerks, eleven went abroad while they held the office. Although the missions covered areas as dispersed as Holstein, Portugal, Germany and Ireland, the main concentration focused on France, Spain and the Netherlands. While the government had virtually continuous resident ambassadors in several continental countries, these additional missions by the clerks were sporadic and related to specific needs and circumstances, with the notable exception of William Paget's mission from 1541 to 1543 when he served as both clerk of the Privy Council and resident ambassador to France.⁹ Thomas Edmondes also served as resident ambassador to the Netherlands from 1604 to 1609, but this was while he served as a clerk under James I.¹⁰ Besides Paget and Edmondes, each clerk sent abroad went on a specific errand or under the direction of another at a time when that area was of particular importance. For instance, during Edward VI's reign, William Thomas went as part of the embassy led by the Marquis of Northampton to negotiate Edward's proposed marriage to the Princess Elizabeth of France, and Thomas Chaloner travelled north to negotiate a treaty with Scotland regarding the border lands following years of battles and skirmishes in the disputed areas.¹¹ From 1574 through the end of Elizabeth's reign, the clerks served such missions virtually continuously. With foreign problems ranging from the war with Spain, to the French wars of religion, to Mary Queen of Scots, the clerks worked repeatedly on various errands. Ashley went on both the Portugal and Cadiz expeditions, Beale went to the Netherlands twice, as well as to France, Germany and several times to negotiate with Mary Stuart.¹² Rogers went to Denmark twice, Tremayne to Ireland, and Wilkes and William Waad served almost continuously out of the country.¹³ Yet with all of the activity during the majority of Elizabeth's reign, very little happened at the end of

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, F70.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, SN3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, F81; *APC*, III, 252; "Thomas, William (d. 1554)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹² *Diplomatic Reps.*, C9, G40, LC68, LC96; "Ashley, Sir Anthony (1551/2-1628)" in *OxfordDNB*. Beale's correspondence for his missions to Mary Queen of Scots are primarily contained in BL Add MS 48049.

¹³ *Diplomatic Reps.*, DK17-18; "Tremayne, Edmund (c.1525-1582)" in *OxfordDNB*.

Henry VIII's reign, during Mary's reign, or at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. No clerk went abroad between 1544 and 1551, and from 1554 to 1573. This coincides with periods when English troops actually fought, either in Scotland or France, and when England declared war. Following 1573 there were numerous marriage and peace negotiations, dealings with Protestant princes and endless talks with the prisoner Mary Stuart, and the clerks went on missions during these times of negotiation.

As discussed before, many of the clerks had experience abroad before they became clerks. Previous experience was one of the main qualifications these clerks held for these missions. As Bell explained, diplomats selected for service were prepared by practical experience and education for their responsibilities.¹⁴ When Thomas Wilkes went on a mission to Duke Casimir in November 1575 the Duke explained to Lord Burghley Wilkes' value under the circumstances:

The bearer, Thomas Wilkes, being despatched hither by the Prince of Condé and the Sieur de Meru, his father and himself have thought that he would be more agreeable to the Queen as an envoy than one of their own adherents, he having been already employed by her Majesty in a similar capacity and being well acquainted with the matter wherewith he is charged.¹⁵

Of the eleven clerks who worked abroad, virtually all of them had previous work experience abroad, or had at least travelled there.¹⁶ Both Thomas and Ashley travelled extensively before their clerkships, Beale and Rogers grew up overseas, and Beale, Rogers and Paget attended university abroad as well. These men also served abroad before their clerkships, and most served in the same areas they later returned to, including Edmund Tremayne who went to Ireland on a special mission in 1569, and returned as a clerk in 1573.¹⁷ This experience proved not only that the clerks could handle the rigours and delicacy involved in a foreign mission, but also on a very practical level, that they had the language skills, personal contacts and/or experience necessary for the task. Although the clerks studied languages at university, practical experience in a language was necessary, especially for less commonly spoken languages. Apparently Barnard Hampton was particularly talented in Spanish and its dialects, because he was noted as a person "well versed in the Spanish tongue" who, along with Armagil Waad, was such a "sufficient Castilian" that he could translate documents from that language.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Diplomatic Reps*, 12.

¹⁵ *HMCS*, II, 119.

¹⁶ Hampton unknown.

¹⁷ "Tremayne" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁸ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1563, 249; *CSP, Spain*, 1568-79, 121.

Indeed, Hampton was so talented he served as Spanish secretary to Queen Mary during his clerkship of the Privy Council.¹⁹ Hampton of course was not the only clerk who served as a secretary for a language. In fact, Thomas Edmondson, as a language secretary, is the best example of the expertise that made the clerks so valuable for service abroad. Edmondson not only served as secretary for the French tongue from 1596 onwards, but also served in France from 1583-1589 and from 1592-1599, and arrived home only a fortnight before becoming a clerk in June 1599.²⁰ After his clerkship he returned to France in 1601, 1602 and again from 1610 to 1617, during which time he finally yielded his clerkship to join the Privy Council.²¹ Clerks like Edmondson with extensive experience in a single country, or like William Waad who served in virtually every major western European country, became expert diplomats abroad, and continued to serve the Privy Council as envoys abroad and specialists at home throughout their tenures as clerks of the Council.

Perhaps the best qualification of the clerks for service abroad was the fact that they worked abroad so repeatedly, both before and after their appointment as clerks of the Privy Council. One example, Daniel Rogers, who both lived and studied on the continent before entering government service, worked virtually continuously from 1565 to 1580 as an agent in France, an envoy in the Netherlands, and as secretary to the Merchant Adventurers in Antwerp before being captured and held in Germany for four years, after which he became a clerk.²² Rogers was an excellent candidate for these posts, particularly for those in the Netherlands and Germany, since his mother was from Antwerp, where he also lived for a time, and he studied under Melancthon in Wittenburg, and having not only previous experience abroad, but familiarity with the location and the language was essential for success. Robert Beale had similar foreign experience to that of Rogers, although as Beale became a clerk much earlier in life than Rogers did, most of his experience was after he acquired his clerkship, while most of Rogers' came before. Beale lived in both Strasbourg and Zurich before entering service, during which time he undoubtedly learned French and German. Beale was first employed in France from 1564 until 1572, at which time he returned to England to become a clerk.²³ Following this he continued his diplomatic work, first in the

¹⁹ *CSP, Spain*, 1568-79, 121.

²⁰ NA SP 12/257/86; *Diplomatic Reps.*, F142, F158, F160, F167, F170.

²¹ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F174-5, F177, F183.

²² *Ibid.*, E74, F114, G37, 41-4, LC61-2, 65, 70, 79, 82.

²³ "Beale, Robert (1541-1601)," *OxfordDNB*.

Netherlands in 1576, and then in Germany in 1578, during which time his language skills no doubt aided him.²⁴ From 1581 to 1584 Beale repeatedly negotiated with Mary Queen of Scots, the French speaking former queen then imprisoned in England, and was present at her execution.²⁵ Following this, Beale again returned to the Netherlands in 1587, and completed his diplomatic work in 1600 shortly before his death as he worked with others to negotiate a treaty with Spain at Boulogne.²⁶ In Beale's case, his personal and professional experience, his language skills, and his repeated negotiations worked in his favour in his repeated work for the crown abroad.

In consequence of repetitive service abroad, clerks rose through the diplomatic ranks, rising from secretaries, to agents, to special ambassadors, and even to resident ambassadors. The foreign career of Thomas Edmondson in particular demonstrates this trend.²⁷ From 1583 to 1589 he worked as secretary to the resident ambassador in France Sir Edward Stafford, and held the post under Stafford's replacement Sir Henry Unton from 1591 to 1596, during which time he also worked as charge d'affaires.²⁸ Edmondson returned to France repeatedly from 1597 to 1599, was promoted to a special ambassador, agent and charge d'affaires once again.²⁹ Changing arenas in 1599 and 1600, Edmondson, now a Privy Council clerk, was sent to the Spanish Netherlands as a special ambassador, then returned to France the following two years, also as a special ambassador.³⁰ After a year's absence from diplomacy, Edmondson returned to the Spanish Netherlands in 1604 to 1609, now as a resident ambassador, following which he spent seven years as ambassador to France, during which time he finally ceased to be a clerk and joined the Privy Council.³¹ Over a decade later in 1629, thirty years after beginning his clerkship, Edmondson ended his diplomatic career as ambassador extraordinary to France.³² If Edmondson's progression as a diplomat were not obvious in the titles he held abroad, it is clearly displayed in the amount he was paid. In Edmondson's first royal appointments for which his pay is known, he received twenty shillings a day as charge d'affaires under

²⁴ *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC68, G40.

²⁵ For Beale's letters and memorandum regarding these see BL Add MS 48049.

²⁶ *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC97, C9.

²⁷ Edmondson papers during his embassies are primarily contained in Geoffrey G. Butler, ed., *The Edmondson Papers* (London, 1913) and Thomas Birch, *An Historical View of the Negotiations between the courts of England, France and Brussels, from the year 1592 to 1617*, (London, 1749).

²⁸ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F142, 158, 160, 164.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, F167-8, 170.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, SN1-2, F174-5, 177.

³¹ *Ibid.*, SN3, F183.

³² *Ibid.*, F210.

Unton in 1592.³³ However, this quickly increased to thirty shillings a day in 1594, followed by the standard pay of forty shillings a day as a special ambassador in 1597.³⁴ When Edmondess finally became a resident ambassador in 1604, he received over sixty six shillings a day, which increased over time to four pounds (eighty shillings) and later to six pounds (120 shillings) each day, or six times the amount he received at the beginning of his foreign career.³⁵ The case of Edmondess reiterates two important points: first, the clerks worked repeatedly abroad, and often in the same countries; and second, some clerks worked abroad enough to rise through the diplomatic ranks. Clerks like Edmondess demonstrate that the Privy Council selected men with proven diplomatic experience to work abroad, and that such selections were based primarily on expertise and not random selection.

Before discussing some of the more practical matters faced by the clerks as they worked abroad, it is important to note the Privy Council clerks were unique compared to other clerks with their extensive work in that arena. Similar to the fact that almost no other clerks worked as MPs, particularly during their clerkships, which will be discussed later, almost none worked abroad during their clerkships either. Only four such clerks, Robert Jones in the Privy Seal office, and John Somers, Thomas Windebank and Nicasius Yetsweirt as clerks of the Signet ever worked abroad.³⁶ Of these clerks, only Somers served more than once, and he, like so many of the Privy Council clerks, served repeatedly, working nine times in France and twice in the Low Countries, in the 1550s, 1560s, 1570s and 1580s.³⁷ Although the Council clerks were unique compared to other clerks in the frequency of their work abroad, they were not unique compared to the vast number of fellow courtiers repeatedly sent by the crown to work overseas. Thomas Bodley, a Marian exile who like Beale and Rogers lived overseas and studied in Geneva, worked repeatedly in Denmark, France, Germany and the Low Countries.³⁸ Sir Philip Hoby, whose personal and professional experience under Cromwell and others closely mirrors that of William Paget, was sent to the emperor, France, Germany and the Low

³³ Ibid., F160.

³⁴ Ibid., F160, 167-8, 170, 174-5, 177, SN1-2.

³⁵ Ibid., SN3, F183, 210. Unton completed his term in 1592 and was rather unwillingly sent back to France at the end of 1595, dying there in early 1596. Edmondess' increased salary in 1594 reflected the high costs of living in war-torn France, the work he had to do in the absence of a ligier ambassador and his success in making this case to the queen via Essex and the Cecils. For more on this see Paul Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* (Cambridge: 1999), 195-6.

³⁶ Interestingly, none of them were ever members of Parliament.

³⁷ Ibid., F86, 90, 97, 102-3, 108-9, 111, 140, LC81, 86.

³⁸ Ibid., DK 15, 19, F142, 150; G48, LC103, 108.

Countries.³⁹ Finally Stephen Lesieur, imprisoned on a mission just as Daniel Rogers was, worked on fourteen missions, including two to Germany in an effort to secure the release of Rogers.⁴⁰ These examples demonstrate that although the Privy Council clerks were unique among clerks for their foreign service, these were similar to the many other courtiers who worked abroad as part of their careers of service to the crown, and shows that the crown kept using men of experience who had proven themselves capable and trustworthy.

While outside of England the clerks and other envoys, regardless of the details of their mission, performed certain functions. The first of these involved meeting with the head of state, which seems simple but often was not, as William Waad discovered in 1584 on his mission to Spain. He wrote of his difficulty seeing King Philip, then angry at his ambassador's expulsion from England.⁴¹ The irate Philip forced Waad to report to Lord Burghley that he had been ordered to leave the country just a month later.⁴² Waad also learned the actual meetings could go poorly, as he found in 1587 when he gave offence to the King of France. As the Spanish ambassador Mendoza reported to King Philip:

As Waad was instructed when he came, to deal with certain seizures of English property at Rouen, he said that the Queen thought it strange that some of this property should have been sold since Waad's arrival here, whereupon the King replied that it was much stranger still that such a man as [Waad] should dare to say as much to him.⁴³

The clerks required tact and delicacy as they handled these assignments. The assignments themselves varied widely depending on circumstances. The clerks were occasionally sent to handle negotiations and treaties. In May 1600 Robert Beale and Thomas Edmunds travelled "to confer in Boulogne with the envoys of the king of Spain; with the object of concluding peace between the two monarchs, in union with the king of France and the Archduke, governor of Flanders."⁴⁴ Sir Thomas Chaloner, joined by two other special ambassadors, went on commission to negotiate the borders with Scotland in

³⁹ Ibid, E33, 50, 56, F62, 81, G19, LC29,46,50.

⁴⁰ Ibid., G45, G47. Despite his efforts, Rogers continued to blame Lesieur for the long delay in his release, and was probably quite pleased when Lesieur was himself imprisoned.

⁴¹ NA SP 94/2/14.

⁴² Ibid., 446.

⁴³ NA SP 94/2/97; *CSP, Spain*, 1587-1603, 94-5.

⁴⁴ NA SP 94/7/680; *CSP, Spain*, 1587-1603, 658.

1551, although only Chaloner actually went to Scotland.⁴⁵ These two missions were both single forays, with no following commissions sent to conclude negotiations where these failed. This suggests that while the Privy Council took direct hands-on interest in these missions and saw the clerks as useful envoys to act on their behalf, circumstances were not yet at the point where a full ambassador or councillor could have gone without risk of humiliation. In addition to treaties, the clerks negotiated customs and border disputes, conveyed condolences, handled extradition requests, and explained the arrests of foreign Envoys in England, for example.⁴⁶

Important negotiations such as these required careful handling, but additional reasons remained for the clerks to go abroad. One of any envoys most important functions was to establish friendships and contacts abroad in hopes of gathering information. William Waad wrote Lord Burghley in 1580 regarding his efforts in this behalf:

My desire hath been great, and my endeavour hath not wanted, to give your Lordship some certain informations of the doings which are here in hand. The which are sealed with such secrecy, and coloured with reports, as neither by intelligence, nor by the opinion of men, is there any knowledge to be had.⁴⁷

The information the clerks sought came from a variety of sources. Giacomo Marengo wrote to the Earl of Essex regarding how Thomas Edmond was attempting to contact the King of France's mistress through go-betweens and that the mistress was willing to talk, but unfortunately Edmond was recalled.⁴⁸ Despite such occasional setbacks, the clerks also succeeded in using friendship to gain information. For example, in 1588 the Spanish ambassador Guerau de Spes wrote to King Philip regarding some issues involving a ship convoy. He wrote that the queen "has appointed secretary Bernard Hampton to treat with me on all that concerns this business, in consequence of Cecil being much occupied. This is all the better as Hampton is a friend of mine."⁴⁹ The Privy Council took advantage of Hampton's friendship three months later when then sent him to meet with De Spes to "ask the ambassador what other possible meaning or interpretation could be placed by him on his letters than that which their Lordships had

⁴⁵ Diplomatic Reps., SC24. The other special ambassadors were Sir Robert Bowes, a soldier, later Privy Councillor and the "acknowledged expert of his generation" in border affairs, and Sir Leonard Beckwith. "Bowes, Sir Robert (1493?-1555)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁴⁶ NA SP 94/3/237; NA SP 15/30/6; *APC*, III, 252.

⁴⁷ *HMCS*, II, 315-6.

⁴⁸ *HMCS*, VII, 495-7.

⁴⁹ *CSP, Spain*, 1568-79, 83.

placed upon them, confirmed by discreet native Spaniards.”⁵⁰ Such friendships also helped in negotiations as Dr. Junius de Junius, the Danish ambassador, pointed out to Sir Francis Walsingham that Daniel Rogers was ideal to send on his mission to Denmark because he was “known to and liked by the aforesaid Princes.”⁵¹

Pretended friendship was just as useful as these friendships and foreign contacts, although more dangerous. The Privy Council called upon both Thomas Chaloner and Armagil Waad in 1559 to play these roles. Chaloner went to find out if the King of France referred to himself in a treaty as King of England. In his instructions the Privy Council explained the circumstances:

One Dardois, a secretary of the Constable of France, carried to the King Catholic in the late King Henry of France’s reign, the treaty between those two, ratified in the name of the Dauphin, the present King of France, in the following matter: “Francois, par le grace de Dieu Roi d’Ecosse, d’Angleterre, et d’Ireland, Dauphin de Viennoise,” etc. Which if it be true he has offered [the Queen] greater injury than becomes a friend; and in order to be sure hereof, commands him, (if he cannot first come to the knowledge of it otherwise,) of himself to seem to motion it to M. D’Arras, using it in such sort as if he understood it out of France; and, doubting its truth, would gladly understand its meaning. If D’Arras shall show himself strange, or deny it, Challoner may bear him in hand that he means friendly to cover the fault... In this proceeding he shall not show that he does it by any direction from home, but first advertise [the Queen] thereof.⁵²

Armagil Waad’s instructions included the use of a similar ploy of friendship when speaking to the Duke of Holstein to find out his religious views and his opinion regarding some treaties. He was told that “in all these things he shall use himself so warily as it may seem these things pass from himself; giving as it were some inkling of hope, but so as in nowise to charge and tie the Queen.”⁵³ Although this particular course of action had its dangers, the information gained they considered valuable enough to warrant the risk.

In all of their activities abroad, the clerks had one final duty: to report back regularly to the Privy Council. Each individual wrote in their own style and in varying frequencies. For instance, Thomas Edmondes wrote volumes of letters from his missions in France, yet Robert Beale complained that, due to his workload, he had “no leisure to write.”⁵⁴ However even Beale occasionally wrote back regarding events, such as his

⁵⁰ Ibid., 121.

⁵¹ NA SP 84/20/125; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1588, i, 33.

⁵² *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1559-60, 94; original in French.

⁵³ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1558-9, 217-8; BL Harleian 36, 75.

⁵⁴ NA SP 81/1/19. For Edmondes letters see Butler, ed., *The Edmondes Papers* and Birch, *An Historical View of the Negotiations between the courts of England, France and Brussels*.

explanation of the events of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572.⁵⁵ A series of letters written by Thomas Wilkes from 1573 to 1576 to Sir Francis Walsingham and Lord Burghley are excellent examples of a clerk fulfilling this duty.⁵⁶ Now, the letters which survived give a glimpse of the struggles and negotiations that occurred as the clerks worked away from England. Then, the letters sent home contained the best source of news for the Privy Council to find out about activities on the continent and so make policy decisions. The clerks' opinions on events overseas helped the Council make decisions, yet they did not stop helping the Council in this way when they returned home. In fact, the information and expertise they gained in foreign countries remained useful to them and the Privy Council as they worked with the Council and the foreign ambassadors stationed in England. The clerks conferred with the councillors both regarding affairs abroad and meetings with ambassadors in London. For example, in 1578, Tremayne conferred with Sir Christopher Hatton regarding Scottish affairs, and in 1599 Thomas Edmondes, considered an expert on French affairs, repeatedly spoke to the Council on the subject. George Fenner wrote that "Mr. Edmondes is returned out of France, and converseth much w[i]th our Lord Treasurer: it is thought if we entend any peace he shalbe imployed thither againe."⁵⁷ The knowledge of the clerks was additionally invaluable when the clerks and the Privy Councillors met with foreign ambassadors stationed in London. The Privy Council also used the clerks to prepare them for important meetings. Robert Beale's summons from the Privy Council contains a particularly good example. They wrote:

Where the Denmark Ambassador ys appointed to have audyence of her Majestie on Sondaie next and therefore yt were necessary that thinges were so understood and dygested before hand as he might not saie he ys unanswered when he comes to her Majestie'[s] presence, wee send you his wrytinge and doe desire to conferr with you to morrowe about yt, for which purpose wee could wyshe to have you here about two of the clocke to morrowe in the afternoone, for yf he come on Sondaie (as the Queen will have him) and that no answeere be agreed on before hande, her Majestie will be offended.⁵⁸

Similarly Beale wrote a memoranda in 1598 regarding matters to be considered in making peace with Spain.⁵⁹ In these cases, the value of the expertise of the clerks gained abroad is clearly evident. Through learning first hand the intricacies of foreign

⁵⁵ BL Add MSS 48049, fols 340-57.

⁵⁶ Eg. CSPF, Elizabeth, 1572-4, 395, 404, 460, 490-2, 507, 567, 569-70; *CSPF-Eliz.*, 1575-7, 38, 118-9, 138-9, 243-4, 253, 256, 298, 330.

⁵⁷ NA SP 12/271/33.

⁵⁸ *APC*, XXIX, 358.

⁵⁹ BL Lansdowne MS 103, 88.

governments and diplomacy, they returned better equipped to serve and advise the Council.

The clerks additionally used their knowledge when meeting with foreign ambassadors on the Privy Council's behalf. Considering the amount of foreign ambassadors and other dignitaries in London, it made work for the Council much simpler for them to simply send the clerks and thus decrease their work load, just as they did when they had the clerks handle payments, correspondence and the numerous suits from individuals. The clerks routinely met with ambassadors regarding a wide range of issues, from the more mundane, to the potentially critical. In 1545 an English merchant named Thorne upon landing at Spain was arrested by the inquisition "in consideration whereof the Counseill sent Thomas Chaloner to themperour's Ambassadour to declare the afforsaide matter unto him, to the ende he thereupon shuld wrytte unto themperour for the speadie redresse of the same."⁶⁰ Additionally in April 1569, following the appearance of the Spanish ambassador before the Privy Council, Barnard Hampton was sent to conduct a further interview with him and act as an intermediary between the ambassador and the government.⁶¹ On other occasions the clerks went to inform ambassadors of important events. Armagil Waad repeatedly met with the Spanish ambassador on matters ranging from negotiating customs dues, to informing him of the marriage arranged between Edward VI and the French princess in 1551.⁶² Later that same year Waad went to forewarn the ambassador of the Duke of Somerset's arrest, so he could prepare for when he met with the Privy Council that afternoon.⁶³

Informing ambassadors of such events was important, and information like Waad's required delicate handling. Yet there arose occasions of a more serious nature when the clerks went to hopefully smooth the way with an ambassador. Both Beale and Wilkes met with the Spanish ambassador in 1580 after Sir Francis Drake returned with Spanish gold from his circumnavigation voyage. Apparently the ambassador, rightly protesting Drake's actions, stated: "A war is easily begun, but not so soon ended; the event is doubtful. And yet sometimes 'wars have been moved upon less occasions.'"⁶⁴ It is significant that the Privy Council sent the clerks on such an important errand. Fortunately the Council averted war at that time. After these visits with ambassadors,

⁶⁰ *APC*, I, 273.

⁶¹ BL Add MSS 48023 fols 325-6; *CSP, Spain*, 1568-1579, 141-3.

⁶² *CSP, Spain*, 1550-2, 110.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 384.

⁶⁴ NA SP 94/1/57; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1579-80, 463-4.

the clerks reported back to the Privy Council regarding the meetings. No doubt the clerks reported in person most of the time, yet occasionally they gave a written report. William Waad informed Walsingham in 1585 of the details of his discussion with the French ambassador, and in 1587 Waad recorded in the Privy Council registers the instructions given him for another meeting with the ambassador, at the conclusion of which he included the notation... “I delyvered this message to the Ambassadour the 7 of January.”⁶⁵

Two reasons summarize the value of having the clerks deal with resident ambassadors in England. First, since the clerks knew the details of any difficulties facing the Privy Council, they could convey any information to the ambassadors without a Privy Councillor having to go. Simply put, they did the work of a councillor so the councillor would not have to. The second reason, however, is part of a larger situation. Due to the vagueness of the clerks’ position in relation to the Privy Council, the clerks could meet an ambassador in the guise of a gentleman, a secretary, a Council assistant, or as a representative of the Council depending on the circumstances, the same principle being true of the clerks’ errands abroad. This ambiguity was useful to the Privy Council, who could, in essence, suit a clerk’s standing to fit the situation.

When the clerks or any other diplomatic representatives went abroad, they received letters of credit from the government, informing foreign powers of their authority and mission. The Privy Council registers record that before Robert Beale went to the Low Countries, “for his dispatche there was signed by their Lordships sundrie letters of credit for Mr. Beale, as to the Prince of Orenge and the Admirall of Flusshinge and the Governour of Middleburghe.”⁶⁶ The Senate of Denmark actually requested letters of credence for Daniel Rogers:

We have fully and sincerely opened to this your ambassador our very great affection and humble observance towards your Majesty, as also our mind concerning all matters and articles reported to us: which as we have no doubt that he will dexterously and candidly in turn declare to your Majesty, so we would submissively and reverently ask you to deem him worthy of the fullest credence in all those matters.⁶⁷

Although letters of credence gave the clerks some protection and authority, they did not fully explain their office or position in the government, and this ambiguity led to misunderstandings and problems which could be exploited or lead to problems

⁶⁵ NA SP 78/14/93; *APC*, XIV, 241.

⁶⁶ *APC*, IX, 2.

⁶⁷ *HMCS*, XIII, 381.

depending on the situation. When Wilkes was sent to the Prince of Condé, the ambiguity was planned beforehand. Condé noted that Wilkes was appropriate for the task, “being well acquainted with the matter wherewith he is charged; moreover the matter will be thereby better concealed so that no reproach can attach to her Majesty.”⁶⁸ In cases such as this, the crown benefited not only from Wilkes’ experience and personal relationships with those involved, but also from the possible deniability of Wilkes’ actions as being personal and not on the queen’s behalf. However the ambiguity of a clerk’s status led to frequent misunderstandings. When Beale met with the Danish ambassador regarding a variety of issues, he reported back the ambassador “thinketh not that the commissioners appointed are of sufficient authority to yelde him justice.”⁶⁹ William Waad faced similar problems in France when trying to get permission to return to England. The Spanish ambassador Mendoza, then in France, said that he “[understood] that Walsingham sent to tell Chateauneuf that they had better be careful how they treated Waad, because the same treatment should be meted out to him. The latter replied that Waad was not of sufficient rank for him (Chateauneuf) to be made responsible for his treatment. The English ambassador would be his security.”⁷⁰

Wilkes faced similar problems as special ambassador to Spain in 1577.⁷¹ Philip Sega, Bishop of Ripa the Papal Nuncio in Spain wrote to the Cardinal of Como regarding Wilkes’ arrival. According to Sega, it was publicly held that Wilkes “comes not with the title of ambassador but of agent upon one sole errand, and is of very low rank, being but under-secretary of the Royal Council of England, and is, by what we understand, a most corrupt heretic.”⁷² Clearly, although Wilkes undoubtedly arrived with letters of credence, they failed to make the necessary impression. This was perhaps why Wilkes’ letter of credence to Don Juan of Austria two months after his mission to Spain was more specific concerning both Wilkes’ status at home and the authority he held while abroad.⁷³ The letter stated that “with a view to the pacification of the Low Countries we have sent this bearer, Thomas Wilkes, one of the clerks of our privy council to negotiate with you in certain matters of importance, praying you to hear him and give credence to him as to ourselves.”⁷⁴

⁶⁸ *HMCS*, II, 119.

⁶⁹ NA SP 12/269/21.

⁷⁰ NA SP 94/2/61; *CSP, Spain*, 1587-1603, 61.

⁷¹ *Diplomatic Reps.*, SP20.

⁷² *CSP, Rome*, 1572-8, 367-8.

⁷³ *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC80.

⁷⁴ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1577-8, 600.

In the case of Daniel Rogers, the disagreement over his status kept him imprisoned for four years. When Queen Elizabeth threatened to detain the Spanish ambassador Mendoza in retaliation, the Prince of Parma wrote:

As for the intention you expressed of applying the same treatment to Don Bernadino de Mendoza if I do not set Rogers at liberty... I cannot persuade myself that so just a princess... should avenge the detention that Rogers merits... on such a person as Don Bernardino, the king's ambassador to you, being under your protection and safeguard, and who consequently cannot be touched without violating the law of nations and the treaties above mentioned. On the other hand, Rogers has not those qualifications. He was not sent to the king, or to me as his lieutenant.⁷⁵

The confusion over the exact status of a clerk sent abroad led to a variety of difficulties. After Robert Beale concluded some negotiations with the Duke of Orange, Queen Elizabeth decided to renege on some portion of that agreement, causing the Duke to write and complain that the deal was genuine and made, as he understood it, under the authority of her and her Council, although in this case, Elizabeth saw the matter differently.⁷⁶ Yet when Thomas Chaloner served in the Low Countries in 1559, he had trouble convincing the local authorities he had the appropriate authority to send some horses to England. In the end Chaloner explained that "the Queen did not so discredit their Ambassadors, as, once having given them letters of general credence, they should in every trifling matter replicate the same."⁷⁷

Clearly difficulties arose when foreign governments tried to judge the precise standing of these clerks of the Privy Council. These difficulties led to an increased scrutiny of the clerks, which occasionally led to further problems. The Hanse towns wrote complainingly to the Privy Council in 1585 of their confusion because Robert Beale's letters to them differed from those sent from the Council.⁷⁸ Apparently they closely scrutinized any difference between the activities of the clerks and the activities of the Privy Council. The infrequency with which the clerks received instructions from the Council added to this problem. The Council informed the clerks of major events at home, such as when William Paget received a detailed account of Catherine Howard's infidelities in 1541, the clerks still continuously asked for information.⁷⁹ Additionally,

⁷⁵ NA SP 83/14/54; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1581-2, 119-20.

⁷⁶ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1575-7, 362.

⁷⁷ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1559-60, 135.

⁷⁸ NA SP 82/2/5.

⁷⁹ *PPC*, 352-6; BL Cotton MS. Otho, C.X. fol. 250.

Robert Beale received supplemental instructions from the Council during his mission to the Low Countries in May 1576:

And first towchinge the shippes retoryned in the west you shall declare, that that restrainte proceeded uppon informacon geven of certein pyracies don by the said shippes uppon sundry of her Ma[jes]ties subiects wherof the Judge of th' Admiraltie, as he enformed us, gave you some proofes before your departure.⁸⁰

Despite occasions such as these when Paget and Beale were guided by news and instruction from the Council, the clerks still continuously asked for more information.

Henry Cheke wrote the Earl of Huntingdon in 1582 of the difficulties in gaining instructions from the Council.⁸¹ Thomas Chaloner dealt with the same problem by appealing directly to William Cecil for information. He wrote, "I dare not ask letters of you, knowing how 'specially' ye can spare time, yet if you said how my lords take our doings, it would much satisfy me."⁸²

Considering these difficulties it is unsurprising that the clerks occasionally found cause to complain about the difficulties of their labours and lack of support from home. Even when things progressed smoothly, diplomatic missions were rigorous. John Chamberlain writing to Dudley Carleton at court, explained how Thomas Edmond's failed as conclusions for a peace treaty with France were coming to an end in 1598:

Your frend Edmonds came out of Fraunce the last weeke... He is like to be tossed to and fro and brickewald like a tennis ball from the one side to the other till somewhat be concluded: for we have two moneths time to deliberate whether we will treat or no, and three moneths more for the treaty.⁸³

Unfortunately, the failure of an enterprise led to increased difficulties, even if the clerks were not at fault. Four years before his negotiations concluded, Edmond's wrote the Earl of Essex seeking support during his mission:

I doubt not it will be by some imputed that I have not done my duty, wherein, I protest to your lordship, I have acquitted myself to the uttermost possibility and have, with my plain speaking and instant urging, purchased the opinion of too impertinent or passionate. I most humbly beseech your lordship, therefore, if any such thing fall out, to be pleased to give me therein your defence, that I may not bear the blame of unhappy action, which commonly doth fall out that poor ministers are misliked as matters do ill succeed.⁸⁴

Edmond's was fortunate in that his mission eventually ended in success.

⁸⁰ Brigham Young University, HBLL, Vault MSS 457, 6. Further instructions arrived that June: Vault MSS 457, 12.

⁸¹ NA SP 12/27/107.

⁸² NA SP 50/5/372; *CSP, MQS*, 1547-63, 185.

⁸³ *JCL*, I, 39-40.

⁸⁴ *HMCS*, IV, 622.

Although Edmondes' did not suffer any lasting ill effects from his difficulties abroad, Thomas Wilkes faced imprisonment and exclusion from court following a disastrous mission to the Low Countries from 1586 to 1588. Wilkes was sent to act essentially as the Council's eyes and ears in the Low Countries and later on the Council of State, yet his reports home, particularly regarding the actions and opinions regarding the Earl of Leicester led to ill reports regarding him, leading him to return home in desperation without authorization.⁸⁵ In a series of letters to Sir Francis Walsingham held at Brigham Young University, the increasing concern and desperation of Wilkes is evident. In February 1586 he wrote the following:

I thinke yo[u]r ho[nour] will judge my case and state to be but miserable: and true it is, that if I were not comforted w[i]th the knowledge of a good conscience free from gilt inuriouslie wronged, and offended w[i]thout cause or desert, and that I finde my self hable to answer w[i]th my credit and honestie all suche slanders and reproaches as art heaped upon me at home: it were a course to make a man desperate, and to forsake Contrey, Prince, frendes and all.⁸⁶

As time passed, Wilkes continued to ask for help from Walsingham, stating that "in truthe I durst not trust anie other in Court."⁸⁷ Wilkes, however, continued to write honestly "concerning the unwilling disposicon of the States g[ener]all to have Themistocles retorne" and "the g[ener]all mislike conceived of him."⁸⁸ In April 1587 Wilkes noted: "The return of my L[ord] of Leicester is expected... his coming will either consolidate all o[u]r woundes, or open them againe."⁸⁹ Unfortunately for Wilkes, his wounds were opened, and he returned home without permission in June 1587, desperate to have a chance to redeem himself at court. Over the next two years, Wilkes begged help of numerous courtiers, including Sir Christopher Hatton, and the Earl of Essex, and pledged to Walsingham "if I lyve, I will require yo[u]r goodness therein w[i]th the expence of my lyfe," yet these pleas made no headway and it was only after Leicester's death that Wilkes returned to favour at court.⁹⁰

Problems such as Wilkes', including a lack of communication from home, scrutiny of their actions abroad, and general confusion as to their standing, left the clerks in an extremely delicate position and led, in several cases, to serious problems. In 1543,

⁸⁵ *Diplomatic Reps.*, LC94, LC95.

⁸⁶ Brigham Young University, Vault MSS 457, 24.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 25. Themistocles was Wilkes' code term for the Earl of Leicester.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48. See also NA, SP12/206/47-49; NA SP12/208/1,12; NA SP12/212/37,67,73,78; NA SP12/213/25; NA SP12/222/67.

William Paget, then an ambassador to France, was arrested and held in Boulogne. Apparently Henry VIII, very upset about the treatment of one of his ministers, was “so obstinate about it, that rather than let the two French ambassadors depart from England, he will let his own die in prison at Boulogne.”⁹¹ Fortunately Paget was quickly released. However, as mentioned above, Daniel Rogers faced longer incarceration. He was held in Germany for four years, during which time he attempted to escape, and was only released after numerous entreaties by friends and family, and payment of a ransom.⁹² William Waad received worse treatment during two missions to France. During the first, in 1585, he was “assaulted in the highway... and was well beaten.”⁹³ During the second, in 1587, he was under threat of death. Sir Edward Stafford reported to Walsingham that “there is as good watch laid for Mr. Waad’s departure, and either to kill him or use him worse than kill him, as ever there was for anything.”⁹⁴ Eventually Walsingham intervened with the French ambassador to make sure that “the King, as he is bound in honour, so he will see you safely returned,” which took two months.⁹⁵

Despite the myriad problems they faced, the clerks continued to serve abroad, including Paget, Rogers and William Waad who faced such personal danger. Their dedicated service led to commendations of their work by their colleagues and Privy Councillors. The Earl of Leicester praised Robert Beale’s work when he said “there is not a more sufficient man in England than Mr. Beale is, nor quicker nor of better dispatch.”⁹⁶ William Paget, in “consideration off [his] good service in the cowrt of Franncce,” received an increase in pay for his labours.⁹⁷ Although at home the clerks gained a measure of respect for their hard work, the same was not necessarily the case abroad. Rogers may have been “known to and liked” by the Princes of Denmark, but William Waad was “greatly hated, spitted at and watched for his departure.”⁹⁸ These opinions varied from time to time and person to person, but it shows not only the individual nature of these missions but also the extremely tenuous nature of the clerks’ position. They were sent with vague credentials, received few instructions, were closely watched and risked imprisonment and physical harm. All the while they clung

⁹¹ *CSP, Spain*, 1542-3, 276.

⁹² BL Lansdowne 42, 75; NA SP 83/18/87.

⁹³ NA SP 78/13/103; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1584-5, 418.

⁹⁴ NA SP 78/17/52; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1586-8, 272-3.

⁹⁵ NA SP 78/17/56; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1586-8, 278.

⁹⁶ NA SP 84/19/45; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1587, 221.

⁹⁷ *PPC*, 283.

⁹⁸ NA SP 84/20/125; NA SP 78/17/56; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1588, i, 33; 1586-8, 257.

tenaciously to the good opinion of colleagues and Councillors at home so they could eventually return with honour. Despite the problems inherent in such undertakings, the clerks of the Council completed overwhelmingly successful expeditions and returned home as better servants of the Privy Council.

As mentioned above, the clerks actively participating in gathering information for the Privy Council while abroad. However some intelligence gathering procedures the clerks of the Privy Council participated in, both abroad and at home, went beyond simply gathering information. These activities dealt with identifying and eliminating specific threats against the crown, whether from a country or an individual. They examined conspirators, searched homes, captured fugitives, and resorted to torture on occasion. In these activities, what the clerks did was highly sensitive and extremely delicate, and under the close supervision of the Privy Council. The most basic thing the clerks did in their intelligence activities was gather information relating to plots. This was most common during the reign of Elizabeth, because of the numerous plots against her life by Catholics and Spanish sympathizers. The starting point of these intelligence operations was to get a basic knowledge of a potential conspiracy or activity the Privy Council might need to know about, and inform them of such. Such information came through contacts abroad, and more specifically through spies. William Waad, who worked extensively in this area, wrote of a “notable fellow of late that I have retained, who hath discovered divers matters unto me.”⁹⁹ In that case, the “divers matters” included the capture of a priest and “3 or 4 others about London [who] will be taken within these few days.” Thomas Edmondson actively recruited a Jesuit to spy for England. He wrote “I have got a good notable jesuit one father 122 to be a spy in Spaine, as y[our] honor commanded me; but he doth demand 500 pistoles by the year; if you think this not an unreasonable sum send me word, that I may strike the bargain.”¹⁰⁰ Other clerks also became involved in these activities, particularly during the reign of Elizabeth I. For example, Thomas Wilkes reported to Walsingham, Burghley and the Earl of Leicester regarding attempts to get information about John Somerfield’s treason against Elizabeth.¹⁰¹ Anthony Ashley, during a period when not allowed at court, wrote to

⁹⁹ *HMCS*, VII, 33.

¹⁰⁰ BL Add MS 4125 fol. 293.

¹⁰¹ NA SP 12/163/54.

Robert Cecil with information, not only because he thought it might be useful, but also to regain his position.¹⁰²

Gathering basic information, such as names and places, was important but not necessarily the job of the clerks. They mostly became involved once a target was identified or at least suspected. At that point, they began to strongly question individuals on their suspected activities or affiliations. In 1582, Tremayne recorded the confession he took from Thomas Sanders regarding his travels to Spain to speak with papists, and in 1591 Ashley held in custody and examined John Fitzjames, a suspected member of the Babington plot.¹⁰³ Many times, such examinations led to homes being searched for letters, ciphers or other information, and the clerks participated in this activity as well. Wilkes searched the lodgings of Edward Isham in 1589, and Beale searched the home of Mr. Stanihurst in 1580, but reported back to the Earl of Leicester that he found no incriminating papers or letters in Stanihurst's possession.¹⁰⁴ The clerks occasionally pursued and captured these suspects, as when Armagil Waad rode to "apprehend one that wold have escaped into Fraunce."¹⁰⁵ We know these were not the only intelligence functions the clerks performed, because of payments, such as the two for Armagil Waad in 1549 and 1550 that refer to activities regarding "speciall affayres" and "speciall service," yet these were the basic intelligence functions they performed.¹⁰⁶

In all these duties secrecy was paramount. In 1580, the Privy Council praised Tremayne, along with several others, for how they handled a certain examination. The Privy Council wrote that, for "their care in examining and concealing of the mater... they are hartilie thanked and their wisdoms commended."¹⁰⁷ Tremayne further demonstrated his ability to keep a secret when the Council entrusted him with the task of handling the bullion Francis Drake returned with, and instructed him to leave ten thousand pounds in Drake's hands, "to be kept most secreat to your selfe allone."¹⁰⁸ The Council closely monitored the clerks' activities and indeed, for these activities, the clerks required the permission of the Privy Council, either in a letter or a warrant, such as the warrant issued to Wilkes in 1589 to search the lodgings of Edward Isham.¹⁰⁹ Yet the most important

¹⁰² NA SP 12/267/56.

¹⁰³ NA SP 12/240/3. *CSPD*, 1581-90, 42

¹⁰⁴ NA SP 12/224/20; NA SP 15/143/43.

¹⁰⁵ *APC*, II, 113.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 285, 380.

¹⁰⁷ *APC*, XII, 2.

¹⁰⁸ NA SP 12/143/30.

¹⁰⁹ NA SP 12/224/20.

thing the clerks needed specific permission from the Council for was torturing a prisoner in order to get information. Only four clerks, Beale, Wilkes, Tremayne, and William Waad, all of whom served under Elizabeth, ever participated in torture. Beale, one of the men who examined the Jesuit Edmund Campion, was given permission, “in case he continewe willfullie to tell the trothe, to deale with him by the Racke.”¹¹⁰ The confession wrought from Campion led to his trial and execution five months later. Thomas Wilkes was involved in several incidents of torture, including that of the Catholic conspirator Francis Throckmorton. Sir Francis Walsingham wrote general instructions to Wilkes regarding Throckmorton, leaving the rest to Wilkes’ discretion. In his instructions he wrote:

You shall do well to geive Mr. Norton warninge this night or to morowe in the morning early, to mete at the Tower at such houres as by you shalbe thought meete. I have seen as resolute men as [Throckmorton] stoope notwithstanding the great show that he hath made of a Roman resolution. I suppose the grief of the last torture will suffice without any extremities of racking to make him more conformable than he hath hitherto shewed himself.¹¹¹

Edmund Tremayne was involved in the interrogation of Charles Bailly in April 1571 and carried the torture warrant to the Tower. The warrant allowed Tremayne to “put him upon the rack, and by discretion with putting him in fear torture [sic] procure him to confess the truth.”¹¹²

William Waad was the clerk most deeply involved in intelligence gathering, and specialized in torture. Waad’s experience with intelligence included using spies and intercepting mail, and he assisted in the discovery of the hidden letters of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586 and the dismantling of the Lopez plot. In the case of Mary, Waad, along with Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir Amias Paulet participated, not only in searching for letters, but also in devising the plan to extricate Mary from Chartley house in order to make the search.¹¹³ Waad used such materials to aid in his extensive and repeated interrogations of prisoners.¹¹⁴ He was routinely involved in examining individuals in the Tower, such as Pete Cubiaur in 1585 whom the Spanish ambassador promised money for information, Anthony Wheatly in 1587, a mariner with knowledge of preparations in

¹¹⁰ *APC*, XIII, 467.

¹¹¹ NA SP 12/163/1.

¹¹² *HMCS*, I, 496; *CPR, Elizabeth*, 1571, 157 f.114r.

¹¹³ *CSP, MQS*, 1585-6, 585-6, 606-7, 624; NA SP 94/2/485.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Phelippes, in corresponding with another spy, a Mr. Barnes, explained that Barnes’ mail “Waad opened, but made up again, so that you did not suspect it, and thus he lighted upon the things written of the Jesuits; Waad has confessed as much, and also that he took a copy and used it for the Queen’s service, yet it was discreetly and friendly managed.”: NA SP 12/284/1.

Spain and Portugal for the Armada, and Jane Shelley who predicted a rebellion using astronomy.¹¹⁵ Additionally he examined Valentine Thomas who claimed James VI told him to kill Elizabeth, and various prisoners held after the Essex rebellion in 1601.¹¹⁶ Waad's repetitive involvement in interrogations, along with several other skilled interrogators, is similar to the repeat missions abroad in that it highlights the fact that the Council routinely selected the same men with demonstrated ability to complete the same tasks.

Through all these activities, William Waad gained a reputation for keeping "the Papists in awe" and being "the only persecutor of Catholics."¹¹⁷ Yet he deserved this reputation even more for his involvement in the torture of numerous suspects. Francis Edwards noted that by 1593 Waad was "a man well-established by this time for his reliability and lack of scruple" which likely led to his appointment as Lieutenant of the Tower in 1603, and thus ensured his presence at all sessions of torture within the Tower.¹¹⁸ The justification for torture was presented to the public in 1583 by William Cecil Lord Burghley and Thomas Norton. Among the reasons given was:

"that none of them haue bene put to the racke or torture, no not for the matters of Treason, or partnership of treason or such like, but where it was first knowen and euidently probable by former detections, confessions, and otherwise, that the partie so racked, or tortured, was guylty, and did knowe, and coulde deliuer trueth of the thinges wherewith he was charged."¹¹⁹

Through this justification, and with direct royal and Privy Council permission, Waad and others interrogated and tortured numerous prisoners.¹²⁰ In 1587, George Stoker, who had been apprehended out of the Low Countries and twice escaped, was taken to the Tower for interrogation. Waad and others were "authorised and required... if they should perceive that he should refuse to declare for what cause and to what end he came into

¹¹⁵ NA SP 12/178/55; NA SP 12/203/52; NA SP 12/244/42.

¹¹⁶ NA SP 52/47/283; APC, XXXI, p.74.

¹¹⁷ NA SP 12/271/107; NA SP 12/284/32.

¹¹⁸ S. J. Francis Edwards, *Plots and Plotters in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Dublin: 2002), 184, see also 216-228; Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: 1996), 179, see also 176-180.

¹¹⁹ William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Sir Thomas Norton, *A declaration of the fauourable dealing of her Maiesties commissioners appointed for the examination of certain traitours* (London: 1583), fols Aiii v – Aiv r.

¹²⁰ "Under the Tudor monarchy torture became a royal prerogative in cases in which the safety of the state was held to be in danger.": Arnold Meyer, *England and the Catholic church under Queen Elizabeth* (New York: 1967) 179-185. See also John H. Langbein, *Torture and the Law of Proof: Europe and England in the Ancien Regime* (Chicago: 1977); James Heath, *Torture and English Law: an Administrative and Legal History from the Plantagenets to the Stuarts* (London: 1982); Elizabeth Hanson, "Torture and Truth in Renaissance England," *Representations*, 34 (1991) 53-67.

this Realme, then it is thought meete that they putt him to the torture of the Racke.”¹²¹ Waad received further Council authorization to rack Roger Asheton in 1588, use the “torture of the manacles” on another prisoner in 1595, and with Thomas Wilkes, had the authority to “trie” another prisoner “by the ordinarie torture there in Bridewell” in 1596.¹²² Nicholas Owen, held and tortured at the Tower from February to March 1605, was believed to have died from torture, although Waad and witnesses claimed that Owen killed himself rather than face further interrogation.¹²³ In all these activities, it is important to note that William Waad, and the others he worked with, acted with the authority and permission of the Privy Council. He was trusted to handle vital matters of state, yet he and the others were always responsible for their actions to the Privy Council.

Such matters were serious and treated with the utmost secrecy. In order to maintain this secrecy, the utmost care was taken, mainly through the use of ciphers or vague wording in letter writing, in the whole of the letter, or in parts, although such means were not foolproof. For example, in 1560 Barnard Hampton received from Edinburgh “an intercepted letter from a French secretary in the castle to the town” which he was asked to decipher.¹²⁴ Additionally Thomas Wilkes, in his letters to Sir Francis Walsingham from the Low Countries, used ciphers to hide the meaning of certain words and phrases.¹²⁵ Knowing the potential damage a letter could do, Hampton and others showed care for secrecy even in more casual correspondence. Hampton, writing to Sir William Cecil, acknowledged his concern over the content of his letter. He wrote “I know no part of the matter, nor durst presume to inquire any ‘particularities’ more than it pleased her Majesty to utter herself. I barely report her words, and if the matter be dark, I pray you sire, hold me excused.”¹²⁶

Being very careful was an essential part of any intelligence work, because the clerks were not out of danger. Two clerks faced danger in two different ways. In 1559 the Privy Council suspected Francis Allen, a clerk appointed by Mary, of revealing “all secret matters concerning him or others” to the Earl of Northumberland, a known Catholic, later beheaded for leading the Northern rising.¹²⁷ The Earl was then Warden

¹²¹ APC, XV, p.58.

¹²² APC, XV, p.40; APC, XXV, p.47; APC, XXV, p.11.

¹²³ Alice Hogge, *God's Secret Agents: Queen Elizabeth's Forbidden Priests and the hatching of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: 2005) 363-5.

¹²⁴ HMCS, I, 238.

¹²⁵ Brigham Young University, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBLL, Vault MSS 457, 31, 35.

¹²⁶ NA SP 52/3/805; CSP, MQS, 1547-63, 416-7.

¹²⁷ CSPF, Elizabeth, 1558-9, 566; NA SP 52/1/540; CSP, MQS, 1547-63, 251.

General of the Marches and Allen's correspondence, as a clerk, could have been completely innocent. Yet even in fulfilling their basic duties the clerks were not above suspicion of violating the secrecy so essential in Council matters. Robert Beale, on the other hand, faced danger because of his zeal in working against the Catholic cause and his knowledge of the affairs of Mary Queen of Scots. During the Babington conspiracy in August 1586, the Spanish ambassador Mendoza wrote to King Philip that he gave the conspirators the advice to "kill or seize Cecil, Walsingham, Lord Hunsdon, Knollys and Beal, of the Council, who have great influence with the heretics, as they are terrible heretics themselves."¹²⁸ Fortunately enough for Beale and the others, the plan did not succeed, and Beale lived to see the end of the Babington plot and witnessed Mary Queen of Scots' execution the following February.

The intelligence work the clerks of the Privy Council participated in included gathering information, searching homes and examining people. They had to be careful in what they wrote and what they did to ensure they did not bring trouble upon themselves. What is important about their activities, is the trust the Privy Council had in these men to have them participate in such secret activities. Equal trust is demonstrated in the Council sending these men on numerous foreign assignments, handling matters both delicate and dangerous. This was not necessarily work clerks sought, however they received some benefit for their labour. Overall their work was instigated and supervised by the Privy Council, and while it was not without risks, the clerks for the most part saw positive results from these assignments.

The clerks sought positive benefits from other offices and positions in government in addition to their work abroad. Throughout the Tudor period, men of wealth, expertise and position held seats in the House of Commons, including eighteen of the nineteen men who worked as clerks of the Privy Council.¹²⁹ The clerks, as with their appointments as JPs (which will be discussed below) needed personal standing, patronage and a background of government service to acquire a seat. The clerks of the Privy Council sought to enter Parliament because it enhanced their prestige, confirmed their status and provided an opportunity to serve both crown and patron. The Council benefited by ensuring added support for legislation and subsidies, having trusted men to report back regarding proceedings and individual opinions, and, on a personal level, reiterated their prestige and authority by placing men they selected in a seat. These

¹²⁸ NA SP 94/2/469; *CSP, Spain*, 1580-6, 607.

¹²⁹ The exception is Barnard Hampton.

benefits explain why Councillors took the effort to ensure election for the majority of the clerks elected to Parliament. While the foreign work of the clerks was weighted in the Council's favour, their presence in Parliament was mutually beneficial and is an important aspect of their careers, albeit one less directly tied to their work for the Privy Council. By analysing aspects of their time as MPs, even simple aspects such as periods of attendance, patterns emerge which reflect on the men individually, the clerks as a group, and the patrons who helped them.

Numerous reasons and considerations explain why the clerks desired and worked for seats in Parliament. However, several drawbacks to the position existed. Although constituencies supposedly paid their members of Parliament, at varying rates and with varying degrees of promptness, none paid enough to have money serve as motivation to seek election. One MP, James Harington of Rutland said in 1601 that the pleasure of serving cost him two hundred pounds, and he left without leaving any of the customary gifts.¹³⁰ An additional difficulty was that an appointment nominally required presence and housing in London although, for the clerks who already lived in London, this did not pose an additional problem, particularly as their office already necessitated their presence there. However, as a positive aspect for the men who served in Parliament before becoming clerks, it provided an opportunity to go to the capital and perhaps work toward further government employment. As Mark Kishlansky wrote, "for gentlemen and lawyers, who obtained the majority of borough seats parcelled out to patrons, it was an occasion to follow their own businesses, advance their careers or simply partake in the delights of the capital."¹³¹ While men of sufficient social standing might not require help to acquire such seats, election provided an opportunity for those who needed help, to enhance their social standing. As the Commons grew as an institution, membership became a mark of status, and perhaps more importantly, men could be a "part of the socio-political apprenticeship which would fit them to govern their local communities."¹³² As MPs, they learned about and participated in the governance of the country, which then enabled them to work effectively as the JPs assigned to administrate in the counties.

While a desire, or more simply, a perceived obligation to serve formed part of why the clerks sought seats in the Commons, it also formed part of why both their

¹³⁰ J. E. Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons*, (London, 1961), 331.

¹³¹ Mark A. Kishlansky, *Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), 13.

¹³² Michael A. R. Graves, *Early Tudor Parliaments, 1485-1558* (London, 1990), 34.

patrons and in a broader sense the crown sought their return to Parliament. Of course, assigning motives to such vague groups as “patrons” or “the crown” is problematic at best, and such terms must be handled with care. Yet one particular overarching motive did, to varying extents, apply to both: support. Michael Graves noted that for royal government not to exploit every possible avenue of support, especially when pushing forward a radical or contested parliamentary agenda, would have been “irresponsible, indeed unnatural.”¹³³ Neale wrote of the work of Thomas Cromwell’s labour to provide a group of “king’s friends” to help lead the House, and this effort most likely continued, particularly in times of crisis and change, such as the Marian push to restore Catholicism, or the 1586 trial of Mary Queen of Scots.¹³⁴ Not only the government sought support in the Commons. Individual courtiers, some Privy Councillors, some simply noblemen or powerful gentry also worked to send men to London as MPs to support their causes and personal agendas. In these cases regarding patrons lie many difficulties regarding distinctions. Men such as the Earl of Leicester, seeking to have elected a particular individual, acted as a Privy Councillor, a friend and servant of the queen, a courtier, a nobleman, a landowner, a faction leader, or a fount of patronage when supporting a candidate.¹³⁵ While these multiple roles create difficulties when discussing purpose, the motive of seeking support remains, regardless of the role or roles which entered into the decision. Neale explained that government ministers understood “the fact that Councillors and prominent courtiers, by the ordinary process of election, could count on securing seats for themselves, and, through their prestige and territorial power, possessed sufficient influence in boroughs to bring their friends and followers into parliament.”¹³⁶ This was precisely what courtiers, and particularly Privy Councillors, proceeded to do for the clerks and others who sought their aid.

Brief mention must be made of the fact that, with the exception of Robert Beale, and clerks working as clerks of the Parliament, none of the Privy Council clerks appear in any significant way in the extant Parliamentary records. There are two possible reasons for this: first, they were either not present for or did not care to participate in Parliamentary activities, and two, they worked privately with individuals to push forward the Council’s agenda. While apathy is certainly possible, the fact that several clerks

¹³³ Graves, *Early Tudor Parliaments*, 33.

¹³⁴ Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 285.

¹³⁵ Simon Adams, “The Dudley Clientele and the House of Commons 1559-1586,” *Parliamentary History*, 8 (1989), 217.

¹³⁶ Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 288-9.

were not in the country and others were most likely conducting other business during a session, means the clerks for these reasons do not appear in the record. However, the lengths to which Sir William Cecil and the Earl of Bedford among others went to in order to secure the election of these men implies their role was most likely hidden yet still important. It is well known that members of Parliament, particularly those who repeatedly returned to the Commons, were loath to accept interference from the crown or Council. For example, in speeches such as that of the Speaker of the House Williams in 1562 emphasized their liberty to “speak their minds without any controlment.”¹³⁷ Yet in Nicholas Bacon’s speeches, we see the attitude that Parliament was meant only to discuss measures put before it by the government, with its advice limited to that arena.¹³⁸ In such a tense atmosphere, important legislation required delicate handling, and it was in this manner the clerks were most likely involved in Parliamentary business, although a lack of records leaves us without proof. Although they were not necessarily the Council’s “men of business” in Parliament, their presence and the care for their election suggests some participation on their part.¹³⁹

Although the clerks, as clerks, could reasonably depend on acquiring a seat in Parliament, their office as clerks was not the only factor. The varying circumstances of the clerks illustrate the multiple factors involved in electing the clerks to Parliament, and these factors most readily appear when evaluating the circumstances of their election to the Commons. These factors are the same as those relating to the appointment of the clerks as Justices of the Peace discussed below: service, personal standing, patronage and location. Although the relative weight of these factors changed depending on the clerk involved and the circumstances of the time, all of these factors are evident in some way.

First is the relationship between the work of the clerks and their election as MPs. The majority of the clerks became MPs immediately following their appointment as clerks, with the two circumstances most likely related, and this will be discussed more fully later. However, other offices of the clerks related to their election as MPs for a specific county or borough. As with the similar JP appointments, the connection between government service and election becomes clearest for those who worked for or

¹³⁷ G. W. Prothero, ed., *Select statutes and other Constitutional Documents illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (Oxford, 1913), 130. See further Michael A. R. Graves, *The Tudor Parliaments: Crown, Lords and Commons, 1485-1603* (New York, 1985), 33-35.

¹³⁸ G. R. Elton, *The Parliament of England 1559-1581* (Cambridge, 1986), 31-32.

¹³⁹ See further Michael A. R. Graves, “Management of the Elizabethan House of Commons,” *Parliamentary History*, 2 (1983) and Graves, “Thomas Norton: the Parliament man,” *HJ*, 23 (1980); and Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays*, (London, 1994), 70-71.

participated in the Council of the North. Two such clerks were Sir Thomas Chaloner and Henry Cheke. Chaloner, who voluntarily yielded his clerkship of the Privy Council in favour of other offices in 1551, became a member of the Council of the North in September 1552. The following month Chaloner returned to Parliament as a member for Knaresborough in Yorkshire, a town less than twenty miles from the Council's seat at York. Henry Cheke acquired a similar seat in 1584, the first election following his appointment as secretary to the northern Council in 1583. Cheke sat for Boroughbridge, another constituency within twenty miles of York. Cheke's election shows similarities to other secretaries of the Northern Council, including Thomas Eynns, who sat for four Yorkshire boroughs during his time in that office, including Boroughbridge.¹⁴⁰ Clearly the work of these men, both for and with the Council of the North, directly effected their seats in Parliament and, at least in Cheke's case, led to a simultaneous appointment as a JP.

While some clerks like Cheke and Chaloner acquired seats in the Commons due to their government service, other clerks gained seats through their own social standing in a community. Two examples are William Honing and Thomas Wilkes. In March of 1553, William Honing was elected for the Suffolk borough of Orford. Although no longer a clerk of the Privy Council, Honing still worked as a clerk of the Signet. Additionally, the crown granted him the manor of Carleton, also in Suffolk, for his services in 1544, and further granted land in the county in 1558.¹⁴¹ Through such grants and others, including manors granted him in Yorkshire in 1549, Honing became a significant landowner and remained a significant courtier, making it unlikely he needed help to secure his Parliamentary seat in 1553.¹⁴² Thomas Wilkes' election shows similar circumstances. Wilkes sat for four successive Parliaments in 1584, 1586, 1589 and 1593. In the first two elections, Wilkes, already a clerk of the Privy Council for nearly a decade and a frequent foreign envoy, sat for Downton in Wiltshire, where he acquired the lease of the rectory and parsonage two years previously.¹⁴³ For the following two Parliaments, Wilkes held the seat in Southampton. Southampton offered him the seat in 1586, as a courtier and freeman of six years there, but Wilkes withdrew when he found out about his next foreign mission, and had himself re-elected in Downton instead.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Hasler, II, 95.

¹⁴¹ *L&P*, XIX, ii, #800(10), p471; *CPR, Mary*, IV, 163.

¹⁴² *CPR, Edward VI*, II, 368.

¹⁴³ Hasler, III, 620.

¹⁴⁴ Hasler, III, 620.

Upon his return to England following his difficulties with the Earl of Leicester in the Netherlands, Wilkes still had sufficient standing as a freeman and landowner to sit for Southampton in both 1589 and 1593. Wilkes is unique among the clerks since his constituency sought him out, even after his disgrace and removal from court. Clearly his own standing in the area remained sufficient for the constituency to consider him an appropriate choice, despite his difficulties.

Although some clerks, like Honing and Wilkes, successfully secured seats for themselves in the House of Commons, most of the clerks of the Privy Council needed the help of patrons, particularly Privy Councillors, to gain a seat. Once nominated by a patron who considered them appropriate for a seat, the selection was rarely contested.¹⁴⁵ Many courtiers had the local prestige to secure seats for their friends, and this process could be exploited and facilitated by the crown as well. Simon Adams explained “patronage in the direct sense may have been only a last resort to place men who could not enter the House under their own auspices.”¹⁴⁶ In this the clerks benefited directly from the influence and authority of the Privy Council. In the counties the government did not need to place nominees they found acceptable; instead they selected the most eligible and appropriate of the leading local gentry, and virtually assured their seat by throwing official weight on their side, and this is what occurred for the clerks.¹⁴⁷ In a rare royal letter regarding elections, Edward VI wrote the following in the last election before his death:

Forasmuch as we have, for divers good considerations, caused a summonition for a Parliament to be made... we have thought it meet... that in the election of such persons as shall be sent to parliament... there be good regard had, that the choice be made of men of gravity and knowledge in their own countries and towns, fit for their understanding and qualities, to be in such a great council... And yet, nevertheless, our pleasure is, that where our privy council, or any of them, within their jurisdictions, in our behalf, shall recommend men of learned and wisdom, in such case their directions be regarded and followed...¹⁴⁸

While the crown may have directed boroughs to follow the recommendations of its ministers, this did not in any way guarantee a favourable result. For example, in 1586, the year of the Babington plot and the trial of Mary Queen of Scots, Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to three leading gentlemen to secure the election of William Waad and Nicholas Fuller, a lawyer, for the town of Gatton. He wrote the following:

¹⁴⁵ Kishlansky, *Parliamentary Selection*.

¹⁴⁶ Adams, “Dudley Clientele,” 217.

¹⁴⁷ Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 285.

¹⁴⁸ John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, II, ii, 64-5 as quoted in Graves, *Early Tudor Parliaments*, 91-2.

After my very hearty commendations, whereas my lords of the council do understand that Mistress Copley hath the nomination of the two burgesses for the town of Gatton, being a parcel of her jointure, it is not thought convenient, for that she is known to be evil affected, that she should bear any sway in the choice of the said burgesses. Her majesty's pleasure being such, as by our letters hath been signified unto you, that a special choice should be had for this present parliament of fit persons known to be well affected in religion and towards the estate. Their lordships have thought good therefore you should recommend unto the said burghers William Waad, one of the clerks of her majesty's privy council, and Nicholas Fuller, a counsel at the law.¹⁴⁹

Although Walsingham stressed the support for Waad and Fuller by the queen and “my lords of the council,” Gatton did not elect them. In fact Waad, intricately involved with Walsingham in uncovering the Babington plot and securing evidence against Mary Queen of Scots, failed to gain a seat in the Parliament that tried and convicted her, because Walsingham did not ensure his seat. In this case, Waad needed to have a seat, a powerful patron worked to see that he acquired a seat, and yet this did not occur.

Most of the Privy Council clerks, particularly those new to their office without the time to cultivate their position outside of London, needed a patron's help to acquire a seat. Numerous men over the Tudor period, mostly Privy Councillors, helped the clerks of the Privy Council enter the Commons. These men, through office or personal influence, effectively controlled the selection of a member for a borough or county, and used this influence to help those connected to them. For example, Thomas Smith 2 was returned for Cricklade in 1589 with the help of Lord Chandos, his future wife's uncle and lord of the borough, presumably as a favour to the Earl of Essex, for whom Smith worked as a secretary.¹⁵⁰ Essex apparently helped Smith through an intermediary, yet other patrons gave direct help to the clerks. One particular example, the Earl of Bedford, helped multiple clerks gain Commons' seats. According to Wallace MacCaffrey, Bedford worked with William Cecil Lord Burghley to secure the election of men to help further his goals and policies. According to MacCaffrey's calculations, Bedford, either through direct nomination or indirect influence, secured seats for forty percent of the men returned to the three counties for which he was Lord Lieutenant in the first four Elizabethan elections.¹⁵¹ In Dorset alone, the percentage was above fifty. Among the men elected through his help were Robert Beale, Edmund Tremayne, and Henry Cheke.

¹⁴⁹ A. J. Kempe, *The Loseley Manuscripts*, 242-3 (London, 1836), as quoted in Graves, *Elizabethan Parliaments*, 90.

¹⁵⁰ “Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609)” in *Oxford DNB*.

¹⁵¹ “Russell, Francis, second Earl of Bedford (1526/7- 1585)” in *OxfordDNB*.

These men all had personal connections to Bedford: Tremayne served him in Italy and after his return to England, Cheke's father John was a close friend of Bedford's, and Beale's aunt, a widow, became Bedford's second wife. Through Bedford's influence, Henry Cheke sat for Bedford in 1571 and 1572, while Beale and Tremayne both sat for Devon constituencies, where the earl owned extensive lands and worked as Lord Lieutenant. While Cheke originally lived in Bedfordshire and Tremayne in Devon, Beale had no connection besides the earl to the constituency of Totnes where he served. For Beale in particular, the Earl of Bedford's influence was necessary to ensure his election.

Through their work, their standing or their patrons, the clerks of the Privy Council successfully obtained seats in the House of Commons. Yet one other factor, location, has been alluded to but not fully explained. There are two facets to this: a personal connection to a county or borough, and physical presence in England during a Parliamentary session. While a personal connection to a constituency, such as Tremayne's family presence in Devon, no doubt helped in securing election to a seat, such a connection was not a requirement. The practice was common, and provision made, that the constituency did not have to pay a per diem for MPs not from the area.¹⁵² Obviously such cases involved the intervention of a patron to secure the seat, and numerous clerks sat in Parliament for constituencies to which they had no ties and had possibly never seen. One intriguing example is Sir Thomas Smith 1, elected to Marlborough, Grampound and Liverpool in succession. The average distance between each, and from London is over two hundred miles, a considerable distance during that period. Since Smith's duties both for and on the Privy Council required his presence in London, it is doubtful Smith ever visited the areas he represented. Another good example is Daniel Rogers, elected in 1589 to Newport iuxta Launceston in Cornwall. Rogers lived and worked virtually his entire life outside of England, most particularly in the two decades preceding his election, and held no property of any significance in the country. Rogers had no reason and no occasion to visit Cornwall and yet, during one of his brief periods of service as a clerk of the Privy Council in London, he was elected, with the help of the Cecils, for a borough two hundred miles away.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Neale, *Elizabethan House of Commons*, 322.

¹⁵³ Hasler, III, 299.

While such incidents are intriguing, they were by no means rare or unusual. Members of Parliament were considered to represent the people as a whole, and not merely an individual borough or county. Sir Thomas Smith 1 explained the following:

For everie Englishman is entended to bee there present, either in person or by procuration and attornies, of what preheminance, state, dignitie, or qualities soever he be, from the Prince (be he King or Quene) to the lowest person of England. And the consent of Parliament is taken to be everie mans consent.¹⁵⁴

Although many clerks did not sit for a constituency familiar to them, their ability and wisdom were generally considered sufficient criteria for service. Interestingly, however, several clerks of the Privy Council were not in the country, let alone the constituency they served, during a Parliamentary session. At least three clerks of the Privy Council worked outside of the country for an entire session for which they held a seat. William Thomas, elected in 1547 for Old Sarum, had been in Italy since 1545 after stealing from Sir Anthony Browne, and did not return until over a year after the session ended. Sir Thomas Smith 1, elected in 1572 for Essex, was actually on a mission to France from the previous December until July, entirely missing the Parliament which sat from May until June.¹⁵⁵ Finally Thomas Wilkes, elected in 1586 for Downton, was in the Netherlands from July of 1586 to July of 1587, missing the session which sat from October until March.¹⁵⁶ Although these clerks missed entire sessions, others were absent in the months and years preceding their elections. Edmund Tremayne, in Ireland from 1569 until 1571, held a seat in 1572, only to return to Ireland in 1573.¹⁵⁷ Another clerk, Thomas Edmondes, went on a diplomatic mission to France from June to September of 1601, before entering Parliament the next month for Liskeard.¹⁵⁸ Apparently the absence of these men just prior to or during the sitting of Parliament was acceptable, and because so many clerks had similar circumstances, this occurrence seems not only acceptable but also unexceptional. Additionally, their election, despite their absence, would have enabled them to sit later if Parliament were prorogued rather than dissolved. While this was not the case for Wilkes, both Thomas and Smith were able to sit for later sessions of the Parliaments they were initially absent from.¹⁵⁹ This practice further suggests that

¹⁵⁴ Smith, *De Republica*, 35.

¹⁵⁵ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F121.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, LC94-95.

¹⁵⁷ NA SP 63/29/4; NA SP 63/41/11.

¹⁵⁸ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F174-5.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas missed the first November to December 1547 session, but was in England for the sessions from November 1548- March 1549, November 1549 to February 1550, and January to April 1552. Smith

election to a seat in the Commons was an expected part of being a clerk of the Council, even if the clerk was unable to make any practical contribution to the business of the Parliament.

Of the eighteen clerks of the Privy Council elected to Parliament, fifteen were acting clerks of the Council at the time they sat in the Commons.¹⁶⁰ This is a significant amount, yet there is more here than just a number. Examining patterns of attendance demonstrates much more about the clerks in Parliament. To begin with, of the fifteen Parliaments called between 1540 and 1603, at least one clerk sat in nine of them, making a clerk present in the House of Commons for thirty-five of the sixty-three years the office of Privy Council clerk existed, or just over half of the time. Importantly these signify clerks acting as clerks of the Privy Council or clerks of the Parliament. The fact that a clerk sat only half of the time leaves the impression that their attendance was only periodically considered important, by the clerks or the crown, yet when analysing attendance a different way, a much more striking pattern emerges. Of the nineteen different clerks, all but three entered Parliament in some way immediately following their appointment as clerks. Of these, thirteen entered as MPs, and three worked as either clerks or deputy clerks of the Parliament, and sat in the House of Lords. The clerks of the Parliament will be discussed more later; we will concentrate now on the thirteen MPs. Most of these thirteen clerks became clerks in the year of a Parliamentary election, and so had the possibility to enter immediately. The others waited until the crown called a new election or summoned a new Parliament, at which time they entered the Commons.

The facts of how the clerks entered Parliament and when are important on their own, but when following them chronologically, several patterns emerge. Two patterns that changed over the course of the period reflect on the clerks as individuals and as a group. First, one pattern that began but changed was the entrance to Parliament of the

missed the first May to June 1572 session, but was in England, although very ill, for the February to March 1576 session, and died before the concluding January to March 1581 session.

¹⁶⁰ This high percentage is unique to the clerks of the Privy Council. Of the clerks of the Signet, Parliament and Privy Seal combined, only eleven of the thirty-four clerks were ever elected to the Commons (this includes three Privy Council clerks who held dual clerkships), and only four of the thirty-four were elected during their clerkship. This compares to eighteen of the nineteen Privy Council clerks ever elected, and fifteen of the nineteen elected while clerks. In percentages, this is 32% combined clerks versus 95% Council clerks ever elected, and 12% combined clerks versus 79% Council clerks elected during their clerkship. Clearly the difference is staggering although the backgrounds of the men are similar. These numbers derive from simply discovering the names of the clerks of the Signet, Parliament and Privy Seal, and confirming through Bindoff, Hasler, and *OxfordDNB* when and where they were elected, and then calculating the percentages based on the confirmed number of clerks elected compared to the total amount.

clerks as clerks of the Parliament. The first clerk, William Paget, began as a clerk of the Parliament in 1541, just a year after becoming the sole Privy Council clerk. Following him, John Mason worked in Parliament as Paget's deputy, and then Armagil Waad worked as Mason's. From 1541 to 1552, a clerk sat in Parliament as clerk of the Parliament. Despite this distinct trend in the formative years of the office of clerk of the Privy Council, the clerks did not continue in these dual roles.¹⁶¹ Instead, starting with Thomas Chaloner's election in 1545, the Privy Council clerks sought election to Parliament instead of the office of clerk of the Parliament. Possible reasons for this include apathy or lack of desire on the part of the clerks, a change in the perceived availability of the office, or simply a lack of time for the clerks to fulfil both roles. Any or all of these reasons explain why the clerks chose election over appointment.

The other pattern involved both a lack of desire by individual clerks, and the complete presence of the clerks as a group. Over the course of the time period during which the office of Tudor clerk of the Privy Council existed, there occurred several blocks of time when all existing clerks participated in Parliament: 1540-1542, 1547-1552, 1572-1585 and 1589-1592. Scattered, these blocks of time tell us very little. However, when availability of a clerk is taken into account, a clear pattern emerges. Prior to 1572, four clerks, at different times, could have entered Parliament but did not, for either personal or potentially professional reasons.¹⁶² However, following the 1572 to 1585 period of continuous and complete clerk attendance, the only times clerks of the Privy Council did not sit in Parliament was when they could not, due to disgrace in the cases of Beale and Ashley, or overseas assignment, in the case of Wilkes and William Waad. Essentially, after 1572 and continuing until the end of Elizabeth's reign, all available clerks of the Privy Council entered Parliament. Only three clerks, chronologically scattered throughout the period, did not enter Parliament in some way during their clerkships. Henry Cheke, due to the short duration and particular timing of his clerkship, could not have attended Parliament. Barnard Hampton and William Honing, on the other hand, had the opportunity but did not seek election. Hampton instead worked on drafting legislation with Sir William Cecil.¹⁶³ It is unknown why

¹⁶¹ This was likely due to the advancement of Mason to the Privy Council and the removal of Waad as a clerk at Mary's accession. Instead of passing to Waad, the office went to Francis Spilman.

¹⁶² These were William Honing, Francis Allen, Barnard Hampton and William Smith.

¹⁶³ Stephen Alford, *Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British succession crisis, 1558-69* (Cambridge, 1998), 11.

Honing did not try for a seat. Besides these three, all of the clerks of the Privy Council attended Parliament at some point in their tenure as Council clerks.

Why there was a change from almost no clerks attending prior to 1572, to a virtually continuous attendance of the clerks as a group through the end of the Elizabeth's reign is unknown. The probable reason was the change of Principal Secretary. In July 1572, Sir Thomas Smith 1, the former clerk, became Principal Secretary for the second time in his career, replacing the now Lord Burghley in the post, while Burghley became Lord Treasurer. Smith expressed positive views of Parliament in his work *De Republica Anglorum*, written less than ten years previously, and may have felt the clerks of the Privy Council needed to sit in Parliament, just as he and all his fellow clerks did in 1547.¹⁶⁴ However, Smith's surviving letters and papers leave no indication of his interest in actively involving the clerks in Parliament.¹⁶⁵ Although Smith may not have actively involved himself in securing seats for the clerks or other courtiers, we know William Cecil, Lord Burghley did. Burghley actively worked through Parliament to accomplish the goals of the crown. He included one clerk in his work, Bernard Hampton, who helped Burghley draft legislation, the preamble to the Subsidy Bill of 1566 in particular.¹⁶⁶ Through the assistance of Burghley's close friend and Privy Councillor the Earl of Bedford the two clerks in 1572, Robert Beale and Edmund Tremayne, both acquired their seats. In later Parliaments other clerks possibly joined other conciliar "men-of-business" in Parliament, such as Thomas Norton, who helped Lord Burghley manage the Commons following his move to the upper chamber.¹⁶⁷ Such men needed to be astute enough not to infringe on the Commons' sense of privilege, while still supporting Council policy, and much of this was done quietly. In fact men who spoke too loudly to push house business forward were reprimanded as being "a flatterer, a lyer, and a naughtie man," or else showing "a greate

¹⁶⁴ Smith, *De Republica*, 34-43.

¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that in 1572 Robert Beale became a clerk and was elected that year for the session, called just after the conviction of the Duke of Norfolk for his involvement in the Ridolfi plot, which was called to consider a change in the treason laws, particularly in relation to Mary Queen of Scots with whom Beale would deal extensively in the early 1580s. Beale, the only clerk to appear in any significant way in parliamentary records and whose passion for the law led to his removal from court in the late 1580s, was evidently so zealous regarding the Act of Submission in 1584 that he wrote a speech which, had he delivered it, would have required four to five hours to read. Indeed Patrick Collinson characterized Beale as "some Captain Ahab in pursuit of his own great white whale" focused solely on his "purpose, indeed obsession." As Beale lived to see the appointment of four of the five clerks elected after him, he could have personally encouraged his fellow clerks to seek election to the House of Commons, even if they did not fully participate in its deliberations. Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays*, 77-82.

¹⁶⁶ Alford, *Early Elizabethan Polity*.

¹⁶⁷ Michael A. R. Graves, "Management of the Elizabethan House of Commons," *Parliamentary History*, 2 (1983) and Graves, "Thomas Norton: the Parliament man," *HJ*, 23 (1980).

desire to winne favour.”¹⁶⁸ This perhaps explains why the clerks did not make a significant impact on Commons’ records and yet such effort was put forth for their election, particularly following 1572 when Burghley’s removal to the Lords necessitated an increase in assistance in the Commons to ensure that house passed the crown legislation put before it.

The final noteworthy trend regarding the election of the clerks regards the number of clerks who returned to Parliament repeatedly. Seven different clerks, five of whom served under Elizabeth, returned to the Commons more than once while clerks of the Council, precisely half of the total number of clerks elected during their clerkship. The seven who did not return repeatedly while clerks either lost or ended their clerkship soon after entering the Commons or died before another opportunity arose. The failure to return of the one exception, Francis Allen, probably relates to a lack of desire on his part, not a lack of opportunity. The seven clerks who worked repeatedly in Parliament, constitute part of a much larger trend. Approximately half of those men elected to Parliament in the Tudor period returned to serve there again, and this included the clerks of the Privy Council.¹⁶⁹ While only half of the clerks elected as clerks returned as clerks, fifteen of the eighteen clerks who sat in the Commons at some point in their careers returned there again. The exceptions were Rogers, who died, Armagil Waad who virtually ceased government service after his losing his clerkship at Mary’s accession, and Francis Allen whose apparent choice not to return was noted previously. Overall, the vast majority of the clerks repeatedly returned to Parliament.

While the clerks of the Privy Council only sat in Parliament roughly half of the possible years of the Tudor period, the patterns regarding when and how many clerks attended demonstrate significant trends. Although an early trend toward dual clerkships ended, other trends, including immediate entry following appointment as a clerk, the change in 1572 to the presence of all available clerks, and the trend, pervasive throughout the period, of repeat election to Parliament, all reflect on both the personal choice and desire of the clerks to seek work in Parliament, and the growing policies or

¹⁶⁸ Graves, “Management of the Elizabethan House of Commons,” 19. See also Michael A. R. Graves, *Elizabethan Parliaments 1559-1560* (London, 1987), 85-90; G. R. Elton, *The Parliament of England 1559-1581* (Cambridge, 1986) particularly 321-330; G. R. Elton, “Parliament,” in Christopher Haigh, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Athens, 1985), 79-100.

¹⁶⁹ In a random selection of six hundred Tudor members of Parliament from Bindoff and Hasler, half in the pre-Elizabethan period and half for Elizabeth’s reign, I counted the number of members returned only once, and those returned multiple times. In the pre-Elizabethan period, 53% returned once and 47% returned multiple times. During Elizabeth’s reign these percentages changed to 45% returned once and 55% returned multiple times. Most of the Privy Council clerks form part of the last group.

standard procedures of the clerks as a group. Whether these patterns developed institutionally or randomly, as a conscious choice on the part of the clerks, the Council or Councillors, or the crown, we cannot know. Regardless, these unique patterns, derived from the effort of numerous individuals to seek a place in Parliament, prove the prominence of the clerks as professionals and gentlemen, and their willingness to work as a group and with the help of patrons to accomplish their goals. Overall, the election of the clerks of the Privy Council to Parliament reflects two significant things: first, the beginnings of some commonalities and standard procedures which applied to the clerks as a group, and second, that a seat, if only in name, was important to the clerks and achieved through individual merit or patronage help.

Beyond the Houses of Parliament, the clerks of the Privy Council held numerous other offices in government during their tenure as clerks. Among the clerks, only three did not hold at least one office at the same time as their clerkship.¹⁷⁰ They worked as clerks in other departments, secretaries and administrators in offices closely associated to their work for the Privy Council. The reason the clerks sought these offices was personal; the posts enhanced their prestige, but more importantly provided another salary and source of fees to help the clerks establish financial security. Further discussion on the financial aspects, the role of patronage and competition for these offices will appear in the next chapter. However, for the purpose of this discussion, it is necessary to mention these offices now, as they formed an important part of the careers of the clerks outside the Privy Council chamber.

The majority of the additional offices held by the clerks were other clerkships or appointments as a secretary. Having previously acquired the necessary skills and experience necessary to fill these posts while clerks of the Privy Council, their service made them perfect candidates for these additional positions. The most significant office that multiple clerks held was the clerkship of the Parliament, particularly as it provided another avenue for the clerks to enter and serve the Council in that arena. Four clerks of the Privy Council held the office either of deputy clerk or clerk of the Parliaments during their careers, namely William Paget, John Mason, Armagil Waad and Thomas Smith 2. These dual clerks highlight two important facts: the interrelationship between numerous clerks and their offices, and the fact that many clerks held several offices simultaneously.

¹⁷⁰ These were Rogers who acquired his clerkship late in life, and spent most of his time overseas, Wilkes who also spent the majority of his career overseas, and Thomas whose clerkship was so short he did not have the time.

The clerkship of the Parliaments was an office similar to that of the clerk of the Privy Council. Both clerks' primary responsibility was to write and preserve the records of the body they served; the clerks of the Parliament served the House of Lords.¹⁷¹ Although the clerk of the Parliament served only intermittently, dependant on Parliamentary sessions, the work of the office was roughly the same as that of the clerks of the Privy Council. Unsurprisingly, the same men were selected for both clerkships. In 1541 William Paget, the first and then only clerk of the Privy Council, became a clerk of the Parliament.¹⁷² Additionally he also simultaneously held the office of clerk of the Signet.¹⁷³ Although Paget held the clerkship of three government offices, he worked, from 1541 to 1543, as resident ambassador to France.¹⁷⁴ During his absence, Paget required someone to fulfil the duties of his office, which led to the appointment of John Mason as both acting clerk of the Privy Council and deputy clerk of the Parliament.¹⁷⁵ Upon Paget's return in 1542, Mason advanced to Paget's place as clerk of the Council, while Paget joined the Privy Council itself. Although both men kept their places as clerk and deputy clerk of the Parliaments, an additional clerk, Thomas Knight, joined Paget as joint clerk of the Parliaments.¹⁷⁶ Paget, as well as another clerk of the Privy Council William Honing, knew Knight, as he worked as a clerk of the Signet, just as Paget and Honing did, in addition to his new post as clerk of the Parliament. Seven years after the addition of Knight as a clerk of the Parliament, Paget gave up this clerkship in favour of his long-time deputy John Mason who now yielded his Privy Council clerkship in favour of a place on the Privy Council, just as Paget did. As a Councillor, Mason, like Paget before him, employed a deputy to fill his office as clerk of the Parliament. He selected another Privy Council clerk, Armagil Waad and so, in just nine years time, three Privy Council clerks successively rotated positions as deputy clerk and clerk of both the Parliaments and the Privy Council.¹⁷⁷ Particularly striking is how John Mason followed

¹⁷¹ For more on clerks of the Parliament see Michael A.R. Graves, *The House of Lords in the Parliaments of Edward VI and Mary I* (Cambridge, 1981), 120-123; and Andrew Thrush, "The House of Lords' Records Repository and the Clerk of the Parliaments' House: A Tudor Achievement," *Parliamentary History*, 21, (2002), 367-373.

¹⁷² *L&P*, XVI, 504, 1056(64).

¹⁷³ *L&P*, XVI, 239, 502(13).

¹⁷⁴ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F70.

¹⁷⁵ "Mason, Sir John (c.1503-1566)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁷⁶ *CPR, Edward VI*, III, 298-9. For a full list of the clerks of the Parliament see

http://www.parliament.uk/faq/lords_cofp.cfm

¹⁷⁷ "Waad, Armagil (c.1510-1568)" in *OxfordDNB*.

William Paget step for step in both clerkships before joining him on the Privy Council and later sharing the office of Masters of the Posts.¹⁷⁸

Mason and Paget were not the only clerks to hold multiple posts, or more particularly, to hold the dual posts of clerk of the Parliament and Privy Council. In 1597, Thomas Smith 2, a clerk of the Privy Council for two years, petitioned for the office of Parliament clerk on the day of the death of Anthony Wycke, Mason's adopted son who held the post for twenty-five years.¹⁷⁹ Smith succeeded in obtaining the post, and for the following eight years held both clerkships simultaneously.¹⁸⁰ The clerkship of the Parliament was not the only additional clerkship held by the Council clerks. As already mentioned, two men served as clerks of Parliament, while two others acted as deputy clerk. Additionally Honing and Paget held the office of clerks of the Signet, Edmondes held the reversion to the clerkship of the Crown, and William Smith was granted for life "the office commonly called 'the office of clerke of Hell' alias 'clerke of the treasure house of our court of the Common Pleas at Westmynster.'" ¹⁸¹ In addition to these clerkships, the Privy Council clerks held a variety of secretarial positions. Beale acted three times as Secretary of State during Walsingham's absences from London, Mason as secretary for the French Tongue, Thomas Smith 2 for Latin, and Ashley as the secretary for the Cadiz expedition in 1596.¹⁸² Additionally, as previously mentioned, both Beale and Cheke served as secretaries to the Council in the North. While the university education and work experience of the clerks qualified them for these positions, the selections were individual and based on their personal abilities. For example, John Mason was an appropriate choice for secretary of the French tongue because, not only had he travelled extensively on the continent, but also lived in Paris as a King's scholar after completing his degrees at Oxford. Similarly, Anthony Ashley was suitable to serve as secretary of war on the Cadiz expedition in 1596 as he worked in a similar position of overseeing the booty during the Portugal expedition in 1589.

¹⁷⁸ While it is important that John Mason followed so closely in the footsteps of William Paget, it is equally significant that both men held several posts simultaneously. For example, from 1545 to 1549 Paget held at least four offices, as Privy Councillor, clerk of the Parliament and Signet and Master of the Posts, all of which required a great deal of time. Similarly, John Mason, from 1550 until his death in 1566 held the offices of Privy Councillor, clerk of the Signet, and Master of the Posts with Paget.

¹⁷⁹ Hatfield House, Herts., Cecil MS 53/30.

¹⁸⁰ "Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁸¹ *L&P*, XVI, 239, 614; *CPR, Mary*, IV, 459-60; Bindoff, II, 383; "Edmondes, Sir Thomas (d.1639)" in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁸² NA SP 78/10/32; "Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609)" in *OxfordDNB*; *L&P*, XVI, 565; "Ashley, Sir Anthony" in *OxfordDNB*.

Just as the clerks were well-suited to the additional clerkship and secretarial posts they acquired, they were similarly suited for other positions. As part of their duties discussed earlier as clerks of the Council, the men frequently handled money matters. For example William Smith handled the payment of three individuals for expenses incurred while arraigning and indicting various rebels in Kent in 1554, and the Council authorized William Honing to receive one hundred pounds to be employed as directed by the Council for provision for the war with Scotland in 1543.¹⁸³ The handling of such financial matters was familiar to the clerks, and three held additional offices relating to this. Thomas Chaloner was the treasurer for the expedition to Ireland in 1551, but more significantly a teller of the Exchequer. Not long after, Francis Allen and Barnard Hampton were both appointed remembrancers of the Exchequer.¹⁸⁴ Although different in nature to these positions in the financial arena of administration, several clerks held additional posts significant enough that they warrant mentioning. William Waad received two different yet important offices. The first was Muster Master in the Low Countries in 1600, appropriate for a man with previous experience in the country.¹⁸⁵ Five years later Waad received the office of Lieutenant of the Tower of London, a perfect task for him, considering his lengthy experience in dealing with spies and prisoners which will be discussed further.¹⁸⁶ Finally, other important appointments occurred, including that of Thomas Smith 2 as Master of Requests, and Daniel Rogers as keeper of the Privy Seal.¹⁸⁷

Although it may seem difficult for men such as these clerks to hold multiple offices simultaneously, particularly clerkships which required so much time, it was possible to do so. A.J. Slavin, in his work on Sir Ralph Sadler, explained in detail how Sadler managed to coordinate his duties as a Privy Councillor, notary of the Chancery, clerk of the Hanaper and Master of the Great Wardrobe, as well as other offices, with efficiency and ability, and to his great financial advantage.¹⁸⁸ Sadler, while Principal Secretary, handled the duties of that office on days on which the Council met, primarily Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday during his tenure, and dealt with his other offices on

¹⁸³ *APC*, I, 123, V, 113.

¹⁸⁴ *L&P*, XIX, ii, 412; *CPR, Mary*, IV, 428; *CPR, Elizabeth*, IV, 65; *APC*, III, 224.

¹⁸⁵ *APC*, XXX, 371; Thomas Wilkes, with significantly more experience in the Low Countries would most likely have been appointed by the Privy Council for this task, but he died on a mission to France two years previously.

¹⁸⁶ *APC*, XXXII, 406.

¹⁸⁷ "Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609)" in *Oxford DNB*; NA SP 12/211/10.

¹⁸⁸ A.J. Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547* (Cambridge, 1966), 158-187.

other days. The clerks likely used similar scheduling to handle their additional offices. However a set schedule was not always possible, as in the case of John Mason. In the first months of 1543, while Mason was acting clerk of the Privy Council and deputy clerk of the Parliament during that Parliamentary session, the days of meeting of the Council and the Lords almost completely overlapped, eliminating the possibility of an arrangement like Sadler's.¹⁸⁹ Mason managed to compensate by leaving some register entries incomplete, only recording those in attendance, and having more complete entries later.¹⁹⁰ That January roughly half of the days that Council and Lords meetings overlapped Mason resorted to perfunctory register entries, but by April he must have adjusted enough to the demands of both offices that no such entries were necessary, and at the end of the month the record including his appointment as clerk was detailed and complete.

Some offices, particularly those requiring travel outside of London, caused severe restrictions on the ability of the clerks to perform them. To solve this problem the clerks employed deputies to fill their offices, just as others appointed them as deputy in offices as well. Thomas Danett explained to Lord Burghley in 1595 that he sought to work as Beale's deputy as secretary to the Council in the North, for which he had been outbidden before, but now had sufficient funds to, with Burghley's help, acquire the post.¹⁹¹ Just as John Mason repeatedly worked as William Paget's deputy, so others became the clerk's deputies as they filled the numerous offices they acquired during their clerkship. Through hard work and coordination like that of Sir Ralph Sadler, and the assistance of deputies like Thomas Danett, the clerks succeeded in fulfilling the duties of these additional offices while remaining clerks of the Privy Council.

The additional offices acquired by the clerks during their clerkships, whether secretarial or not, provided both prestige and funding, both of which the clerks, particularly those serving under Elizabeth, needed to sustain themselves at court. Together with their work abroad and as members of Parliament, the clerks developed careers connected to but not dependent on their office of clerk of the Privy Council. It is important to remember, however, that their assignments abroad, election to Parliament, and additional offices were all largely dependent on the need and assistance of the Privy Council. However, the one office most clerks sought for their own purposes, as Justices

¹⁸⁹ For example, in April 1543, Privy Council meetings coincided with the Lords on seventeen of the eighteen days that the Lords met that month.

¹⁹⁰ This occurred on January 23, 25 and 27, February 9, 13, and 24, and March 2, 6-8, and 11.

¹⁹¹ *HMCS*, V, 195.

of the Peace, while still connected to the Council, primarily reflects the clerks' desire for enhanced personal prestige and not the needs of the Privy Council. The tasks involved in their service as justices are not as important as what their commissions reveal. Just as with their elections as MPs, similar factors of status, location and office influenced these appointments, as did their personal circumstances and their clerkship. Their efforts to secure these commissions and their success in acquiring them, both through their office and personal standing, demonstrate that the clerks succeeded in using their time as clerk and work as JPs to reinforce their personal and professional position.

Justices of the Peace, or JPs, were men appointed by the Lord Chancellor to administrate the counties at a local level.¹⁹² The Lord Chancellor appointed men of standing in each county to act as Justices of the Peace to handle local government, but also to monitor what occurred there and pass on orders of the Council.¹⁹³ Such duties made it natural that the Chancellor include the clerks of the Privy Council, who knew the concerns of the government and became prominent men through their service, in these appointments. Although an unpaid office, men sought it primarily to confirm their standing in the community. Through their service they acted as a link to the counties and local administration. They completed a variety of tasks as JPs: for example, Edmund Tremayne went to force men to return to Plymouth during an outbreak of plague to ensure the defence of the city, and twelve years later William Waad went to stop a feast in Stratford on the road to Essex, to stop the spread of plague.¹⁹⁴ They also handled troop musters, the collection of tax, and executing proclamations, such as those regarding markets and the price of maize.¹⁹⁵ While these tasks seem menial, the clerks were the appropriate choice for such tasks, as they knew the areas, local officials, and gentry.

Of the nineteen clerks, we know at least twelve joined commissions of the peace either during or after their service as clerks of the Privy Council. This fact reflects two very significant things. First, the majority of the clerks worked lifelong for the crown, usually holding their clerkships for at least a decade, particularly in the cases of the Marian and Elizabethan clerks.¹⁹⁶ These extended careers, which include seven who

¹⁹² Mary Dewar, ed., *De Republica Anglorum*, (Cambridge, 1982); Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1583) 67-8.

¹⁹³ See Charles Austin Beard, *The Office of Justice of the Peace in England and its Origin and Development* (New York, 1905) 114 – 138.

¹⁹⁴ *APC*, XII, 91, XXIII, 85, XXIV, 389.

¹⁹⁵ *APC*, XXV, 97, XVI, 77; *CPR*, *Edward VI*, IV, 356, V, 358.

¹⁹⁶ For those whose service as clerks ended sooner, the end of their clerkship did not necessarily indicate an end to government employment. Of the seven only two did not continue significant government employment: Armagil Waad, who, although he occasionally performed tasks for the Council, effectively

died in office, made it logical that at some point in their careers, as they rose in rank and prominence, the Chancellor called upon them to serve as JPs. Second, over their extensive careers, most of the clerks gained sufficient land and standing in a particular county to warrant their appointment on their own merits. This will be discussed more later, however their land acquisitions reiterate the benefit of their long service which provided the opportunity to acquire manors and land and enhance their county prestige. Despite lengthy service and time to increase their standing in the counties, some clerks never joined commissions of the peace during their lifetime.¹⁹⁷

We know of four clerks who did not become JPs during their lifetimes: Francis Allen, William Thomas, Daniel Rogers and Thomas Smith 2. In some cases the reasons for this are clearer than others, and although each case is different, they all demonstrate the factors accounted for when appointing JPs. The earliest example is William Thomas. Several reasons explain the lack of service, including his Welsh heritage, and although he acquired additional land while a clerk, he did not establish any permanent landholdings outside of Wales, and his lack of presence within Wales likely precluded an appointment there. Additionally, because he only lived in England from 1548 until his death in 1554, and was only a clerk from 1550 to 1553, during which time he lived primarily at court, he had very little time to establish himself in an English county. For William Thomas, the main barrier to securing any local standing was time. The second clerk chronologically was Francis Allen. A Marian clerk, Allen kept his clerkship after Elizabeth's accession. However his strong Catholic ties occasionally led to suspicion. In particular Ralph Sadler accused Allen of spying for the Catholic Earl of Northumberland in 1559.¹⁹⁸ Allen's name disappears from Council records from 1568, and Northumberland was beheaded in 1572 following the Northern Rising. Whether the two events are related is unknown, yet suspicion of Allen most likely followed him throughout his career, likely influencing the Lord Chancellor to neglect appointing him

retired after being replaced at Queen Mary's accession, and William Thomas, executed for treason just a year after losing his clerkship. The other five continued to work steadily for the crown, with three advancing to become two Principal Secretaries and a Councillor. These were Paget, Mason, Honing, Chaloner and Thomas Smith 1.

¹⁹⁷ The service of three clerks as JPs is uncertain: Thomas Edmondes, Barnard Hampton and William Smith. Edmondes probably served eventually, particularly since he became a knight, a member of Parliament several times, and later a member of the Privy Council. However, since he also spent numerous years on diplomatic missions abroad, his name might not have appeared in the commissions. We can be fairly certain that Barnard Hampton never served as a justice. No such mention of Hampton appears in the extant state papers, and although he owned an estate in Devon, he does not appear in county records or as a MP. The other clerk, William Smith, is indistinguishable from numerous contemporaries, making it impossible to know if he participated in a commission.

¹⁹⁸ *CSPF, Elizabeth, 1558-9, 566.*

as a Justice. In addition to potential suspicion, Allen lacked the standing in his home county to merit an appointment as a JP. Originally from Lincolnshire, he served in Parliament for Boston, thirty miles from his birthplace in Grantham, yet he failed during the course of his service in government to acquire any landholdings in that or any other county. Additionally, the prohibitive distance between London and Lincolnshire, approximately one hundred miles, made establishing himself in the county impractical for a man required to frequently attend the Council at court. Due to the suspicion, and more so for his lack of landholding, the Lord Chancellor likely deemed Allen inappropriate for a commission of the peace.

A lack of land proved problematic for Francis Allen, and the same held true for Daniel Rogers. Although born in England, Rogers' father, a cleric, was martyred, leaving no land behind and resulting in the younger Rogers living in exile. Following his return upon Elizabeth's accession, Rogers studied at Oxford and promptly returned to the continent to begin his diplomatic service. Daniel Rogers spent all but two of the next twenty years abroad, following which he became a clerk of the Privy Council. Unsurprisingly, Rogers had no local ties, particularly since, following his clerkship late in life he returned to the continent twice, returning to England just prior to his death. Of Rogers' twenty-six years of government service, he spent twenty-two abroad, making him an inappropriate choice to handle administration in a county he never lived in.

The final clerk was Thomas Smith 2, with problems similar to Rogers'. While Rogers worked continuously overseas, thus precluding establishing any prominent standing in a county, Thomas Smith 2 lived almost continuously in London. In his first employment from the mid 1580s until 1595 as a secretary to the Earl of Essex, he of necessity resided with the earl.¹⁹⁹ Following his appointment as a clerk of the Privy Council in 1595, Smith began residing in London and although he owned a home in his home county of Berkshire, he remained in London in government employ until his death. Although Smith had the opportunity to establish himself in his native county, he did not do so, nor did he acquire land in other counties. As a London resident, a prominent government official and a knight, Smith most likely did not feel the need to seek an appointment as a Justice of the Peace. The example of these clerks demonstrate some of the reasons that kept prominent officials from being appointed Justices of the Peace. From lack of land and lack of time, to an absence from the counties or the country, a

¹⁹⁹ "Smith, Sir Thomas (c.1556-1609)" in *Oxford DNB*.

variety of reasons, including indifference, precluded a clerk from becoming a JP.

Despite the fact that several clerks never served on these commissions, most clerks of the Privy Council did so at some point in their careers. Just as with those who did not serve, there are various reasons why this occurred: the appointment related to their service, the clerks sought it through a patron, or the clerks, because of their position were simply the most logical choice.

The first and very specific reason for an appointment as a JP was that it directly related to their government service. The two clerks for whom this is most distinct are Robert Beale and Henry Cheke. In 1586 Robert Beale became secretary to the Council in the North, held at York.²⁰⁰ Although Beale primarily fulfilled the post through a deputy, he was appropriately named JP for two of the counties under the Council's jurisdiction, Durham and Westmoreland, in 1591. Beale had no land in the north and no other ties to the region excepting another office he held in 1590 as bailiff of the duchy of Lancaster liberty.²⁰¹ Henry Cheke, the secretary to the Council of the North that Beale replaced, received the office in 1581.²⁰² Two years later Cheke became a JP, not for his native Bedfordshire or Surrey where he lived previously, but all five counties under the authority of the Council of the North. Such an appointment is impressive and, for a clerk of the Privy Council, completely unprecedented, even for those clerks who joined the Privy Council. These multiple appointments were not, however, uncharacteristic of those of other secretaries of the northern Council. Essentially their appointments were ex officio by virtue of the office they held, just as with their Parliamentary seats. All six of the Tudor secretaries to that Council were appointed JPs during their office for at least one of the northern counties, and two secretaries Thomas Eynns and Ralph Rokeby were, like Cheke, appointed JPs to several northern counties simultaneously.²⁰³ In these cases, the connection between the offices of Justice of the Peace and secretary to the Council of the North is distinct, making it unsurprising that both Robert Beale and Henry Cheke became JPs while filling that office. Cheke moved to York for his work with that Council and remained there, continuing as a JP, until his death at York in 1586, after which Beale replaced him. Like Beale, Cheke had no land in the north, nor any other ties there through family, marriage, or patronage. For both, the only reason was the office they held.

²⁰⁰ *CPR, L&I* 294, 7; *NA SP* 15/31/39.

²⁰¹ Hasler, I, 412.

²⁰² *CPR, Elizabeth*, IX, 106; *APC*, XIV, 133.

²⁰³ Hasler, I,452; II, 95-6; III, 303; Bindoff, III, 508-9.

Government service was not the only reason for an appointment as a JP. Some clerks actively sought the post through the help of a patron. While not always necessary for the clerks, particularly since the Lord Chancellor who handled the appointments was a member of the Privy Council, some clerks took this added measure, a strong example being Anthony Ashley. In 1594 Ashley, already a clerk of the Privy Council, sought a place as a Justice with the help of his brother, Robert. Robert already served Sir John Puckering, a noted lawyer and the new Lord Chancellor.²⁰⁴ The two Ashleys succeeded in gaining the elder brother's appointment in 1594. Following Puckering's death in 1596, Robert Ashley tried to ingratiate himself with the new Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas Egerton, through a literary work on honour, but failed to enter his service. It is clear, however, that his efforts with the previous Chancellor, Puckering, bore fruit for Anthony Ashley.

A connection to the Lord Chancellor, in charge of naming JPs, certainly aided Anthony Ashley, as the Chancellor was the ideal patron in this circumstance. However, a reasonably poor relationship with the Chancellor did not preclude a commission. William Honing had at best an indifferent relationship with Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and the Marian Lord Chancellor. Honing's relationship with Gardiner began as a professional one: Gardiner was a Henrician Councillor and Honing was a clerk. Following the death of Henry VIII, however, the Council removed Gardiner from its ranks. At the first Edwardian Parliament, Honing sat for Winchester, a seat Gardiner ordinarily controlled, but Gardiner spent most of that Parliamentary session in the Fleet. Only six months after Gardiner's release from the Fleet, he was sent to the Tower of London, due to his opposition to Protector Somerset's religious reforms, whereupon the Privy Council called upon Honing who, along with Sir Ralph Sadler, sealed Gardiner's home.²⁰⁵ Queen Mary released Gardiner at the outset of her reign; Honing in the meantime, had lost his clerkship three years previously for his support of Somerset. Although no longer a clerk of the Council, he remained a clerk of the Signet and a significant landholder in Suffolk. When Honing joined a commission of the peace in 1554, he and the new Lord Chancellor Gardiner could not have held more opposing religious views, and probably had little liking for each other personally. However, as a clerk of the Signet and a landowner, Honing participated in the commission for Suffolk from 1554 until his death in 1569. While William Honing did not have the patronage of

²⁰⁴ "Ashley, Robert (1565-1641) in *OxfordDNB*.

²⁰⁵ *APC*, II, 210.

the Lord Chancellor as Anthony Ashley did, he held a significant government post and owned at least two manors in that county.²⁰⁶ Essentially, Honing was one of the many men who became JPs due to their personal standing.

Most of the clerks shared this reason for their appointment. Two good, yet slightly different examples are Edmund Tremayne and William Waad. Edmund Tremayne's appointment arose from the most traditional reason for naming a JP: the position of a man and his family in the county. Edmund Tremayne, born in Devon, was through his mother Philippa, a member of the extended Courtenay family, hereditary Earls of Devon. Edmund was in fact the fourth cousin twice removed of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, the last Plantagenet heir and, while he lived, a potential husband for the Princess Elizabeth. The Courtenay family dominated Devon, and although Tremayne was a member of the extended family, he was still very much a part of it. He entered the Earl's service in 1553, remaining with him through his incarceration in the Tower and exile in Italy. Following the Earl's death Tremayne became deputy butler of Devonshire, partly through family connections and the help of Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, a Privy Councillor and Lord Lieutenant of several counties, including Devon. In 1571 Tremayne became a clerk of the Privy Council, and the following year he sat in Parliament for Plymouth. The same year he inherited his family's estates, following the death of his brother Roger, and began in 1574 to renovate the principal home in Collacombe.²⁰⁷ His standing in the county increased in 1576 when he married Eulalia, daughter of Sir John St. Leger, also of Devon and, like Tremayne, a distant Plantagenet relative. Just a year after his marriage and only five years after becoming a clerk of the Privy Council, Edmund Tremayne joined Devon's commission for the peace, a status he maintained for the rest of his life.

William Waad also had family connections, although not nearly as strong as Tremayne, and was also a clerk of the Privy Council when he became a JP, yet the circumstances of his appointment owe as much to his location as anything else. William, the son of a previous Council clerk Armagil Waad, inherited the estate his father acquired after the latter's death in 1568. Although the estate in Middlesex was significant (Armagil Waad had been a JP for the county for the final eight years of his life), William Waad was still attending to his education, entering Gray's Inn in 1571, and so lived in London. Beginning in 1572 he entered the service of his father's friend Lord

²⁰⁶ *L&P*, XIX, ii, 800(10), 471.

²⁰⁷ "Tremayne" in *OxfordDNB*.

Burghley, who sponsored him on his European travels. From 1576 to 1587, William Waad worked almost continuously overseas, being only briefly in England for part of 1581 and 1582 when he served as secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham and then received his clerkship of the Privy Council. Although nominally a clerk, it was only after a trying mission to France in 1587 to explain the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, that he returned to live in England and fulfil his clerkship. Throughout this period Waad still owned the family home in Middlesex where his other siblings presumably resided during his long absence. Although a landowner and a clerk of the Privy Council for years, it was only until four years after his return to England that William Waad, now married and an acting clerk, joined the commission of the peace for his home county of Middlesex, in which he continued until his death over thirty years later.

These clerks exemplify the many factors taken into account by the Lord Chancellor when appointing a JP. From family connections, landholding and standing in a county, to their patrons, service, clerkship and physical presence, the clerks exemplify the numerous qualifications of JPs. Although having the right combination of these requirements proved difficult, it is nevertheless not surprising that at least twelve of the nineteen clerks, at some point in their long careers, joined commissions of the peace. Some worked hard for the position, while others received it automatically because of their position in both the county and the government. Although unpaid for their service, the commission declared their importance and further connected them to the administration in the county as well as in London. In summary, these appointments highlight several important aspects of the lives and careers of the clerks of the Privy Council. First, that they sought and obtained these commissions, both for the prestige they granted, and for the importance to the crown and county administration which they confirmed. Second, through their personal standing, long service and professional aptitude, they earned a place on these commissions. Finally, through the help of a patron, clerks still working to enhance their position served as Justices of the Peace. Most importantly, these commissions required effort, and the fact that the majority of the clerks worked so diligently to join these commissions, confirms their desire to prove their status as leading gentlemen in the counties, and demonstrates that they utilized their service and connections in London to achieve that goal. Overall, their work as JPs reflects more on the desires of the clerks than the necessities of government.

The nineteen clerks participated in a wide variety of areas in addition to their daily work as clerks of the Privy Council. They were JPs, MPs, as well as holding

numerous smaller offices. Additionally they worked as foreign envoys and joined in intelligence operations, all while still acting as clerks. Some of their activities were unique to them as a group, and others were standard for courtiers and officials of the day. Most of the work was time consuming, laborious, dangerous, and of little or no monetary value. Yet the work was not without some benefit. The clerks gained prestige, some money, an acknowledgement of their position, and the chance to be involved in key matters of state. The negative aspects to the contrary, the clerks, through their own standing and with the help of patrons, sought out these opportunities, and accepted the others that came at the direction of the crown. Through their work they expanded their knowledge base and broadened their careers, demonstrating their capacity in a variety of arenas and making them valuable government agents. Overall, their activities worked to cement both their personal and professional position. While always servants of the crown and Privy Council, these offices broadened their careers in areas they selected and worked toward. These offices demonstrate that the crown, Councillors and the clerks themselves saw these men as being more than simply clerks of the Council, but life-long capable servants of the crown, to be aided and utilized as occasion warranted.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECURITY AND ADVANCEMENT

The clerks of the Privy Council, as royal servants and university graduates, were gentlemen, by position if not necessarily by birth. However, they did not necessarily hold the title or land to confirm this, nor did their clerkship salaries alone allow them to find security financially. In order to find this security the clerks needed the help of the crown and patrons, particularly from within the Privy Council, to help them get the grants, land and titles they needed to live securely as gentlemen regardless of what might happen in their office. Security was possible through a seat on the Privy Council, and the precedent for a clerk to advance was set from the beginning by William Paget and reinforced when John Mason and Thomas Smith¹ advanced, yet they advanced during times of change. Later clerks, particularly those who served under Elizabeth and her relatively static Privy Council, saw that advancement was much less likely, and most of the clerks of the Privy Council remained clerks until the end of their careers. Therefore, they needed to continually seek means of securing their position financially and socially to anticipate the time when they no longer worked for the crown. Their efforts to achieve a measure of security while concurrently using those efforts to advance themselves on both a personal and professional level give added context to their simultaneous work for the Council as clerks and as crown officials in other capacities discussed above. Overall it is important to understand that becoming clerks of the Privy Council did not end their labours for their personal or professional advancement.

The clerks of the Privy Council faced numerous difficulties following their appointment, not the least of which were vague status and tenuous finances. While the clerks were not courtiers, they frequently worked at court and so sought ways to confirm their standing as gentlemen to make themselves more comfortable in that atmosphere. They achieved this primarily through grants of arms, licenses and the acquisition of land from the crown. Yet this could not be achieved without the help of patrons, preferably Privy Councillors, who pushed their petitions. The patronage system the clerks entered was not without its challenges and drawbacks, but with help the clerks gained financial security and a further clarification of their status as gentlemen. Through begging, toadying, and proving their genuine need, the clerks received the help they needed to secure their position and enhance their family prospects.

The difficulty of position for the clerks is one that has been discussed before, primarily in reference to their service abroad, yet this difficulty appeared in their work at home as well. The clerks worked with the Privy Council, which of necessity met as near as possible to the monarch and court, arenas where social standing was a vital issue. With matters of protocol continuously evident, it was necessary for the clerks to clarify their position in relation not only to the Privy Councillors but also to other courtiers and gentlemen surrounding the monarch. As office-holders, the clerks of the Privy Council were ranked in relation to each other through seniority, and in relation to other clerks through accepted protocol. Seniority was not only reflected in the early years of the clerkship in their salary, but additionally in formal events. When the clerks were collectively knighted by James I upon his arrival to London in 1603, the clerks were knighted in the order in which they had been appointed; William Waad appointed 1584, Thomas Smith 2 appointed 1598, and Thomas Edmondes appointed 1599.¹ On that occasion, as well as others, their position in relation to other officials was also reflected. Julius Caesar and Roger Wilbraham, both Masters of Requests, were knighted before the clerks of the Privy Council, who were then followed by Thomas Lake and John Wood, clerks of the Signet.² A similar order of precedence is reflected in other formal occasions, such as the following, the proceedings at the presentation of the speaker of the House of Commons, in October 1566. An observer recorded the order of the entry of the clerks in relation to others:

And on the nether sacke sate Mr Vaughan and Yale, Masters of the Chancery, Mr Spilman, clerke of the parliament, Mr Martyn, clerk of the Crowne, and Mr Pole his ioynt-pattentee, and behinde them kneeled Smyth, clerk of the counsell and Jones, clerk of the signet, Permitter and Dister.³

At such events the relative status of the clerks of the Privy Council was clearly evident and established. Yet, since the clerks as well as others they worked with held numerous posts and performed a variety of duties, distinctions of place and rank in daily life were much less clear, leading to a variety of difficulties involving protocol and seniority, even in matters as simple as to whom to address a letter. For example, Robert Beale was concerned about the protocol necessary in addressing a letter regarding Mary Queen of Scots. He knew to report to Walsingham but since he was working with the Earl of

¹ William Shaw, *Knights of England*, (Baltimore, 1971), II, 109. Anthony Ashley, still a clerk at the time, had already been knighted.

² Shaw, *Knights of England*, II, 109.

³ T. E. Hartley, ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, (Leicester, 1981), I, 125.

Shrewsbury, a Privy Councillor, he “thought it best to address the letter to her majesty; wherein if there be any default I shall desire that it may be excused and pardoned.”⁴

Such protocol difficulties spilled over into the clerks’ work and gave rise to resentment from others. William Waad, when sent abroad on an errand to the French king, faced problems with the ambassador. Apparently the ambassador became angry that Waad was sent, “whereat he entered into great choler that I was deputed in a matter begun by him... and would not suffer one that lived here under order to serve him, to undermine him.”⁵ Beale endured similar difficulties of credit and place in the simple matter of signing a letter. The question arose between himself and Dr. Parkins about who was of higher rank. In the first letter that Beale was prepared to send, he signed his name in the second place leaving the third space for Parkins, yet Parkins refused to sign. Beale explained the debate that ensued:

Afterwards he brought another letter unto us wherein his name was set before mine. I know no cause why I should – apart from Her Majesty’s service – concede this to him. He pretendeth to be a Master of Requests; but this title gives no precedence, except while held... For twenty-five years and more I have been a clerk of the Privy Council; I am a Master of the Chancery; have served as a Counsellor for the Queen with the Estates of the United Provinces, and am one of the Council established in the North Parts... As you are the chief person under whom I serve the Queen, I would ask that neither I nor my place may be disgraced without desert.⁶

The difficulties the clerks faced while working at home were not about their authority or connection to the Privy Council. “At issue was a question of *status* rather than *power*,” and the status of the clerks was in question.⁷ Although the clerks spent their days working with the Privy Council, their social standing was nowhere near that of the Privy Councillors. Privy Councillors were at least knights or clergymen of high standing, yet the clerks, at their appointment, barely held the status of gentlemen derived from their university studies. Since they had advanced to a position or relative authority, a similar advancement or at the very least a clarification was necessary to balance the new position. Lawrence Stone explained “When mobility occurs, it is hastily made respectable by the fiction of gentle birth and the official stamp of rank or title.”⁸ The official stamp in the Tudor period was an armorial grant from the College of Arms, a

⁴ *CSP, MQS*, 1581-3, 395-6.

⁵ NA SP 89/1/52; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1581-2, 133-7.

⁶ *HMCS*, VII, 404-5.

⁷ W. Prest, “The Legal Education of the Gentry at the Inns of Court,” *Past and Present*, 38 (1967) 26; Emphasis by Prest.

⁸ Lawrence Stone, “The Inflation of Honours 1558-1641,” *Past and Present*, 14 (1958) 45.

convenient way to distinguish nobles and gentry from the rest of English society. It also divided those who could potentially participate in political life and those excluded from it.⁹ This is not to say that every gentlemen required a personal grant of arms to participate in government or to be considered a gentleman. If a man came from a gentry family then an individual grant was unnecessary to clarify his position. The primary purpose of the grant was to “establish the gentility of persons whose status was doubtful,” and most of the clerks fell into this category.¹⁰

William Harrison, a sixteenth century historian explained the situation well with the following remark:

Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, who so abideth in the university giving his mind to the book... or besides his.. good counsel given at home, whereby his commonwealth is benefited, can live without manual labour, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall for money have a coat of arms bestowed upon him by heralds... and thereunto being made so good cheap be called master, which is the title men give to esquires and gentlemen, and reputed for a gentlemen ever after.¹¹

Of the nineteen clerks, ten received armorial grants and the other nine did not.¹² To further understand their situation, we can make suppositions as to why these men either did or did not gain grants. To begin with, there is the issue of family and whether these men had the family background to justify the grants or make them unnecessary. Several clerks did not need grants for this reason. For example, Henry Cheke’s father John had been knighted, Edmund Tremayne was part of the extended Courtenay family with royal ties, Daniel Rogers’ father was a famous clerical martyr, and Robert Beale was the brother-in-law of Sir Francis Walsingham one of the most dominant political figures of the day. Their status was relatively clear, yet others had family backgrounds which made it much less likely that anyone had held arms before them. William Thomas, for example, was Welsh, Thomas Wilkes’ parents are completely unknown, and of the rest only William Honing had any type of relationship to someone bearing arms, his great-uncle’s cousin Thomas Wriothesley who had been created a baron by Henry VIII. These

⁹ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, “England: The Crown and the New Aristocracy, 1540-1600,” *Past and Present*, 30 (1965) 52.

¹⁰ Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England: A History of the Office and College of Arms* (London, 1967) 204.

¹¹ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, 187, quoted from William Harrison’s *Description of England in Shakespeare’s Youth*.

¹² The ten were Allen, Chaloner, Edmondes, Honing, Paget, William Smith, Thomas, both Armagil and William Waad, and Wilkes. For these grants see W. Harry Rylands, ed., *Grantees of arms named in docquets and patents to the end of the seventeenth century* (London, 1915) 3, 49, 81, 132, 188, 236, 251, 264, 279.

clerks who received grants needed them to establish themselves as the gentlemen they had become.

As mentioned above, part of how these men became gentlemen was through their time at university and there is an interesting correlation between the clerks who attended and those who received grants. Of the ten clerks who received grants, only four are known to have completed degrees at a university.¹³ The other five, not having these degrees to denote them as gentlemen, used armorial grants to make up for this lack. On the other hand, of the nine clerks who did not receive grants, only two had not attended university, Beale being the only one who attended but did not receive a degree.¹⁴ Since university attendance was used as a guideline in marking gentlemen, for these seven an armorial grant to further augment their status was unnecessary.

There is an interesting trend worth noting relating to these grants of arms and university degrees. During the reign of Henry VIII, three of the four clerks received grants, and two received degrees, William Paget receiving both. Under Edward VI, two had received grants and two degrees, Armagil Waad receiving both. Under Mary, both clerks received grants but neither received degrees. During Elizabeth's reign, only three of the nine received grants, while six of the nine had received degrees. There is definite transition between the majority of clerks gaining grants, to the majority graduating from university. This is even clearer when analysing the clerks in terms of those who were appointed either before or by Elizabeth I, splitting the number of clerks into virtually equal sections. Of the pre-Elizabethan clerks, seven of ten received grants of arms. This number dropped to only three of nine under Elizabeth, a decrease of thirty-seven percent. On the contrary, while only four of the ten pre-Elizabethan clerks had received degrees, this number rose to six out of nine during her reign, an increase of twenty-three percent. There are several conclusions to be drawn from this information. To begin with, studies at university, where the clerks studied under the influence of laws relating to the royal supremacy and the break with Rome, were much more important under Elizabeth's reign, whereas the lack of such training could have proved of benefit to the two clerks appointed by Mary. Additionally, it appears that over time, university attendance became more of basic qualification for a clerk of the Privy Council, while a clerk being established gentry through armorial grants seems to have been less important. The vital

¹³ These were Paget, both Waads and Wilkes. Chaloner attended university but did not graduate.

¹⁴ The nine who attended were Ashley, Beale, Cheke, Mason, Rogers, and both Thomas Smiths. The two who did not were Hampton and Tremayne.

point is that both university studies and armorial grants classified these men as part of the gentry, a class that most were not born into. Through their grants and degrees they entered the strata of society which enabled them to become courtiers and government officials.

While acquiring an armorial grant at any time was an aid to the clerks in achieving a higher social standing, another link between grants of arms and status is found in the timing of those grants. Three clerks, William Paget, Thomas Edmondes and Armagil Waad, all received their grants within a year of becoming clerk of the Privy Council. Edmondes received his virtually immediately afterward and Waad five months after his appointment, while Paget received his a year later when sent on a mission to France. For these men there is a direct correlation between their royal service and these grants. Yet two other clerks did not get grants until they had been clerks for years. Both Francis Allen and William Smith had been clerks for ten years and approaching retirement when they received grants. Most likely these men were considering firmly establishing their status before leaving their positions at court for life in the country. These armorial grants, and the different motivations for the clerks acquiring them, demonstrate the need these men had to clarify their status as gentlemen.

In order to obtain an armorial grant, petitioners had to prove that they were descended from a family who could trace their lineage back to the crossing of William the Conqueror, or at the very least, be the son of a man who either was or could have been granted arms. Even these requirements could be set aside if a man could prove that he had the property or funds to live as a gentleman. According to the regulation of fees set out by Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk, Earl Marshal from 1524-33, the cost of armorial grants varied according to a man's financial circumstance. For a man valued at over one hundred pounds in land or fees, a coat of arms cost ten marks. For men worth less than that in land but over one thousand marks in moveable goods, the charge was six pounds, and five pounds for a man worth less than either but over ten pounds of land or three pounds in moveable goods.¹⁵ As seemingly strict as these requirements were, calculating property value was impractical, so the heralds charged fees "by particular arrangement, which for the most part meant more."¹⁶ In 1637 Sir John Borough noted that he charged a minimum of twenty pounds.¹⁷

¹⁵ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, 166-7. One mark equals £6 13s 4d.

¹⁶ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, 119.

¹⁷ Wagner, *Heralds of England*, 119.

Such a cost was not exceptionally prohibitive, but the inconvenience could be. Before 1565, grants could be given at heraldic visitation or by a herald in London if the herald found the petition valid. However, in regulations set down in 1565 by Thomas Howard Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal from 1554 to 1572, any man seeking a coat of arms must be examined by the Duke himself or in his absence, the Earl of Leicester, or William Cecil Lord Burghley. For most petitioners, gaining access to one of these men could have proven difficult, yet for the clerks, who worked with these men daily, it would have been much simpler. For these men and many others with the necessary funds and access to court, an armorial grant was not difficult to acquire, and because of this the grants themselves lost some of their value.¹⁸ Between 1560 and 1589, more than two thousand armorial grants were given, yielding large sums for the heralds in their “particular arrangements,” the situation becoming such that the heralds’ venality was notorious. In 1616, the York Herald was so willing to grant arms regardless of the individual that he tricked Sir William Segar, the Garter King of Arms, into granting arms to the common hangman.¹⁹

Although the clerks, through their training and positions, were legitimately gentlemen, they continued to seek other means to prove and enhance this status. A knighthood furthered this ambition, yet, although the clerks could obtain armorial grants without help, knighthoods were not granted so easily. The bestowing of knighthood was a power reserved by the monarch, or someone such as the Earl Marshal acting in their behalf. It was originally meant to be an acknowledgment of service on the battlefield, but through the years was extended to men holding a high government post, or even further extended on state occasions, like coronations. It was not something which the clerks petitioned for, but rather an acknowledgement of their work and position.

There were nine clerks who were knighted during their lifetime. In the case of two, William Paget and Thomas Smith 1, they were knighted after becoming Principal Secretaries and Privy Councillors, appropriate to their new position.²⁰ The other seven were knighted for service in war or on a state occasion and both reasons are significant, though in different ways. The three men knighted for wartime service were Chaloner, Wilkes and Ashley. Thomas Chaloner was knighted by the Lord Protector and Earl Marshal Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset after the Battle of Pinkie in 1547, Thomas

¹⁸ For more on the problems relating to armorial grants see Wagner, *Heralds of England*, 199-222; and Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (London, 1982) 156-167.

¹⁹ Stone, “The Inflation of Honours 1558-1641,” 47.

²⁰ Shaw, *Knights of England*, II, 54, 65.

Wilkes was knighted in 1591 by the King of France, Henry of Navarre, for his earlier services during the religious wars, and Anthony Ashley was knighted by the Earl of Essex along with sixty-seven other men on the Cadiz expedition in 1596.²¹ These knighthoods are significant because they are a recognition, not of an office or an event, but of their individual actions in war. This is what a knighthood was originally intended to mean and the honour attached was undiminished by the later actions of the men who knighted them.

While the battlefield was the most traditional venue for a knighthood to be bestowed, a similarly traditional venue was a state occasion. John Mason, Thomas Edmondes, Thomas Smith² and William Waad were all knighted on such an occasion: Mason during the coronation festivities of Edward VI in February 1547, and the rest upon the arrival of James I to London in May 1603.²² Mason's knighthood was most likely part of the efforts of his colleague and former clerk William Paget and the new Lord Protector to secure support among key government officials in establishing control of the government and Regency Council. This knighthood was an acknowledgement of the man as much as the position, and the circumstances were similar in 1603 when Edmondes, Smith and Waad were knighted. Upon his arrival in May 1603, James I knighted the clerks of the Privy Council (Anthony Ashley, the fourth clerk, was already a knight when James arrived). Certainly this was an effort to show his magnanimity to the officers he inherited from Elizabeth I, but it was also an acknowledgement of the status due the office of clerk of the Privy Council. Although the prestige of their knighthoods is somewhat diminished by the fact that between his arrival in May 1603 and the end of the following year James knighted 1,159 men, it was also the start of a trend involving knighthoods for the clerks.²³ Although Elizabeth I had only two clerks who were knighted during her reign (neither by her or at her request), James I knighted fifteen of the twenty-three clerks who served during his reign, including Edmondes, Smith and Waad, and made another a baron.²⁴ Although the trend did not significantly continue following James' reign, these knighthoods and the additional prestige which accompanied them were a significant boost to the clerks of the Privy Council.

While armorial grants and knighthoods secured the clerks' status as gentlemen, that title would be worthless without the funds to support it. Part of being a gentleman

²¹ Shaw, *Knights of England*, II, 62, 89, 92.

²² Shaw, *Knights of England*, II, 59, 109.

²³ Stone, "The Inflation of Honours 1558-1641," 49.

²⁴ For information on these clerks see <http://www.history.ac.uk/office/privycouncil.html>.

was living the lifestyle of one, including having servants, rich clothing and a fine home, and that lifestyle could not be maintained without a significant amount of money. The income acquired by the clerks of the Privy Council came from two principal sources: the direct and indirect allowances given them by the government. Direct income consisted of their salaries, payment for supplies, the fees of their office, bouche of court, additional resources for expenses, and occasional wealth in the form of gifts and annuities from the crown. Indirect income stemmed from the licenses, land grants, wardships and additional offices acquired by the clerks. This money was indirect in that the financial gain was neither immediate nor specifically defined by the crown in these grants, and because these grants were only given or allowed by the crown after an appeal or request for them. Such assistance was on an individual basis and because of this, the clerks did not benefit equally from the largess of the crown. However, the clerks who were persistent and observant acquired the capital required to live out their lives as the gentlemen they were.

For all clerks of the Privy Council, the primary and most direct financial reward of their position was their salary. Unfortunately for the clerks, their salaries were not extravagant. Anthony Ashley explained to Sir Robert Cecil in a letter that when he was first sworn as a clerk extraordinary, he “had no manner of wages, fee or reward,” meaning that he worked without salary of any kind in the expectation of eventually becoming a clerk in ordinary.²⁵ Even as a clerk in ordinary, the men received very little to support themselves, and as the salaries were frozen at fifty pounds in 1553, the twelve clerks who served after that year faced inflation and rising prices with a salary worth less and less each year. Fortunately, the clerks’ salaries were not their only means of support derived from their office. To ensure their duties could be performed without difficulty, the clerks as a group received a quarterly stipend for the books, stands, pens and ink used to create the register book and write out the Council’s orders.²⁶ Additionally, as nominal servants of the office of Principal Secretary, they received bouche of court, or the permission and right to dine with the Principal Secretary each day they were attendant on the Privy Council.²⁷ While this was not a direct monetary compensation, it allowed the

²⁵ *HMCS*, IV, 439.

²⁶ E.g. *APC*, II, 156, 179, 218, 224.

²⁷ J. R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents A.D. 1485-1603 with an historical commentary* (Cambridge, 1951), 207-8; F.M. Greir Evans, “Emoluments of the Principal Secretaries of State in the Seventeenth Century,” *EHR*, 35 (1920), 513-528; *A collection of ordinances and regulations for the government of the Royal Household, made in divers reigns, from King Edward III. to King William and Queen Mary* (London, 1790), 183, 250; NA SP 12/235/9.

clerks to work at court without personal concerns, and further allowed them time each day with fellow clerks and the Principal Secretary.

There are another set of payments given to the clerks relating to their work. These were the extra payments to repay the clerks for travel expenses, and special services performed. The Exchequer rolls are filled with notations of such payments, among which were the following. “To Roberte Beall one of the clarkes of her Ma^{tie} privie counsaile... for his chardges being sent by her highness speciall commandndent to Sheffield for... her Ma^{tie} speciall affairs... xxx iii li vi s viii d.”²⁸ Another was to Thomas Wilkes “for his chardges and expenses in followinge of sondrie speciall services committed unto him for her Ma^{tie} in ridinge of jurneys hiringe of horses, travelinge by water etc. xx li.”²⁹ While these funds did not enhance the clerks’ financial prospects, they at least prevented the clerks from being harmed financially from performing their duties. However, as they were paid after their journeys, and the sums involved were sometimes quite large, as those in these two examples, it was even more necessary for the clerks to have a degree of financial stability to absorb such expenses without facing any major detriment because of it.

These forms of compensation, from their salaries and payment for travel, to their allowances for food and supplies, were not unique to the clerks of the Privy Council. Other officers of similar calibre, such as the clerks of the Signet and Privy Seal, received the same types of payment, and this was also true for others outside of the secretarial arena. One of the clearest examples are diplomats and those sent on diplomatic missions, as the clerks frequently were. Diplomats received per diems which constituted their base salary, pay for food commonly referred to as a diet, reimbursement for travel and payment for other ad hoc extraordinary expenses.³⁰ Such payments were standard for the clerks and others, and allowed them to perform their duties without excessive concern for their financial situation.

All of this income, from the clerks’ salaries to their travel expenses came directly from the government, yet additional money was paid to them from individuals in respect to the official work they did. These were the fees allowed and discussed above for such work as taking a recognizance, writing a warrant, or copying a register entry. The bulk

²⁸ NA E 351/542 fol. 33.

²⁹ NA E 351/542 fol. 55.

³⁰ For more on diplomatic compensation see *Diplomatic Reps.*, 11-14; Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York, 1970), 47-8, 231-6; Gary M. Bell, “Elizabethan Diplomatic Compensation: Its Nature and Variety,” *Journal of British Studies*, 20 (1981), 1-25.

of the clerks' direct revenue came from this source, as they were paid for each official act. For example, John Hawarde, summoned to appear before the Privy Council, paid to a "Mr. Ward" (probably Waad), clerk of the Privy Council, a royal for recording his appearance, six shillings and eight pence for entering into a bond of appearance, and a further six shillings eight pence for a copy of the bond.³¹ Such amounts were not exceptionally large, however numerous fees and the occasional gratuities that accompanied them multiplied quickly. Because the fees of office were so valuable, competition for them was not unknown. While there is no specific instance of this for the clerks of the Privy Council, other government offices frequently dealt with this problem. For instance, in the midst of the reorganization of the Exchequer, a small war developed between the writer of the tallies and the clerk of the pells for both control and the fees which could be claimed by either office.³² It was likely to deal with similar difficulties that the clerks of the Signet office wrote an agreement "for equal gain by the clerks of writing fees" in March 1557, and why the clerks of the Privy Council wrote out such a specifically delineated fee schedule for themselves in 1575.³³

The fees of the clerkship along with their salaries and paid expenses were all considered part of the clerks accepted revenue directly from their offices. This income came from the government coffers or individuals appearing before the Privy Council, and not directly from the monarch. However, occasionally the clerks received financial support from the monarch personally. Such support was intermittent and given to individuals and not the clerks as a whole. Assistance directly from the crown came in the form of annuities and gifts. Hampton, Rogers and Allen were each given annuities of forty marks, fifty pounds, and sixty pounds respectively.³⁴ They were gifts in a way, but primarily a recompense for their work. Allen's annuity was granted in 1566 after he served as clerk for thirteen years and probably was to acknowledge his dedication in office. Hampton's annuity in 1555 was actually payment for unofficial duties in addition to his duties as clerk as a Spanish secretary to Queen Mary, which annuity he was required to yield if he was promoted to another office, and was most likely yielded upon Mary's death, although this is uncertain. Rogers' annuity was similar to Allen's in that he was granted his annuity for life in return for his services on various embassies abroad

³¹ Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime*, (Oxford, 1979), 94.

³² G. R. Elton, "The Elizabethan Exchequer: War in the Receipt," in G. R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government: Papers and Review, 1946-1972* (Cambridge, 1974), I, 355-388.

³³ NA SP 11/10/7; BL Add MS 48018 fol. 670.

³⁴ *CPR, Elizabeth, III*, 479; *CPR, Mary, II*, 72; *CPR, Elizabeth, VII*, 546.

in 1578. In a way this was his retainer until he received a court appointment, which he wouldn't receive as a clerk for a further ten years, yet as the annuity was granted for life, Rogers kept the annuity upon receipt of the clerkship. Although Rogers' annuity came prior to his clerkship, it further highlights the fact that annuities were used to help various government servants and not just the clerks as they faced financial difficulties in the course of their work. These annuities were particularly valuable for Allen and Hampton in that they increased their annual income by one hundred and fifty and two hundred percent, and useful for Rogers, because it enabled him to sustain himself in between his various diplomatic missions.

The annuities given to these three clerks were given on specific occasions and for specific reasons. Unfortunately for the rest of the clerks they were also rare. Yet they were not the only benefits granted to clerks from the monarch. The clerks participated in a setting of gift-giving particularly between courtiers and the monarch, and these occasional gifts could also help them with their financial needs. For example, three clerks received gifts which helped them financially. Francis Allen received a gold chain from King Philip, while Armagil Waad and Barnard Hampton profited from the continued sale of former church lands when they were given Trinity Church and its contents in 1552.³⁵ Other clerks received gifts that were more ceremonial than valuable. John Mason received from Philip and Mary "a Map of England, stayned upon cloth of silver in a frame of wood, having a drawing cover, painted with the king and queen's arms, and a book of Spanish, covered with black vellat."³⁶ As a New Year's gift to Elizabeth in 1562, Armagil Waad gave the queen three fine glasses in a wicker basket, and received in return one gilt casting bottle.³⁷ Although such decorative royal gifts had to be kept and preserved by the receiver as a matter of course, others, like the contents of Trinity Church, gave the clerks an opportunity to supplement their income while at the same time bask in the royal favour.

The clerks' salaries, fees, gifts and other assistance described above were all forms of direct or virtually direct financial assistance from the government or the monarch. Although such payment would have allowed the clerks to perform their duties, this income, with the exception of any lifetime annuities, would no longer be available after the men ceased to be clerks of the Privy Council. To supplement their income

³⁵ *CSP, Spain*, Jan.-July 1554, 315; *APC*, IV, 560.

³⁶ J. Nichols, *The Progresses and public processions of Queen Elizabeth* (New York, 1964), I, p.xxxiv.

³⁷ Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, I, 118, 127.

while clerks and to ensure their financial security after their clerkship was complete, the clerks sought after and gained trade licenses, land, wardships and additional offices. These avenues for income were not only acceptable to the monarch, but constituted an established method for the crown to pay its servants without emptying the treasury.³⁸ The greatest distinction between these payments and the direct payments from the government is not where the money came from. The key distinction was that these licenses, wardships, land deals, etc., all had to be initiated by the clerks personally, with the amount of profit almost entirely dependent on their personal initiative. While the government was willing to give out these financial resources, the clerks did not gain any of this capital until after a great deal of effort and in some cases a great deal of money.

Perhaps the most straightforward resource to acquire was an agriculture or trade license. Several clerks received these type of licenses, particularly Elizabethan clerks. For example, in 1582 Beale was granted a sole license to import steel, while Armagil Waad was licensed in 1565 to make sulphur and oil for thirty years.³⁹ Wilkes received a license to hold a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of white salt for twenty-one years.⁴⁰ William Paget, before becoming a clerk, was licensed to import wine and export wheat.⁴¹ Such licenses may not seem exceptionally valuable, however, this was not the case. For example, given the price of wine and wheat in 1534, if William Paget only made a minimal profit of two percent on both licenses, he would have earned over thirty pounds annually, the same amount as his annual salary when he became clerk six years later.⁴² Thomas Wilkes' monopoly on the manufacture of salt was one of many which caused serious problems because of their value, and for years he had to defend his right to keep such a lucrative license.⁴³ Although grants such as those of the clerks were common, particularly among office-holders, complaints began to arise, most especially at the end of Elizabeth's reign, from merchants and the merchant companies of London.

The matter was a delicate one because it dealt with three different areas of national interest. The first, and the main focus for the merchants, was the right of

³⁸ For more on this topic see Williams, *Tudor Regime*, 94-101, Joel Hurstfield, *The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); R. W. Hoyle, *The Estates of the English Crown*, (Cambridge, 1992), 112-136, 169-197.

³⁹ *CPR, L&I* 286, 10; *CPR, L&I* 282, 65; *CPR, Elizabeth*, III, 235-6.

⁴⁰ *CPR, L&I* 293, 56.

⁴¹ *L&P*, VII, 1352(21); XVI, 580(37), 780(3).

⁴² For more information on commodities prices see James E. T. Rogers, "Facts and Observations on Wages and Prices in England during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 24, (1861) 535-585.

⁴³ *CPR, L&I* 293, 56. For a history and further explanation of the value of the salt monopoly see Edward Hughes, "The English Monopoly of Salt in the Years 1563-71," *EHR*, 40 (1925), 334-50.

subjects to their person and property, particularly extending to their trade as their ability to provide for themselves.⁴⁴ Sir Edwin Sandys, in his arguments before Parliament regarding the matter in 1604, explained that although there were between five and six thousand people in the companies of merchants, trade resided in the hands of two hundred at most.⁴⁵ Clearly this situation restricted the rights of other tradesmen involved, yet there was another right involved: the royal prerogative. It was the monarch's prerogative to grant licenses to whomever they chose, and to do so without restraint. During Queen Elizabeth's last speech to Parliament in November 1601, she addressed the issue of these licenses, diplomatically claiming that while she retained her right to grant as she would, she was possibly led astray by others: "And if my Princely bountie haue beene abused, and my Grants turned to the hurt of my People, contrary to my will and meaning, or if anie of Authoritie vnder mee haue neglected, or converted what I haue committed vnto them, I hope God will not lay their culps to my charge."⁴⁶

While the royal prerogative needed to be preserved, the licenses also affected the commonweal, and complaints arose beginning in 1571 in the Commons regarding monopolies and the issuances of licenses. In the following two decades complaints arose from various town corporations, and in 1597 Robert Wingfield requested a committee to investigate the "sundry enormities growing by patents of privilege and monopolies and the abuses of them."⁴⁷ Debate continued and in 1601 Queen Elizabeth cancelled the eleven most unpopular patents. This measure did not stop debate and the problem continued into the reign of James I. When James first arrived in England in May 1603 he issued a proclamation from Theobolds inhibiting the use of any charter or grant made by Queen Elizabeth of any kind of monopoly.⁴⁸ There followed an investigation by Parliament into the matter, and when Sir Edwyn Sandys gave the report of the commissioners in May 1604, he also presented two bills of free trade. The first, "for all Merchants to have free Liberty of Trade into all Countries, as is used in all other Nations," effected licenses and monopolies for domestic goods, such as Wilkes' salt

⁴⁴ For more on these arguments, see David Harris Sacks, "The Greed of Judas: Avarice, Monopoly, and the Moral Economy, ca 1350- ca1600," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 28, (1998), 282-287; David Harris Sacks, "The countervailing of benefits: monopoly, liberty and benevolence in Elizabethan England," in Dale Hoak, *Tudor Political Culture*, (Cambridge, 1995), 272-277.

⁴⁵ *Journal of the House of Commons 1547-1629*, (London, 1802), I, 19 May 1604, 214-5.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth I, *Queene Elizabeths speech to her last Parliament* (London: 1628), A3v.

⁴⁷ Penry Williams, "The Crown and the Counties," in Christopher Haigh, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Athens, 1985), 131-6; Michael A. R. Graves, *Elizabethan Parliaments 1559-1601* (London, 1987), 54-5, 115-6.

⁴⁸ NA SP 14/1/70.

monopoly, and Armagil Waad's license to make sulphur and oil. The second bill, "for the Enlargement of Trade for his Majesty's Subjects into foreign countries," effected international trade licenses, such as Paget's licenses to export wheat and import Gascon wine.⁴⁹ Both bills were for "Three several Days debated, and in the End passed with great Consent and Applause of the House (as being for the exceeding Benefit of all the Land) scarce Forty Voices dissenting from it."⁵⁰ This was not the end of the matter, as there were still numerous lawsuits, and further acts of Parliament brought forward.⁵¹ Although future clerks and officials had a much more restricted ability to access this avenue of wealth from the crown, the Tudor clerks were more fortunate and used their licenses and monopolies to augment their meagre salaries.

As a way to further secure their present and future finances, the clerks sought after more than these licenses. A particularly common method was to acquire land from the crown. As David Thomas explained, "the crown sometimes managed its lands not for the revenue or for the tenants, but as a source for casual supplements to the incomes of its servants. This was done by granting them leases in reversion on favourable terms."⁵² Robert Beale, when facing financial difficulties, requested just such assistance. He wrote his "humble suit to her Majestie, in consideration of my poverty and service past and as is : to grant unto me lx^{li} by year in lease in reversion for 40 or 30 yeares."⁵³

There is more to these grants than simply a sale of property. The terms of the sale or lease were different in each case and reflected the amount of assistance the crown intended to extend, and the entry fee, length of the grant, and rent due on the land were all factors.⁵⁴ In the case of the clerks, however, normal considerations were set aside and they received land on exceptionally favourable terms. While most individuals paid an entry fee of four or five times the annual rent, as well as rents on each property, the clerks routinely received special consideration in these matters. A grant to Thomas Chaloner noted that he received it "without fine or fee," and William Honing received

⁴⁹ Both bills and Sandys' arguments regarding them are found in *Journal of the House of Commons*, I, 19 May 1604, 214-5.

⁵⁰ *Journal of the House of Commons*, I, 214-5.

⁵¹ E.g. An act "for the restraint of monopolies" in May 1606, *Journal of the House of Lords 1578-1614*, (London, 1802), II, 421-22.

⁵² David Thomas, "Leases in Reversion on the Crown's Lands, 1558-1603," *Economic History Review*, New Series, 30 (February 1977) 67.

⁵³ NA SP 12/200/63; In the original document, lx^{li} (sixty pounds) appears as LX*.

⁵⁴ For superb explanations of these factors see Thomas, "Leases in Reversion on the Crown's Lands, 1558-1603," 67-72; Katherine S. H. Wyndham, "Crown Land and Royal Patronage in Mid-Sixteenth Century England," *The Journal of British Studies*, 19, (1980) 18-34, and David Thomas, "Leases of Crown Lands in the reign of Elizabeth I," in Hoyle, *Crown Estates*, 169-193.

“lands forfeited to the king by [Thomas] Seymour’s attainder; rent free.”⁵⁵ In addition to mention of rent in these grants, the length of the lease, the location and value of the property are mentioned. The length of the leases varied with longer leases being rarer, and the clerks’ leases were for extensive periods of time. Henry Cheke received a lease for thirty one years, and William Waad a lease for forty years, while Anthony Ashley was leased land formerly owned by his father for life.⁵⁶ William Honing was actually given ownership of Carelton manor in Suffolk “for his service,” and Armagil Waad given two estates in Kent and Sussex.⁵⁷ While grants of ownership were rare, long leases were almost the same thing and still yielded a considerable income.

In addition to the consideration of the length of a lease in the terms of the grants, were the location and worth of the land. While many of the clerks’ leases mention a specific location, such as Fremington in Devon or Bentley Manor in Southampton, most of the leases focused on worth rather than location.⁵⁸ As Katherine Wyndham explained, “the patronage net was a central rather than a local one and the suitor seems on the whole to have aspired to an estate at a good price rather than a particular tract of land.”⁵⁹ The worth of the land was based on its output reflected in the rent due. However, by Elizabeth’s reign, the failure of the crown to re-evaluate and adjust the rent meant the rent of the land was considerably lower than its value, and once a lease was granted, the crown could do little to raise the rent until the lease expired.⁶⁰ This failure strongly favoured the grantees, who could potentially earn significantly more income than the lease implied. For example, William Thomas, who was given three separate grants in 1550 and 1551 for land worth a total of one hundred pounds annually, would have actually earned much more than that.⁶¹ Thomas was not the only clerk to receive land worth a considerable amount. Barnard Hampton received land in three grants worth nearly two hundred pounds annually, and both William Honing and Armagil Waad received grants worth over fifty pounds annually.⁶² Because such land grants normally included land in several counties, the clerks could make deals to sell or exchange the land, as leases themselves were a form of property. The sale of property was a lucrative

⁵⁵ *CPR, Edward VI*, II, 368; *CPR, Edward VI*, III, 218-9.

⁵⁶ *CPR, Elizabeth*, VI, 296, VIII, 180; *CPR, L&I* 282, 83.

⁵⁷ *L&P*, XIX, ii, 800(10); *CPR, Elizabeth*, VI, 95-6.

⁵⁸ *APC*, IV, 685; *CPR, Elizabeth*, VII, 296.

⁵⁹ Wyndham, “Crown Land and Royal Patronage in Mid-Sixteenth Century England,” 19.

⁶⁰ Thomas, “Leases in Reversion on the Crown’s Lands, 1558-1603,” 72.

⁶¹ *CPR, Edward VI*, III, 122-24, 421-2; IV, 129.

⁶² *APC*, IV, 685; *CPR, Edward VI*, I, 381, II, 962; *CPR, Mary*, IV, 172-3, 163; *CPR, Elizabeth*, II, 505.

business, as many exchequer officials for example used to their advantage, and the clerks and other officials joined in this enterprise.⁶³ Just six weeks following a grant to Armagil Waad in 1563, he received another grant allowing him to give land to his friend and Privy Councillor Sir William Cecil.⁶⁴ Such deals were not uncommon, nor were deals involving trading grants or debts for land. One of William Thomas' acquisitions included this type of switching. He received land in south Wales "in recompence of an anuitie he hath in the right of Fraunces Southwell... and of a debt owing by Sir Anthony Kingston of cccc markes."⁶⁵ Through these deals and land acquisitions, the clerks could enhance their status and financial stability and, as landed gentlemen, fit more comfortably at court.

While land acquisition deals like William Thomas' could be complex, an even more complex procedure was gaining a grant of wardship. In addition to the land and grants they received, William Thomas, William Smith, Edmund Tremayne, Robert Beale, John Mason, William Waad and Thomas Smith 2 were granted wardships of minors with estates.⁶⁶ Obtaining a ward was perhaps the most costly and difficult endeavour that the clerks and other courtiers embarked upon. All grants of wards proceeded through the Court of Wards, a highly lucrative government department controlled by the Master of the Court of Wards, a post held in succession from 1540 by the Earl of Wiltshire, Sir Francis Englefield, Sir Thomas Parry, and most notably Sir William Cecil followed by his son Robert. Any grant of wardship necessarily began with a petition to the Master, either directly or through intermediaries such as one of the clerks of the Court, or through servants of the Master, such as the well-known servant of the Cecils, Sir Michael Hickes.

Such a petition was merely one step, for the process was lengthy and exceptionally expensive. In 1605 Sir Julius Caesar, Master of Requests, tallied his expenses in obtaining the guardianship of Mary and Alice Dent over the course of the previous ten years. In all he paid out nearly eighteen hundred pounds to over fifty officials, and paid additionally almost six hundred and fifty pounds in interest on the loan required to handle the costs before the girls finally achieved maturity.⁶⁷ The process was not only expensive, it was fiercely competitive, with the highest men in the land

⁶³ Madeleine Gray, "Exchequer Officials and Crown Property," in Hoyle, *Crown Estates*, 112-136.

⁶⁴ *CPR, Elizabeth*, II, 581.

⁶⁵ *APC*, IV, 628-9.

⁶⁶ *CPR, Edward VI*, V, 4; *CPR, Elizabeth*, II, 123, VI, 117, 128; *L&P*, XIX, I, 625(25); NA SP 12/264/42.

⁶⁷ Hurstfield, *Queen's Wards*, 81-2, full list of expenses in BL Add MSS 12497 fols 423r, 427r-428r.

competing with each other to secure the most attractive wardships. In a list compiled of wardship grants between 1594 and 1598, we see the calibre of men and women who succeeded in acquiring these grants. On the list are the Earl of Shrewsbury, and Lords Buckhurst and Cobham, all Privy Councillors, Master of Requests Herbert, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir John Fortescue, as well as three Privy Council clerks, Waad, Beale and Thomas Smith 2.⁶⁸ The fierceness of the competition and the amount of money involved led to numerous claims of corruption in the Court of Wards, particularly levelled against Sir William Cecil, later Lord Burghley. Such accusations were not without some justification, since, while Cecil's salary as Master was a substantial two hundred marks (or over one hundred thirty pounds) annually, it has been estimated that he actually earned over two thousand five hundred pounds additionally each year, over five times the designated salary.⁶⁹ Considering that he held the post for thirty-seven years, this constitutes a staggering income of nearly one hundred thousand pounds from this office alone.

Clearly the grants of wardships were valuable for the Master of the Wards, yet he could not have earned so much money as he did if the wardships had not been highly valuable to the suitors who acquired them. To begin with, the grants came with annuities of varying values. For example, Tremayne's wardship yielded him only five pounds annually, but Beale, Thomas and Mason received thirteen pounds, nineteen pounds and twenty marks respectively. This may seem small, particularly in comparison to the sum paid out by Caesar and others to acquire a ward. However, in Thomas' case, the annuity was just short of half of his highest annual salary as clerk, and for John Mason it was two-thirds his salary. These annuities were just the beginning. As guardians, the clerks and others held the ward's land, from which they gained the rent, all expenses for the ward's care were paid from the ward's estates, and the guardians held the right to marry their wards to whomever they chose for however much money they could manage. Additionally, the clerks and other suitors could sell the wardship to others, including family members, for an immediate profit from the enterprise. This does not mean that minor children were treated in a mercenary manner, but depending on the wards' estates there could be a great deal of money involved, and it was the chance to get involved in

⁶⁸ Hurstfield, *Queen's Wards*, 125-7, original NA SP 12/268/42.

⁶⁹ Hurstfield, *Queen's Wards*, 279-91. For more on William Cecil's tenure see Hurstfield, *Queen's Wards* and A.G.R. Smith, *Servant of the Cecils: The Life of Sir Michael Hickes, 1543-1612*, (London, 1977).

this lucrative business that led the clerks and others to spend hundreds and even thousands of pounds to gain a ward.

Wardships were valuable commodities, and because they were so competitive, the clerks had to seek even further sources of capital. The clerks, like many others, used their Privy Council and patronage connections to acquire additional offices to supplement their income. As Robert Braddock explained, “petty offices... numbered in the thousands. They tipped the balance from mere solvency to financial respectability and were jealously guarded by royal servants who passed them from one to another.”⁷⁰ While most of the additional posts of the clerks related in some way to their work with the Privy Council, some were simply for the financial benefit of the clerk involved. For instance, Edmund Tremayne was receiver general of land in the counties of Devon and Cornwall and the city of Exeter.⁷¹ In addition to Tremayne’s post, Ashley was clerk of the castle of York, and Beale was petty customer of the subsidy, deputy governor of the mines royal and bailiff of the Duchy of Lancaster.⁷² Although not vital positions in any way, they aided the men financially, and losing them produced hardship. In 1593 Ashley explained the value of his office in York when he wrote:

I understand there is some such matter intended underhand, taking advantage of some nice quirk in law, to defeat my patent by non-residence, though of small value, yielding no more than 24l. per ann., yet would I be loth to lose it, both for the disgrace, and for that it was the only help that my father by his purse procured me towards my maintenance in the place I serve her Majesty when I was first sworn extraordinary and had no manner of wages, fee or reward.⁷³

Armagil Waad complained to William Cecil in 1569 about being deprived of his office in the customs, which must have been a lucrative position because he purchased it for a large sum.⁷⁴ These few salary-enhancing posts went primarily to clerks in Elizabeth’s reign who struggled financially from a salary that remained stagnant from 1553. In April of 1587, Robert Beale gave this reason when he begged that:

in consideration of my poverty and service past and as is : to grant unto me [sixty pounds]... or else that it would please her majestie that I may be dispensed with, and serve in some other place of lesse countenance and charge: for being therby in debt I am not able to continewe in it any lenger.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Robert C. Braddock, “The Rewards of Office-Holding in Tudor England,” *The Journal of British Studies*, 14, (1975) 40.

⁷¹ *CPR, Elizabeth*, VII, 68.

⁷² NA SP 15/27/67; *CPR, L&I* 287, 79; Hasler, I, 412, “Beale, Robert (1541-1601)” in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷³ *HMCS*, IV, 439.

⁷⁴ NA SP 12/60/80.

⁷⁵ NA SP 12/200/63. In the original document, sixty pounds appears as LX*.

Despite his protests, Beale continued to serve in his posts including the secretariat of the Council in the North, worth three hundred pounds annually, although he claimed it was worth only thirty-three.⁷⁶

Due to the competition for office, the clerks and others petitioned for places immediately after they were vacated through death. Thomas Edmondes wrote the Earl of Essex in 1595 regarding a vacancy: “It may please yo[u]r L[ordship]: to be pleased to have me yo[u]r fauoravle remembrance for the place fallen voide by Mr yetsweirtes death.”⁷⁷ Edmondes also noted: “I understand that uppon the death of Mr Yertsworth sute hath ben made to yo[u]r L[ordship]. on my behalf to vouchsafe me yo[u]r recomendacion towards her ma[jes]tie to bestowe on me the place of Secretarie for the ffrrench Tounge...”⁷⁸ Edmondes at the time was serving in France as the English agent to Henry IV, and was fortunate to have friends to push for his advance while he was away. The petitions must have begun almost immediately the post was vacant, since Charles Yetsweirt had only died on April 25th.⁷⁹ In 1597 Thomas Smith 2 wrote to petition Sir Robert Cecil for the clerkship of the Parliaments the very day that the incumbent died. He wrote:

I presume to speake unto yow by this lettre, & to crave so much favoure at your handes as that yow will be pleased to move her Majestie in my behalfe for the Clarkship of the Parlament, now voyde by the decease of one Mr Mason, that died this afternoon.⁸⁰

Smith further explained in the letter why he should be considered for the post.

The office is but of small commoditie and may be well enough received by me notwithstanding the place of service I have already in the Courte. And since her Majestie is not willing to encrease the number of pensions to the Clarks of the Counsaile, it may please her to make me her servant in fee by that office...⁸¹

Thomas Smith 2's letter reiterates the fact that the clerks, particularly those serving under Elizabeth needed additional posts, like the clerkship of the Parliaments in order to supplement their income and it was primarily due to this need that the clerks continued to petition for and receive additional offices.

⁷⁶ “Beale, Robert (1541-1601),” *OxfordDNB*.

⁷⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, Anthony Bacon Papers, MSS 651 f316r.

⁷⁸ Geoffrey G. Butler, ed, *The Edmondes Papers: A selection from the correspondence of Sir Thomas Edmondes envoy from Queen Elizabeth at the French Court*, (London, 1913), 249.

⁷⁹ Charles Angell Bradford, *Nicasius Yetsweirt: Secretary for the French Tongue* (London, 1934), 7.

⁸⁰ Hatfield House, Cecil MS 53/30.

⁸¹ *Ibid*.

Several clerks also obtained other offices in addition to their clerkships, such as Edmond's post as secretary of the French Tongue, and Smith's post as clerk of the Parliaments, and the many other posts discussed previously. For example, Honing, Mason and Thomas each received prebends, a practice more common in Henry VIII and Edward VI's reign than in Mary and Elizabeth's, and William Thomas was also granted a reversion to the collection of tolls and an annuity of forty marks, equal to two-thirds his salary.⁸² However, these positions did not come without work or help, and so the clerks, like other courtiers, tried many avenues in order to get these positions, although they were not always successful. William Thomas requested the post of Auditor of Sussex, yet when the Privy Council looked into the matter, it was decided that the post was not needed and would be discontinued.⁸³ As a consolation, Thomas was granted the reversion to the post should it ever again be continued. Clearly the direct approach did not always succeed, and so courtiers, including the clerks, tried other methods. In 1593, Anthony Ashley complained of someone trying to defeat his patent as county clerk of Yorkshire. He wrote, "I understand there is some such matter intended underhand, taking advantage of some nice quirk in law, to defeat my patent by non-residence."⁸⁴ Legal loopholes were not the only thing courtiers took advantage of. Thomas Smith 2 tried to take advantage of a man's absence abroad to gain his post. The man wrote to the Earl of Essex for help, "I am now like to be put besides by Mr. Smith, the Clerk of the Council, that takes advantage of my absence to get that he never spake for all the while I was in England."⁸⁵

While these tactics may have succeeded in some cases, the tactic which succeeded the most was purchasing an office. Apparently the practice was commonplace, because Armagil Waad wrote complaining to Sir William Cecil regarding the matter in 1567. He wrote:

Yo[u]r worship told me the last tyme that I wayted uppon you that this buyeng and selling of offices was not honest nor much to be suffered / And that yt was not likely that the buyer of an office would behave himself well in the same specially having bought it at an unreasonable price⁸⁶

The law preventing this was the Act against Buying and Selling of Offices, passed in 1552, and although it forbade direct sales by officials to hopeful candidates, it did not

⁸² *CPR, Edward VI*, IV, 47, 174; *L&P*, XV, 282(120); *APC*, III, 53.

⁸³ *APC*, III, 344

⁸⁴ *HMCS*, IV, 439.

⁸⁵ *HMCS*, VIII, 438.

⁸⁶ NA SP 15/13/120.

stop officials accepting funds to influence their opinion.⁸⁷ While the sale of office was yet to become as infamous as it was in the Stuart period, the practice was not uncommon.⁸⁸ This matter affected the clerks, as well as the other courtiers. One man, writing to Lord Burghley in 1595 and seeking to act as Robert Beale's deputy in his office in York, wrote that he had been a suitor for the place before but failed because he was "outbidden with money," but now that impediment had been removed and he hoped for success.⁸⁹

All of these tactics reflect the active competition for offices, not only for their financial rewards but also for their prestige. Some suits took years, and even then could end in failure. For instance, Thomas Edmondes, beginning in 1612, began to vie with a "multitude of competitors for the secretariship" and was "saide to be in fayre possibilitie to outstrip all his competitors, and to be Secretarie."⁹⁰ Unfortunately, he failed in gaining the post, even after he "troubled himself so much, sollicitated so openly and laboured so long in vaine."⁹¹ Although Edmondes was not successful, the clerks for the most part succeeded in their efforts to gain additional offices, for their prestige and also for the additional income which came with them.

Although the clerks varied in the success of their efforts to gain offices, licenses and other means of financial support, the source of their financial difficulties was the same. The primary difficulty, particularly for the Elizabethan clerks, was their salary. The financial burden on the clerks increased as the years passed, as their salaries following 1553 stayed the same despite a dramatic rise in inflation, leaving the clerks with little with which to sustain themselves, occasionally resulting in the clerks claiming that their salaries and fees were not enough to support them. Although individual clerks may perhaps have played up their difficulties in order to dramatise their cause for relief, Beale summed up the clerks' problems well when he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil in 1599. He wrote "I am not able to bear the burden any longer, for I am in debt and know not what shift to make to content my creditors... I receive not any benefits by my fee of Clerk of the Council, which is spent in subsidies and many other charges of my extraordinary employment."⁹²

⁸⁷ John Guy, *Tudor England*, (Oxford, 1988), 392.

⁸⁸ For more on this issue in Stuart times see Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Earl Stuart England* (London, 1993).

⁸⁹ *HMCS*, V, 195.

⁹⁰ *JCL*, I, 355, 483.

⁹¹ *JCL*, I, 521-2.

⁹² *HMCS*, IX, 154.

The subsidies Beale referred to were a form of taxation levied by Parliament, and for the Elizabethan clerks who were faced with numerous subsidies to finance war on the continent, these subsidies became a financial drain.⁹³ However the clerks, like many other office-holders and courtiers, devised means to ease their burden. Throughout the Tudor years these men began to strategically undervalue their worth resulting in lower taxes. In the 1540s, the wealth of courtiers was roughly accurate, as the 1541 subsidy rolls attest. For example, in 1541 John Mason was valued at forty pounds and William Paget at one hundred, both reasonable assessments considering their salaries and position.⁹⁴ However, following Henry VIII's death, gentlemen began to routinely under-report their income, by vast amounts.⁹⁵ By the 1550s the government was aware of the systematic undervaluation and began to issue stricter commands to subsidy commissioners, hoping to solve the problem, yet the problem continued throughout Elizabeth's reign.⁹⁶ Sir Walter Raleigh famously noted in 1601 "our estates that be 30l. or 40l. in the Queen's Books, are not the hundred part of our wealth."⁹⁷ This example was reiterated by the assessment commissioners, including William Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, whose wealth, according to his report, fell from twelve hundred to eight hundred pounds annually from 1559 to 1566.⁹⁸ In the 1582 subsidy rolls the clerks, as well as others, were seriously undervalued. For example, Beale and Wilkes, both receiving their clerkship salaries of fifty pounds in addition to their other sources of income, were valued at ten pounds and three pounds respectively.⁹⁹ As a result of these low valuations the Elizabethan clerks and others were able to pay remarkably little. In 1582, due to the incorrect valuations, Beale paid barely one percent of his salary, while Wilkes paid only one-third of a percent.

Although the clerks, particularly those during the latter half of Elizabeth's reign, may have avoided paying some of their financial obligations to the government through taxation, this was not the only burden that Beale protested in his letter to Sir Robert

⁹³ For more on how warfare effected taxation see Ian W. Archer, "The burden of taxation on sixteenth century London," *HJ*, 44 (2001), 599-628.

⁹⁴ *Two Tudor subsidy rolls for the city of London*, (London, 1993), 83, 145.

⁹⁵ Steven J. Gunn, *Early Tudor Government*, (Basingstoke, 1995), 135.

⁹⁶ Roger Schofield, "Taxation and the political limits of the Tudor State," in Cross, Loades and Scarisbrick, *Law and Government under the Tudors*, (Cambridge, 1988), 239-40.

⁹⁷ Schofield, "Taxation" in Cross, Loades and Scarisbrick, *Law and Government under the Tudors*, 238; Helen Miller, "Subsidy assessments of the peerage in the 16th century," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 28 (1955), 15-34.

⁹⁸ Miller, "Subsidy assessments," 22. Other examples include Lord St. John decreasing his assessed wealth from £400 to £150 from 1559 to 1566, and Lord Burghley who persisted in designating his income at 200 marks per annum while Lord Treasurer, a vast underestimation of his acquired wealth.

⁹⁹ *Two Tudor subsidy rolls*, 191, 183.

Cecil. Beale referred to his “extraordinary employment” and the clerks’ increasingly regular “extraordinary employment” often included missions abroad as discussed earlier. Such missions, known for their ability to bankrupt the men sent on them, made the clerks’ financial situations even worse.¹⁰⁰ Thomas Edmondson faced such difficulties in France, that even after a loan of two thousand pounds, he still needed more money.¹⁰¹ The merchant Otywell Smith, who loaned him the funds, explained to the Earl of Essex that “if he have not better allowance, he is not able to continue.”¹⁰² Daniel Rogers, facing similar problems in the Low Countries in 1575, was advised by Sir Thomas Smith 1, that since he was gaining no ground in his negotiation, he should “lose no more time about them, and so save his credit at least, and, peradventure, some money.”¹⁰³ After such expensive duties abroad, the clerks faced exceptional difficulties upon their return in finding some way to recoup their losses.

All of the grants, licenses and other awards greatly helped the clerks, who received little in terms of salary, augment their income. Yet such assistance was sporadic, placing the men in varying financial states and never leaving them fully secure financially. For example, we know John Mason in 1541 and William Waad in 1577 had sufficient funds to loan money to others.¹⁰⁴ Mason lent a Spaniard one hundred pounds, twice the highest salary a clerk was ever paid, and Waad lent funds to another courtier, William Herle, yet both transactions resulted in disputes and the Privy Council had to intervene to ensure the clerks were repaid. Although loaning money was evidently a risky venture, the clerks and others occasionally received additional income through less than reputable means. One incident occurred in 1601 when William Waad was accused of accepting a bribe. In a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, a man named William Ayshe explained he had long been attempting to get the Privy Council’s help in a case of treason against a man named Alexander Knapman, and Waad, at Cecil’s instruction, had

¹⁰⁰ It has become commonplace for historians to assume that all diplomatic missions were financially problematic for those sent. Mattingly and others have stated that the chance of financial embarrassment was almost a certainty and that diplomats could only survive if they had enough money of their own to make up for the governments failure to pay promptly or at all. However, Bell, in his article on diplomatic representatives written while compiling his research for his *Handlist of English Diplomatic Representatives*, claims that “the ruination that most diplomatic correspondents claimed would occur, and that most historians assumed did occur, simply did not,” and that under Elizabeth, diplomats were officially the governments best paid servants. While Bell may be accurate in his claims in general, the frequent complaints by the clerks and on their behalf supports the idea that the clerks at least faced significant financial difficulties while abroad.

¹⁰¹ *CSP, Elizabeth*, 1569-71, 535.

¹⁰² *HMCS*, V, 150-1.

¹⁰³ *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1575-7, 163.

¹⁰⁴ *PPC*, 126; *APC*, IX, 217.

promised to get answers for him. Yet when they next met, Waad told him he would no longer have any part in the matter. Ayshe explained that he “greatly [doubted] lest some of Knapman’s confederates have used some dealings with Mr. Wade in the mean time: for Knapman is a man of great wealth, and will not stick to bestow 500l. rather than to answer the cause.”¹⁰⁵ Apparently Ayshe’s accusation of bribery was found to be without merit, because no further mention of the incident appears in any records; if William Waad accepted a bribe to help him financially, which was probably accurate, he evidently got away with it. Bribery and other financial incentives for assistance were not unusual. John Littleton noted “If you mean to have extraordinary favour, you [must] give an extraordinary price to purchase it, the friendships and favors of this time and of great men being proportioned to the reward, and measured by the commodity themselves receive.”¹⁰⁶ Although most examples of this were naturally unrecorded it is highly likely that clerks, such as William Waad, routinely accepted compensation for advancing petitions or facilitating access to the Privy Council.

Waad was fortunate in that financial accusations against him did not lead to any type of punishment or rebuke. Another clerk was not as fortunate. In 1596 Anthony Ashley was accused of withholding a gold chain from the goods gained on the Cadiz expedition.¹⁰⁷ His purported actions were discovered and reported to the Council, and Ashley spent the next several years trying to return to favour and his post as clerk. Yet there is more to this incident. Ashley, as secretary to the general’s council on the Cadiz expedition, was a supporter of the Earl of Essex, was knighted by him at Cadiz, and returned to London carrying with him a manuscript of Essex’s proposed publication “A true relation of the action of Calez.” However, due to the antipathy between Essex on one hand and the newly appointed Principal Secretary Sir Robert Cecil and the famed Sir Walter Raleigh on the other, and amid growing rumours about Essex’s actions at Cadiz, the atmosphere at court was greatly against Essex and his supporters. Likely in consideration of his safety, Ashley, as the first from the expedition to return to London, hoped to avert trouble for himself by giving Essex’s manuscript to the Privy Council. His efforts failed, for he failed to gain Cecil’s trust and succeeded in gaining the enmity of Essex, and it was then that the accusation regarding his failure to turn over the gold

¹⁰⁵ *HMCS*, XI, 570-1.

¹⁰⁶ Society of Antiquaries, London, MS 215 fols 5r-6r.

¹⁰⁷ *APC*, XXVI, 406.

chain was reported.¹⁰⁸ Ashley, upon being imprisoned and then banished from court, pleaded to Sir Robert Cecil for aid and a restoration to favour, yet it was years before Ashley returned to court.¹⁰⁹

Ashley may have been undone by court politics, yet the root of his problem to begin with was financial. The lack of money was such a problem that the clerks were reduced to begging for assistance. Beale in particular is an example of this. He wrote to Queen Elizabeth asking that “in consideration of my poverty and service past and as is” to grant him a lease worth sixty pounds annually, “or else that it would please her majestie that I may be dispensed with, and serve in some other place of lesse countenance and charge: for being therby in debt I am not able to continewe in it any lenger.”¹¹⁰ In 1577 he wrote to Lord Burghley asking for help finding an extra source of income, and again in 1582 urging his need of relief owing to his debts.¹¹¹ Letters such as Beale’s are not merely examples of the clerks’ financial difficulties. They emphasize the manner in which the clerks worked to acquire the licenses, wardships and offices they needed to solve these difficulties: cultivating the support of a patron. With the acquisition of licenses and grants of land and office the clerks secured their financial future. Yet this could not be done without help. For example, the three Elizabethan clerks who obtained wardships and the annuities which went with them could not have gotten them without the aid and permission of Sir William Cecil, Master of the Wards.

Although the clerks had the advantage over other courtiers through their close contact with the monarch and Privy Councillors like Cecil, they still needed individual noblemen and Councillors to intercede on their behalf. This was true for land deals as it was for other petitions. Richard Stoneley, in his diaries, recorded on Thursday, 5 May 1597 that he had received a letter “in the favor of Mr Smyth from my Lord Treasurer for the purchas of Halstedds & Pakes.” The next day, while going to Westminster, he met with Smith, “with whome after long longe [sic] talke & some favour to be showed to me by the Lord Treasurer, I conceded to hym Halsted & so went forward with my

¹⁰⁸ The accusation against Ashley was leveled by Sir Gelly Meyrick, a staunch Essex supporter executed in 1601 for his participation in the Essex rebellion.

¹⁰⁹ For more on this incident see Samuel Rush Meyrick, “Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the amount of Booty taken at Cadiz in 1596; with The Charges preferred in consequence by Sir Gelly Meyricke against Sir Anthony Ashley,” *Archaeologia*, 22 (1829), 172-189; Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the political career of Robert Devereux 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999), 252-3; Paul E. J. Hammer, “Myth-making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596,” *HJ*, 40 (1997), 621-642.

¹¹⁰ NA SP 12/200/63.

¹¹¹ NA SP 81/1/34; *HMCS*, II, 510.

causes...”¹¹² This incident reflects more than a Councillor kindly intervening for a clerk. Richard Stoneley was a teller of the Exchequer who, since his appointment in 1558, had used his position to further his financial ambitions. By 1571 he was known to have “borrowed” over six thousand pounds to buy land, some of which he sold to Burghley who did not dismiss him, despite his misdeeds, when he assumed the role of Lord Treasurer.¹¹³ A full investigation into Stoneley’s activities only began in 1578 when Stoneley owed nineteen thousand pounds to the crown. Amazingly, it was not until the end of 1588 when Stoneley was no longer permitted to handle cash, and he was not dismissed and forced to attempt to repay the crown until 1597, when his transaction with Thomas Smith 2 took place. Throughout his tenure as Lord Treasurer, Burghley had concealed or minimized Stoneley’s activities, while at the same time purchasing land from him, and so it was in Burghley’s own interest to help Stoneley sell the land he still held in 1597 in hopes of concealing his assistance and recouping the crown’s losses. Thomas Smith 2, who quite possibly knew of these circumstances, was fortunate to benefit from the situation and Burghley’s help.

Of course, the consideration of a Councillor on a clerk’s behalf was expected to be reciprocated, as the case of Thomas Edmondes illustrates. After searching for a convenient and affordable home in London for over a year, he finally found Bath House, which he wished to buy. However, upon hearing of the interest of the Lord Admiral, he wrote to him regarding the house. “I have long sought to settle myself in some convenient dwelling in the city, where I might be ready upon all occasions to attend your Lordship... notwithstanding, if it be your pleasure to require the same for your own use, I will not presume to balance any consideration of mine with your Lordship’s affection.”¹¹⁴ This type of quid pro quo in patronage and assistance was how the clerks and other courtiers acquired the grants, licences, funds and land they needed to live as gentlemen at court.

The basic aspects of the patronage system are fairly straightforward on the surface. In order to get a position or have a specific request presented to the Privy Council, courtiers and other hopeful individuals appealed to a Councillor or courtier whom they believed was in a position to help them. In return they promised loyalty and assistance to the patron. As the Earl of Essex phrased it: “I doe very earnestly pray your

¹¹² Folger Shakespeare Library, V.a.461, fol. 18v.

¹¹³ Guy, *Tudor England*, 393-5.

¹¹⁴ *HMCS*, XII, 372-3.

Lordship that in case ther be occasion offred, yow would be pleased to grace the gentleman with your honorable word & furtherance. Yow shall therby make me much indebted to your Lordship.”¹¹⁵ This quid pro quo relationship was maintained primarily through an excessive amount of flattery on one hand and the occasional favour on the other. Lord Burghley advised his son Robert to gain a patron and “compliment him often.” He reiterated the point by explaining the necessity for a patron by saying “Be sure ever to keep some great man thy friend... for otherwise in this ambitious age thou mayest remain like a hop without a pole, live in obscurity, and be made a football for every insulting companion to spurn at.”¹¹⁶ For better or worse, this system was the way to advance one’s cause at court, and the clerks of the Privy Council understood this just as well as everyone else. However, as Ashley’s difficulties following Cadiz illustrates, the situation was rarely simple. Clerks and other courtiers frequently sought multiple patrons who could, like the Cecils and the Earl of Essex, have vastly different agendas. A delicate balance was required, yet when the clerks were careful, they generally succeeded in gaining the assistance needed.

The primary advantage of a patron for the clerks was an advocate to help them get work. There are numerous references showing who helped the clerks gain their clerkships and other offices. Anthony Ashley spoke of how Lord Chancellor had preferred him to service, and Lord Henry Northampton wrote to Thomas Edmondes reminding him how “my advice did recommend you to this place.”¹¹⁷ Edmund Tremayne was recommended to the Earl of Bedford’s service by the King of Navarre, and Thomas Edmondes was “preferred by the new Secretary to be Clark of the Counsell, and Secretary for the French tongue.”¹¹⁸ Lord Cobham wrote to both Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham on William Waad’s behalf. In his letter to Walsingham he wrote “I have dispatched Mr Wade... beseeching you to lay on him as my dear friend some of the favours which you might bestow on me if I were there; and that you will present him to her Majesty with so good recommendations that he may be accepted as her sworn servant.”¹¹⁹ While such efforts on the clerks’ behalf to get them positions was admirable, it occasionally had a negative effect on others. Robert Beale wrote

¹¹⁵ Folger Shakespeare Library, X.d.459(2).

¹¹⁶ William Cecil Lord Burghley, “Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man’s Life (ca.1584),” in Louis B. Wright ed., *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne* (Ithaca, 1962), 12.

¹¹⁷ NA SP 12/260/30; BL Add MS 4173 fol. 24.

¹¹⁸ NA SP 12/270/120; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1562, 620.

¹¹⁹ NA SP 78/4/88; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1579-80, 301-2.

complainingly about how the Earl of Essex was trying to have his position as clerk given to Essex's secretary, Thomas Smith 2, in 1595, following rumours that Beale was dead. Beale wrote: "I thinke it in no wyse to be mislyked, that my L. of Essex should seeke to prefer his servauntes... But if his L. intencon be, that he should be pleased wth my place and fee: to speake plainelye, I thincke his L. doethe me greate wrong."¹²⁰ Fortunately for both Beale and Smith, Beale retained his position and Smith was permitted to become an additional clerk.

Patrons such as the Earl of Essex also worked to further the clerks, not only in getting them offices, but also in advancing individual suits and petitions. Lord Burghley wrote to Thomas Edmondes in 1585 that he had pressed Edmondes' suit with her Majesty "reminding her how many painful services he had rendered, and how chargeable his last service was, to which she gave good hearing."¹²¹ Matters such as these however, rarely went smoothly, and Sir Christopher Hatton explained to Thomas Wilkes his "great difficulty" after suffering "many storms and thwarts" in obtaining for him his "bill to be signed by her Majesty."¹²² After all the work these patrons did to assist men like the clerks, they were in turn expected to show appropriate gratitude. Daniel Rogers explained to Sir Francis Walsingham: "After God and her Majesty, I think myself singularly beholden to you for the great care you have taken about my deliverance. If God give me grace to come once hence, I am to endeavour myself how I can be thankful to you."¹²³

Simple gratitude was only one of many benefits patrons derived from this system. To begin with, there was prestige in having followers and supporters at court. It reflected a courtiers' perceived power and authority. Yet additional benefits were much more tangible. To begin with, the clients worked directly for their patrons benefit, after all it was in their best interest to do so. Favours in return for consideration were standard. Matthew Hutton Archbishop of York and Lord Keeper Egerton made this type of arrangement in 1596. Hutton wrote the following to Egerton:

This daie I received your Lo. lettre of the last of May, whereby I perceive your Lo. good inclination towards my Chaplaine Walter Carrer to be preferred to the parsonage of Linton when it shall happen to be void, for which I geve your Lo. verie hartly thanks. I understand that your Lo. is desirous to be my tenaunt in my house nere Charing Cross... If the bearer hereof, Richard Bowes, my wive's

¹²⁰ BL Add MS 481116 fol. 339.

¹²¹ *HMCS*, II, 104.

¹²² *HMCS*, III, 107.

¹²³ NA SP 81/2/35; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1582, 193-5.

eldest sonne, stand in nede of your Lo. lauffull favour, I pray your Lo. aforde it unto him.¹²⁴

Quid pro quo arrangements were easier for more powerful individuals with more access to means to help each other and simultaneously advance their own causes and client. The clerks, with less access, had to be diligent to find occasions to help a patron. Anthony Ashley, while explaining his devotion to Sir Robert Cecil, claimed he would seek to aid him and “never omit any fit occasion that... may yield your honor benefit.”¹²⁵ Work for a patron’s benefit could range from the simple to the serious. In Sir William Cecil’s case, he had Armagil Waad relay orders to his gardener, and locate someone to handle some excavations in 1561.¹²⁶ In Sir Francis Walsingham’s case, he had Edmund Tremayne discover for him why the queen was upset with him. Tremayne wrote, reporting to him “the points of mislike” so he could act accordingly.¹²⁷ He wrote again the week later, assuring Walsingham he had been “bold to ask... how her Majesty was now satisfied with your service.”¹²⁸ Having someone actively seeking their benefit, particularly in the difficult political atmosphere at court, could prove invaluable for any courtier, and so the more men helping in such a way, the better it was for the patron. This did not preclude men like the clerks from serving multiple patrons, particularly since this could increase their chances of successful advancement. Lord Cobham explained William Waad’s position in two letters, one to Sir Francis Walsingham, the other to Lord Burghley. In the letter to Walsingham he explained that Waad “relies so much on your liking that he would not bestow himself but to your satisfaction.”¹²⁹ Yet in the letter to Cecil written three months later, he wrote “I suppose that Mr Wade’s service and devotion to you are so well known that I need not recommend him.”¹³⁰ Neither Waad nor Cobham were being in any way disloyal to a patron. In cases such as these, clients like Waad and Cobham simply worked to advance themselves and hopefully gain an ally or two at the same time.

Gaining powerful allies was the primary benefit for the clerks and other courtiers who sought patronage and, as mentioned above, both a patron and the clerks benefited from these connections. Just as a patron gained prestige from having numerous

¹²⁴ HEH, EL 35.

¹²⁵ NA SP 12/267/56.

¹²⁶ NA SP 15/16/25.

¹²⁷ NA SP 83/7/72; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1578-9, 81-2.

¹²⁸ NA SP 83/7/91; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1578-9, 100-1.

¹²⁹ NA SP 78/4/36; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1579-80, 202-3.

¹³⁰ NA SP 78/4/85; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1579-80, 296-7.

followers, so a clerk enhanced his social position by connecting himself to noble patrons and their families. Because the clerks did not have noble ties through blood, they needed to acquire these ties through patronage, friendship and marriage. Thomas Edmondes, for example, persuaded the Earl of Shrewsbury and Sir Robert Cecil to sponsor his son, named for the Earl, at his christening, with Lady Hatton acting as godmother to the boy.¹³¹ This connection demonstrated the high regard Edmondes was held in, and his valued service to both Shrewsbury and Cecil. Anthony Ashley, seeking a similar connection, succeeded toward the end of his life in marrying into a noble family. In 1622 John Chamberlain recorded “On Thursday night last Sir Antonie Ashly in his dotage married Mistris Shelton a younge gentlewoman of the kinred, by whome he hath promise or expectation to become some great man.”¹³² Philippa Sheldon was the cousin of George Villiers, Marquis of Buckingham, one of the closest friends and advisers of the king and Ashley, though retired from public service for twelve years, hoped that through her family, he could enhance his prestige. However, his new connection apparently did not avail him of much, because he was forced to buy his baronetcy six months later for over one thousand pounds.¹³³

All of the clerks had to some extent this motive to become great, both in social standing and government position. It was why they worked to achieve greater offices, gain land and wealth, and connect with patrons who could push them further. Anthony Ashley once described his position as clerk as being in “that shadow of glory,” and said he wanted nothing more than to return there to “live and die in public opinion her [Majesty’s] trusty and honest servant.”¹³⁴ Ashley was pushing for his patron, Sir Robert Cecil, to help him achieve this, and he was not alone. Rogers wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham, asking Walsingham to place him on a commission “for that it were now time for to further me and to win credit.”¹³⁵ This was Walsingham’s role as a patron, and Rogers expected him to fulfil it, which he did. Patrons, like Lord Cobham, worked to ensure the clerks received appropriate credit for their labours. In a letter to Walsingham Cobham wrote, “Therefore whatever Mr Wade has accomplished at Paris for her

¹³¹ NA SP 12/284/76; *JCL*, I, 156.

¹³² *JCL*, II, 419.

¹³³ “Ashley, Sir Anthony, baronet (1551/2-1628),” *Oxford DNB*. Fortunately for the family his son-in-law Sir John Cooper’s similar elevation the same year, as well as Cooper’s subsequent marriages to connected and wealthy women, led to the elevation of Ashley’s grandson Anthony Ashley Cooper to the Earldom of Shaftesbury, a title which has continued to the current twelfth earl, who still holds Anthony Ashley’s original family seat at Winbourne St. Giles.

¹³⁴ *HMCS*, XI, 17.

¹³⁵ NA SP 81/1/46; *CSPF, Elizabeth, 1577-8*, 313.

Majesty's service is to be attributed to himself, so that I may not seem to rob him of his labours."¹³⁶ As these patrons worked to advance the credit of the clerks, they succeeded in placing them where their talents could be noticed, and ultimately helped them achieve the recognition and offices they deserved.

As the clerks advanced at court, they too were sought out for patronage. Mostly others asked them to serve as go-betweens to Privy Councillors. One man explained to Sir Francis Walsingham that he had "troubled Mr. Beale to be a means for me to your honour..."¹³⁷ In August 1594 Henry Young asked William Waad to exert his influence with the Earl of Essex and Lord Cobham for advancement.¹³⁸ Earlier the same year Waad worked with John Cecil as he tried delicately to work for the Earl of Essex without being noted for "infamy and ingratitude" for being disloyal to Sir Robert Cecil.¹³⁹ Many who did not ask the clerks to help them gain a patron, asked the clerks themselves for assistance. Because of their position in the Privy Council chamber, the clerks were in a unique position to help courtiers without direct access to the Council, and petitions for assistance followed. Toby Matthew Bishop of Durham explained that he "wrote to Mr. Smith, Clerk of the Council, mine old acquaintance and friend, to have an eye and ear to such petitions as the Scots might exhibit against me."¹⁴⁰ One courtier, Pearce Edmonds, caught up in the Essex rebellion by accident, wrote William Waad for advice. Knowing Waad was familiar with all of the details of the situation, Edmonds asked whether he should submit himself to Sir Robert Cecil or hope for a general pardon.¹⁴¹ In such situations the clerks could be the best resources of help and information to have, and it is clear that courtiers sought the clerks out because of this.

In these patronage relationships all parties benefited when things were running smoothly. This was not always the case, as Robert Beale found out when a man whom he helped advance from his servant to royal messenger began accusing him of a variety of foul deeds. It was hoped:

that he maye not be disgraced by so insolent and lowlie a p[er]son, that so ingratefullye requiteth him for sondrye good turnes w[hi]ch he hath bestowed uppon him. For he was some tyme Robert Beales servant and advanced to his place of a messenger by his meanes.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ NA SP 78/5/48; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1581-2, 111.

¹³⁷ NA SP 84/19/45; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1587, 447.

¹³⁸ NA SP 12/249/130.

¹³⁹ NA SP 12/284/52.

¹⁴⁰ *HMCS*, XII, 91; Matthew had been Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, where Smith had been a fellow.

¹⁴¹ *HMCS*, XI, 99.

¹⁴² NA SP 12/270/106.

However, the majority of the time, patronage relationships ran smoothly. This was mostly due to the excessive efforts on the part of the clerks and others in keeping their patrons happy and keeping themselves foremost in their patrons' thoughts. Almost every letter from a clerk to a patron contains some sort of thanks and acknowledgement for their help in the past, and the clear implication that they would like such help to continue. Such letters were, in the characteristic fashion of the period, often profuse in their flattery of their patron. Thomas Edmondson wrote to Sir Robert Cecil beseeching his pardon for his troublesome letters, and asking for the chance to prove his "zealous care to acquit myself faithfully." Daniel Rogers told Sir Francis Walsingham:

It grieves me not a little that your honour having been so long out of the realm it has not been my fortune to be present, that I might have shown you some service for the manifold courtesies I have received at your hands.... I have not ceased to pray for your prosperity, for the compassing of your designs and for the preservation of your health; which I have done with more earnestness, understanding that you have to do with Don John, of whom I was more afraid that he might cause you to be presented with a Spanish fig, than I was afraid of the plague at Louvain.¹⁴³

William Waad was particularly fawning in his letters to Lord Burghley. In 1579 he sent him fifty different kinds of seeds which were the "rarest and most excellent that are to be found in all Italy."¹⁴⁴ The following year he wrote "I humbly beseech you to think the zeal of my good will doth spring from that root that shall want but the dew of your good opinion and favour to yield you humble and faithful service."¹⁴⁵ Thomas Wilkes wrote in the same vein demonstrating his dedication to Sir Robert Cecil when he wrote "I am so extremely afflicted with a cold, that I am unfit for anything; howbeit... I will hazard health, life and all to obey Her Majesty's and your commandment herein."¹⁴⁶

In some letters, the clerks were reduced to begging in order to get what they needed, particularly when they had in some manner lost favour at court. Thomas Wilkes' voluminous letters in 1587-88 to the Earl of Leicester begging forgiveness make for illuminating reading, but he was not alone in his difficulties.¹⁴⁷ Anthony Ashley

¹⁴³ NA SP 83/ 9/22; *CSPF, Elizabeth*, 1578-9, 194-5.

¹⁴⁴ *HMCS*, II, 255.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 315-6.

¹⁴⁶ *HMCS*, VI, 61.

¹⁴⁷ See NA, SP 12/206/47-49; SP 12/208/1,12; SP 12/212/37,67,73,78; SP 12/213/25; SP 12/222/67; Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Vault MSS 457 nos. 23-25, 28, 31, 33-5, 38-41, 48.

wrote numerous letters begging for a return to favour and court after the Cadiz expedition. In one letter to Sir Robert Cecil he wrote:

I besech you your good hon[our] to have compassion on me and my present distressed estate, preserving me her Ma[jes]tie remission and good opinion.... I beseech you do not resolutely condemn me in this or in the matter of my present troubles.... God give you everlasting thanks for your honourable proceeding with me, when I know you might with a word have cut me off by the root.... Whatsoever shall please you I may not mislike.¹⁴⁸

Thomas Edmondson similarly begged for assistance, financially in his case, from Sir Robert Cecil in 1596. He wrote pleadingly of the extremity of his estate which “forceth me to beg importunely of your honour to be good unto me, being otherwise undone and a miserable wretch. I know you have relieved many of much better desert, but I will presume to promise that none shall remain a more thankful bondman than myself.”¹⁴⁹

Eventually, after the appropriate amount of begging and flattery, both Ashley and Edmondson had their petitions answered. Although they may appear relatively bold in their pleas, others went even further in their efforts to get what they needed. Indeed Daniel Rogers was almost demanding when he wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham in 1585 after his imprisonment. After describing his “hard fortune” and “long and extreme calamity suffered,” he wrote “it is high time that some better consideration were had for my advancement... if it pleases your honor to advance a poor gent, who for the fifteen years hath ben at your devotion.”¹⁵⁰ While Rogers was rather demanding, Robert Beale was to the point of threatening in a letter to Lord Burghley in 1595. When the Earl of Essex was pushing for Thomas Smith 2 to replace him as clerk of the Privy Council, Beale not so subtly reminded Cecil of his knowledge of the events regarding the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and that his service should be remembered and rewarded:

Further besides my ordinarye service, I was by your L[ordship]. and the rest thought a meate man to carrye downe the commission of the execucon of the Late Scotishe Queene. I received it at your L[ordship's]. handes in the presence of divers other Counsellors: And I preserved in regarde of her Ma[jes]tie safetie, that w[hi]ch was committed unto me, not knowinge of anye matter betwene her Ma[jes]tie and Mr Davison... And I take it I did a good peece of service. But what gott I by it? As much displeasure at home as anye of the rest, and abraode diffamed with carryinge down the hangeman... I will beare my cross patientlye

¹⁴⁸ NA SP 12/259/109.

¹⁴⁹ *HMCS*, VI, 264.

¹⁵⁰ NA SP 12/183/50.

and performe my duetie to my Souverigne without looking unto future
tymes...¹⁵¹

Patronage was not always an easy business; however, for the most part, the clerks succeeded. Through patronage, the clerks received the land, grants and wealth they needed to live as gentlemen. Their patrons secured them additional offices and enhanced their standing, while the noblemen had dedicated servants to protect them and raise their esteem at court. With a limited amount of offices, land and money, not every courtier, or even every clerk achieved all they desired. Yet for the most part, the clerks successfully manoeuvred in this system at court and with their patron's help established themselves as gentlemen and ensured their financial security.

Through their own hard work and a patron's assistance, the clerks of the Privy Council found stability and security both as landed gentlemen and as seasoned office-holders. Yet this was only part of their role. Their primary duty was to work for the Privy Council, and yet they continued to aspire to join the Council. With this goal always in mind, the clerks had to excel and gain the professional admiration of other officials and the Council, without seeming to undermine any Councillor's position or the authority of the Council itself, or to appear discontented or ungrateful for their office. It is vital to remember that, although the clerks were pleased with their position and the proximity in which it placed them to the Privy Council, this did not preclude hope for further advancement. Some likely hoped their office of clerk was only a stepping stone to something more, and so as they worked to prove themselves as clerks, they continued to push for more.

In efforts to secure both their present and potential future position, these men did all they could to enhance their résumés. To accomplish this, the clerks worked to gain a positive professional opinion of their capabilities, demonstrate their expertise, particularly in areas of greatest concern, and show they understood the workings of government and what was necessary in a Councillor. Such efforts most greatly concerned the Elizabethan clerks who, unlike their predecessors, did not have the opportunities which came with regime changes and a growing Privy Council to advance in office as William Paget, Thomas Smith 1, and John Mason did. While they did not face the disadvantages which could come from constant changes, like Armagil Waad or William Thomas, the relative stagnation of the Privy Council meant the Elizabethan

¹⁵¹ BL Add MSS 48116 fols 343-343v.

clerks had to work even harder for an opportunity to advance. They, then, are the clerks who seem to have taken an extra effort to gain the high opinion of others.

As we saw before, the clerks succeeded in proving their value professionally, enough to be recognized above others and receive their clerkship. Although they were not universally liked, Thomas Smith I was temperamental and Robert Beale was a bit of a complainer, yet their skills were largely acknowledged by those they worked with. Thomas Edmondson, though rather dull, was highly praised for his abilities. In one letter, Sir Robert Cecil noted to others his “good spirit and conceit” and “good discretion.”¹⁵² In a letter to Edmondson himself, Cecil wrote: “onely I may tell you that I am gladd the managing of her Ma[jes]ti[e]s request for the Dutchman to the Archduke was committed to your discretions, because the same was performed w[i]th that decorum, w[hi]ch ought to be used in the requests of great Princes.”¹⁵³ The Earl of Northampton’s praise demonstrates the abilities which he thought particularly effective in Edmondson:

I will begin with the last, which is your diligence in compiling the full discourse of your treaty, wherein appear so lively marks of your fidelity, capacity, and memory, as may both express to us what we owe, and to as many hereafter in another age may judge what you merit...¹⁵⁴

Northampton further praised his “industry and sufficiency in discharge of the trust that is reposed in both by our dear Master... His Majesty doth exceedingly approve your carriage in that place, which you hold.”¹⁵⁵ This was precisely the type of judgement the clerks sought after for both themselves and their work. Commended so highly, it is not surprising Edmondson succeeded in his efforts to advance.

The efforts to secure the professional admiration of their colleagues reflects the desire of the clerks to excel in their position and potentially advance. Yet, overall, the primary concern of the clerks was to secure their position professionally, socially and most especially financially. When they ceased to be clerks, their salaries, fees and ties to the Council would be gone, and so the clerks made the most of their position while they could. Through the help of patrons, the clerks of the Privy Council acquired the grants, licenses and land they needed to find personal and financial security, and through their hard work they continued to prove they were worthy of advancement. Neither was easy, yet for the most part, the clerks were able, over their lifetimes and during their clerkship,

¹⁵² NA SP 12/274/120.

¹⁵³ BL Stowe MS 171 fols 47r-v.

¹⁵⁴ BL Add MS 4173 fol. 24.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

to secure their status as gentlemen, with the land and money necessary to support that lifestyle.

CHAPTER FIVE

WRITINGS OF THE CLERKS

Prior to their clerkships, some clerks utilized their literary and intellectual skills by wielding their pens in pursuit, or service of, a patron. Benefits arose for both the clerks and the men who commissioned them. The clerks received payment and hopefully a chance to call upon the patron for aid in the future, while the patron received the desired work. Such commissions to men of special talent and learning have been referred to as “knowledge transactions” and provided a way for scholars to provide a specific form of private service for individuals involved in government.¹ The reward for such service was not necessarily money. In most cases remuneration was in the form of future expectation, including promises of support and friendship in times of need.

G. R. Elton provides the story of how Thomas Cromwell used assigned writing as a type of interview process before becoming a patron of Thomas Starkey, and it was in circumstances similar to these that a variety of powerful individuals gave commissions to several clerks.² Some such commissions came from men already known to the clerks. Sir Henry Knyvett, for example, requested a translation of Gilbertus Cognatus’ *Of the Office of Servauntes* in 1543 from the man then working as his secretary, Thomas Chaloner. In Chaloner’s published dedication to Knyvett he refers to the request and speaks of himself as Knyvett’s “humble servaunt” whom he hopes “longe soo to serve.”³ The subject was well-timed, as 1543 saw intrigue within the Council regarding the Prebendaries Plot against Archbishop Cranmer, who was saved in part by the efforts of his servant Ralph Morice and Cranmer’s own submission to Henry VIII.⁴ While Chaloner and Knyvett had a close working relationship, this was certainly not necessary as in the case of William Thomas and John Tamworth. Tamworth commissioned Thomas, who was apparently known for his fluency in Italian, to complete an Italian

¹ Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, “Pragmatic readers: knowledge transactions and scholarly services in late Elizabethan England,” in Anthony Fletcher and Peters Roberts, *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honor of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge, 1994), 102-124.

² G. R. Elton, *Reform and Renewal: Thomas Cromwell and the Common Weal* (Cambridge, 1973), 48-55. For a broader discussion see pages 38-65.

³ Thomas Chaloner, *Of the office of servavntes a boke made in Latine by one Gilbertus Cognatus and newly Englyshed*. (London, 1543).

⁴ “Cranmer, Thomas (1489-1556), archbishop of Canterbury,” in *OxfordDNB*.

dictionary and grammar book.⁵ Thomas completed the work in 1548 and returned to England the following year. However, having been in Italy since around the start of 1545, prior to which he had no known dealings with Tamworth, it is unlikely that the two were personally acquainted. Tamworth saw the value of Thomas' *Principal Rules of Italian Grammar* and sent it to his brother-in-law of Sir Walter Mildmay for printing, and it was published by the king's printer in 1550, the first Italian dictionary in English.⁶ Although commissioned by Tamworth, Thomas' work also gained him access to Mildmay and even indirect contact could lead to patronage, and patronage was the primary purpose behind the acceptance of these commissions.

While these publications by Chaloner and Thomas were more literary, focused primarily on education, an unpublished commission for Robert Beale was both practical and political. Sometime between Beale's return to England in 1558 and 1562, Beale was employed by Lord John Grey to determine the validity of the marriage of his niece Lady Katherine Grey to Edward Seymour, first Earl of Hertford. On this errand Beale travelled across the continent consulting various authorities before stating in his treatise on the subject that the marriage was valid.⁷ Unfortunately for Beale his finding angered both Queen Elizabeth and the Privy Council, and Grey failed to give him his promised annuity of forty pounds for his work. Although Beale did not gain any advantage from his work, and the final judgement by an ecclesiastical high commission in 1562 went against the marriage, Beale's arguments have been proven substantively correct.⁸

These projects, commissioned on an individual basis, were a means by which the clerks and other aspiring men could secure a patron and funding, although Beale is an example of how such transactions could fall apart. These were direct and specific knowledge transactions with patronage as the implied reward for their learning and labours. Yet some writings of the clerks more clearly demonstrate their ties to the literary world than to any particular patron. The best examples of this are William Thomas' *Peregrine* and the poetry and historical work by Daniel Rogers. While both emphasize the literary connections of these clerks, their hopes of patronage are also evident. While in Venice in 1547, William Thomas wrote *Peregrine*, a tract in defence

⁵ William Thomas, *Principal rules of the Italian grammer with a dictionarie for the better vnderstandyng of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante: gathered into this tongue by William Thomas* (London, 1550).

⁶ "Thomas, William (d.1554)" in *OxfordDNB*.

⁷ Robert Beale, "A large discourse concerning the marriage between the earl of Hertford and the Lady Katherine Grey," Cambridge University Library MS li.5.3, art. 4.

⁸ "Beale, Robert (1541-1601)" in *OxfordDNB*.

of the recently deceased Henry VIII.⁹ Written in the dialogue format popular at the time, Thomas defended the late king in the work he wrote in Italian. Thomas dedicated the published version to Pietro Aretino, “the Scourge of Princes,” known for his circulated letters praising or scolding political figures and more scandalously, for his sonnets written to accompany Giuliano Romano’s *Sixteen Postures*, depicting common sexual positions, in 1524. Although Aretino routinely mocked leading figures, (he wrote a mock will for Pope Leo X’s elephant Hanno) he praised Henry VIII as William Thomas did, and dedicated a volume of letters to him in 1542.¹⁰ It made sense then for Thomas to dedicate his defence of Henry VIII to Aretino, who also lived in Venice at the time. Thomas’ *Peregrine* demonstrated his loyalty to his king, but also emphasized his connection to the literary circle in Italy. The importance of the Italian connection is further supported by the fact that the work was only published in Thomas’ lifetime -- in Italian in 1552 -- and was not translated into English until the eighteenth century.¹¹ However, political considerations were also present in this and his other literary works, and explains why *Peregrine*, though written in Italian, was not published until Thomas was safely out of Italy and away from any negative repercussion from his written support of an anti-papal king and his Protestant son.

William Thomas had literary ties in Italy, but Daniel Rogers’ ties were to the humanist poets both in England and on the continent. Rogers began to compile his history of England between 1569 and 1580 at the request of his cousin the Flemish geographer Abraham Ortelius which had potential to be a fascinating study, due to Rogers’ study of coins and inscriptions.¹² However it was his poetry, primarily written in Latin and circulated among friends, for which he was better known.¹³ Rogers was particularly close to the Sidney family and some of his poems in praise of individuals show echoes both of Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* and Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*.

⁹ Copies of this tract can be found in BL Add MS 33383 and BL Cotton MS Vespasian D xviii.

¹⁰ See Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and his circle in Venice, 1527-1556* (Firenze, 1985), and David C. McPherson, “Aretino and the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel,” *PMLA*, 84, (1969), 1551-1558.

¹¹ “Thomas, William” in *OxfordDNB*. It was published as *Ill Pellegrino Inglese* (1552).

¹² Rogers’ notes for his history are found in BL Add MS 21088. See also F. J. Levy, “Daniel Rogers as Antiquary,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 27 (1965), 444-462.

¹³ For more on Rogers’ literary ties see J.A. van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons and Professor: Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden humanists* (Leiden, 1962). Rogers was the only clerk to write an extensive amount of poetry. Although some poems of Sir Thomas Smith 1 and Thomas Chaloner survive, neither wrote as expansively as Rogers. See Bror Danielsson ed., *Sir Thomas Smith: Literary and Linguistic Works, Part I: Certain psalmes of David translated into Englishe meter by Sir Thomas Smith, Knight, then prisoner in the Tower of London, 1549* (Stockholm, 1963); William Baldwin, *A myrroure for magistrates Wherein may be seen by example of other, with howe greuous plages vices are punished* (London, 1559).

Although Rogers undoubtedly hoped for patronage from the Sidney family, he was not afraid to take risks in his poetry. One particular poem, addressed to Philip Sidney's uncle Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, cleverly plays on multiple Latin meanings to both praise the earl for his title and closeness to the queen, while simultaneously noting the unlikelihood of Leicester receiving a dukedom or marrying Elizabeth.¹⁴ Poems like this, passed as they were among international Protestant literary circles, demonstrated Rogers' literary prowess, while at the same time reiterating his ties to literary figures and literary courtiers of the day.¹⁵

The written works of Rogers, Thomas and others reflect their ties to the literary community and, more importantly, demonstrated that the clerks saw literature as a method of acquiring a patron. Although Thomas wrote *Peregrine* three years before his clerkship and Rogers wrote most of his poetry well before acquiring that office, two works, one by Thomas and the other by Chaloner, are more directly related to them becoming clerks. In 1544 Chaloner published his translation of *An Homilie of St. John Chrysostome*.¹⁶ As a religious work it did not have the direct political implications of *Peregrine* or Rogers' poem to the Earl of Leicester. However in this case both literary and political considerations appear. The *Homilie* was first translated in 1543 from Greek into Latin by John Cheke, the humanist scholar who was a brother-in-law of William Cecil and a friend of Thomas Smith 1. More importantly, he was then tutor of Prince Edward. Thomas Chaloner studied under Cheke at St. John's college Cambridge and likely selected this work to translate into English in Cheke's honour. When published the *Homilie* included a dedication to the recently knighted Sir Anthony Denny. Denny, another former St. John's man, was a gentleman of Henry VIII's Privy Chamber with ties to Chaloner's current employer, another gentleman of the Privy Chamber, Sir Henry Knyvett. Denny also had ties to Sir William Paget, the former clerk who had entered the Privy Council as Principal Secretary the previous year, and who studied as a young man with Denny at the St. Paul's school.¹⁷ Chaloner's translation therefore served as a reminder to men in authority and with connection to the royal family of Chaloner's

¹⁴ Robert Kuin and Anne Lake Prescott, "Versifying Connections: Daniel Rogers and the Sidneys," *Sidney Journal*, 18, (2000), 1-36, in particular 12-14, 25-27.

¹⁵ For more of Rogers' poetry see HL Hertford MS HM 31188. See also verses included in the following works: Laurence Humphrey, *Life of Bishop Jewel, or Ioannis Iuelli Angli, Episcopi Sarisburiensis vita*, (London, 1573); Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum orbis terrarum or The theatre of the vvhole world* (London, 1608); Ralph Agas, *Celeberrimæ Oxoniensis* (London: 1588).

¹⁶ Thomas Chaloner, *An homilie of Saint John Chrysostome* (London, 1544).

¹⁷ "Paget, William, first Baron Paget (1505/6-1563)" in *Oxford DNB*.

connection to them and perhaps served as an implicit request for their patronage. It was most likely due to their assistance, and the timely reminder of Chaloner's connection to them, that Chaloner received his clerkship of the Privy Council the following year.

Thomas Chaloner's translation sought the aid of men in secure positions within the royal household. Five years later, when William Thomas used his writings to seek a patron he took a calculated risk which achieved successful results when he received his appointment as clerk. In 1549 Thomas had two works published. The first, *The Vanitie of This World*, he dedicated to Lady Anne Herbert, sister to the recently deceased dowager Queen Katherine Parr, and wife of Sir William Herbert, the future Earl of Pembroke who, with Lord Russell, controlled the largest army in England.¹⁸ The timing was delicate; the recent rebellions, particularly by Kett and his supporters in Norfolk, were quelled in June by force of arms by Herbert, Russell and John Dudley, then Earl of Warwick. The position of the Lord Protector Somerset was becoming increasingly tenuous and at this time Thomas' dedication to Lady Herbert, whose husband's military authority would be a key factor in the disintegration of Somerset's power base, had added significance. To her he wrote:

Findyng in conclusion, that they, whiche knowe reason, can not yet rule them selves by reason: me thought it necessarie to publisse vnto the worlde this little woroke... in hope that some vertuous myndes beholdyng here as in a glasse, the spottes of theyr owne vices, shall yet the rather bende theyr hertes towardes charitee and contempt of these worldely vanities.¹⁹

Although Thomas' comments to Lady Herbert had political significance, as referencing the actions and potential removal of Somerset, the dedication was innocuous enough to prevent any difficulties. However, William Thomas' second publication in 1549, *The Historie of Italy*, contains a very significant dedication to the Earl of Warwick.²⁰ The work discusses the virtues and problems of the governments of the Italian city states. The dedication to Warwick is reminiscent of the advice posed in *The Prince* by Niccolo Machiavelli, who is mentioned in the *Historie*; Thomas' translation of Machiavelli and the influence of Machiavelli's work on him will be discussed more fully later. Thomas explained to Warwick in the dedication that his history discusses, among other things, the following lessons:

¹⁸ William Thomas, *The vanittee of this world* (London, 1549); "Herbert, William, first earl of Pembroke (1506/7-1570)," in *OxfordDNB*.

¹⁹ Thomas, *The vanittee of this world*, fols Aii r-v.

²⁰ William Thomas, *The historie of Italie, a boke excedyng profitable to be redde: because it intreateth of the estate of many and diuers common weales, how thei haue ben, [and] now be gouerved* (London, 1549).

It moueth the noble prince to mainteigne peace and iustice: and sheweth the tyra[...]ne, what plagues folow of warre and crueltee: and that though his tyrannie passe vnplagued in this worlde (whiche hapneth seldome) yet shall his name be hated and cursed in all ages and amongst all nacions... It sheweth also, howe mutable fortune is, and howe that, whiche hath been gotten with extreeme peines, vnmeasurable expences, and vnreasonable effusion of bloudde, hath ben loste in a moment: and that commonly he that hath conquered most in warre, at the beste is yet a loser: and finally, that of diuision, either amongst the nobilitee or the commons, there ensueth vtter destruction of realmes, and subuercion of common wealthes.²¹

Such advice, dated 20 September, after the rebellions were subdued by Warwick and less than a month before the downfall of Protector Somerset, might have proven awkward for Thomas had Somerset regained control. Fortunately William Thomas correctly gauged the political scene and when his *Historie of Italie* was published it included the dedication to the earl who soon thereafter held the greatest authority on the Privy Council. Within the year Thomas replaced John Mason, who advanced to a place on the Privy Council, as the newest clerk of the Privy Council.

Brief mention must be made of the fact that the clerks were not alone seeking patronage through dedicating their works to others. The clerks themselves were recipients of such dedications. At least nine Council clerks had published works, including poetry and translations, dedicated to them. Some of these works were practical in nature and of immediate use to the clerks to whom they were dedicated. These include a discourse on the trouble in France published in Antwerp in 1568 and dedicated to Daniel Rogers, then secretary to Sir Henry Norris, resident ambassador to France, and a work on law for use in Virginia in 1612 dedicated to Sir Thomas Smith 2, treasurer of the governing council of the Virginia Company.²² Some of the dedicated works were more personal than practical, referencing the clerks personal interests and experiences, including a 1548 description of the Duke of Somerset's expedition to Scotland dedicated to William Paget, Somerset's then staunch ally on the Council, and *The Sculler: rowing from Tiber to Thames* dedicated to William Waad in 1612.²³

²¹ Thomas, *Historie of Italie*, fol. Aii v.

²² Franklin B. Williams Jr., *Index of Dedications and Commendatory verses in English books before 1641* (London, 1962), 23350, 21315; *Diplomatic Reps.*, F114; Pierre Ronsard, *A discourse of the present troubles in Fraunce*, Antwerp, 1568; William Strachey, *For the colony in Virginea Britannia. Lavves diuine, morall and martiall, &c.*, London, 1612.

²³ Williams, *Index of Dedications*, 19479, 23791; William Patten, *The expedicion into Scotla[n]de of the most woorthely fortunate prince Edward, Duke of Soomerset*, London, 1548; John Taylor, *The sculler rowing from Tiber to Thames with his boate laden with a hotch-potch, or gallimawfry of sonnets, satyres, and epigrams*, London, 1612

These dedications reiterate the patronage relationship established through literature. John Taylor and William Patten focused on this relationship when they described their patrons respectively as “the Right Worshipfull and worthy faouurer of learning, my singular good Maister, Sir William Waad Knight” and “the right honorable Syr VVilliam Paget, knight... his moste benigne Fautour and Patrone.” William Strachey added to such references when he glowingly praised Sir Thomas Smith 2 as “the much Honoured, in all Nations acknowledged the most renowned famous Factor and Professor of all Actions that haue the warrant of Religion, Honour or goodnesse.” Paget as well as other clerks who joined the Privy Council continued to participate in this type of literary patronage, and although the clerks were not in as strong a position as Councillors to advance the causes of their literary devotees, the dedications both from the clerks and to the clerks served as a way to seek patronage while demonstrating talent and learning.

The primary focus of the written works left behind from the period before each of the clerks acquired that office is patronage. Whether through employment, education or literary connections, these men used their writings to secure the aid of others in hope of advancement. Their works, both commissioned and personally conceived, reflect on their backgrounds, and once again education, travel and personal contacts play a role in their careers. While the central importance of these works is not their content but their audience, principally who they are dedicated to, they also reiterate the personal talents of the clerks, primarily their literary skill and mastery of several languages. Overall these works, whether commissioned or not, had a practical purpose and the clerks used their knowledge and skill in writing to gain patronage and office.

The clerks of the Privy Council did not cease writing after receiving their office. In fact, for most this was the time in which they produced the majority of the written work which survives. Although most of their writings centre on their work for the Council, as clerks, diplomats and intelligence gatherers, they continued to write to maintain their literary connections and secure patronage. For the most part, however, their written work focused on matters directly related to their work for the Privy Council. This includes treatises on areas or events of concern, works written to persuade or serve as propaganda, personal works on government, and finally treatises relating to the Council itself and more particularly the office of Principal Secretary. The same aspects of patronage, education and connections to others appear in these more practical writings, just as they did in the works written before they became clerks, and it is within

the context of these earlier works that we can study their writings while clerks of the Privy Council.

In their early works some clerks sought patrons in both literary and political circles and this continued after they became clerks, the best examples of this being William Thomas and Thomas Chaloner. Chaloner is best known for his translation -- the first into English -- of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*.²⁴ Published in 1549, four years after his appointment as a clerk, it further reiterated his ties to the literary humanist community.²⁵ Erasmus, perhaps the quintessential humanist scholar and author, wrote his *Folly* following one of his lengthy stays in England and dedicated it to Sir Thomas More.²⁶ The work jokingly comments on the folly seen everywhere in life, with particular focus on the folly of scholastics and religious leaders who focused on rote dogma and medieval study, thereby losing sight of the purpose of both. Although he contained his disdain within his other arguments, Erasmus' opinion that humanism and tempered reform should win out over these outdated ideas is clearly evident. At the time of Chaloner's translation, nearly forty years after *Folly*'s first publication, humanism had won the battle in England and now the work was not dedicated to More or any other individual, it reiterated his ties to the newer generation of humanists led by John Cheke, Roger Ascham and Sir Thomas Smith and included others such as William Cecil and Chaloner himself, all of whom had at the time positions in the royal household or with the Privy Council.²⁷ Chaloner's translation reiterated his ties to humanist interests and, in highlighting Erasmus' mocking of the pre-Reformation church, tied him to the explicitly Protestant agenda of the "commonwealth men" who dominated government under Edward VI.

Although Chaloner's work linked him to humanists in government, William Thomas sought the patronage of the young king himself in his writings. While a clerk of

²⁴ Thomas Chaloner, *The praise of folie, Moriae encomium* (London, 1549).

²⁵ For more see Clarence H. Miller, ed., "*The Praise of Folly*," *Translated by Sir Thomas Chaloner*, (London, 1965); David Weil Baker, *Divulging Utopia: Radical Humanism in Sixteenth Century England*, (Amherst, 1999), 106-130; David Weil Baker, "Topical Utopias: Radicalizing Humanism in Sixteenth-Century England," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36, (1996), 1-30; Arthur F. Kinney, "Rhetoric as Poetic: Humanist Fiction in the Renaissance," *ELH*, 43, (1976), 419-425.

²⁶ For more see Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic debate in the Renaissance & Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1995); Joseph Burney Trapp, *Erasmus, Colet and More: the early Tudor humanists and their books*, (London, 1991), 39-78, particularly 68-71; Kathleen Williams, *Twentieth century interpretations of 'The praise of folly': a collection of critical essays*, (London, 1969).

²⁷ For more see W.S. Hudson, *The Cambridge connection and the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559* (Durham (NC), 1980); Jonathan Woolfson ed., *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*, (New York, 2002); Alistair Fox, "English humanism and the body politic" in Schochet, Tatspaugh, and Brobeck eds., *Reformation, Humanism and Revolution* (Washington, D.C., 1990), 147-62.

the Privy Council, William Thomas became a kind of personal tutor on government to Edward VI. Precisely how this came about is unknown, but Thomas worked diligently to curry Edward's favour. Included in these efforts was a New Years gift to Edward of a translation of Barbaro's travels to Tana and Persia.²⁸ It is also quite probable that Thomas gave a copy of the Italian version of his *Peregryne*, published in 1552, to the young king in memory of Henry VIII.²⁹ The primary work of Thomas for Edward VI was a series of eighty-five questions and discourses on matters of government, which Thomas referred to as "commonplaces of state." In these and his other political writings he addresses a variety of issues, from reforming coinage, to besieging a fortress and pacifying sedition.³⁰ More significantly, he wrote essays dealing with more political subjects such as "whether it be expedient to vary with time" which focused on a prince's behaviour and dealing with others. Thomas also wrote two essays on foreign affairs, one "touching his Majesty's outward affairs" and another on "what prince's amity is best." On this question he concluded that "th' amity of that prince to be best, who is neerest neighbour, most antient friend, agreeable of religion, and good of nature. At the least, if these four cannot be found in one prince, then I think his amity best who is endued with most of them."³¹ Although Thomas' rather simplistic viewpoints make him appear more arrogant than intelligent, his discussions focused on the key issues of the time and were a starting point for the young king to develop his own ideas.

Perhaps Thomas' most relevant work was "whether it be better for a commonwealth, that the power be in the nobility or in the commonalty."³² Because of the immense amount of authority then in the hands of the noblemen on the Privy Council, it was highly unlikely Thomas should find in favour of the commonalty, and indeed he declared the nobility to be the best as they could advise the prince who would speak for the commonalty. Although his arguments on this and his other subjects are

²⁸ BL Royal 17 C. X. William Thomas, "The thinges that were scene and hearde by me, Josaphat Barbaro, citezein of Venice, on twoo voiages that I made, thone vnto Tana (Azov, in Russia) and thother into Persia": translation by William Thomas, with a dedication to the King, as a new. year's gift, n. d. [1551-1553]; Printed as Lord Henry Stanley ed., "*Travels to Tana and Persia*" by *Josafa Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini, translated from the Italian by William Thomas, clerk of the Council to Edward VI*, London, 1873. Barbaro began his journey to Tana in 1436, remained there sixteen years, and returned home along the banks of the Volga to Moscow, and thence through Poland and Germany. His journey to Persia he undertook in 1471, as Venetian Ambassador, returning in 1478.

²⁹ The possibility that Edward VI knew Italian is based on a report by François de Scèpeaux which cannot be confirmed. "Edward VI, (1537-1553)" in *OxfordDNB*.

³⁰ BL Cotton MS Vespasian D xviii and Cotton MS Titus B ii. See also John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials: relating chiefly to religion, and the reformation of it*, (Oxford, 1822), II, i, 156-65; II, ii, 315-327, 365-95.

³¹ Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, II, ii, 381.

³² Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, II, ii, 372-7.

vague and rather plain, they demonstrate his attentiveness to the concerns of the day, as well as his overwhelming security in his favour with the king and the Privy Council that he should undertake such subjects. Interestingly, Thomas' writings once again show evidence of his time in Italy, as his arguments reflect those of Niccolo Machiavelli in that author's *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*, published in Rome in 1531. Thomas' list of eighty-five questions are very much like the chapter headings in the *Discourses* and indeed Thomas' essays regarding the friendship of princes and whether to vary with time have been referred to as "copy-book exercises from Machiavelli."³³ The very fact that Thomas had read Machiavelli's work is especially interesting because, although some politicians and scholars in England were beginning to hear of Machiavelli, few had actually read his works, particularly since they were not taught at Cambridge until 1573, and his most famous work, *The Prince*, was not translated into English until 1636.³⁴ However, William Thomas' fluency in Italian once again aided him in his writings and political endeavours, and Thomas remained a close confidant of the young king until the latter's death in 1553.

William Thomas wrote his discourses for Edward VI in an effort to further his favour. Their focus was political and discussed not only general themes but also issues of immediate concern to both the young king and the Privy Council. Although these writings were a personal project of Thomas', they were similar to the numerous event and area related treatises written by other clerks while holding their office. These treatises were specific, focused on a particular event or situation regarding which the clerks, because of their diplomatic work and other personal experience, were familiar.³⁵ The two clerks who wrote the most treatises were Tremayne and Beale, each representing expertise in either a specific region or a broad scope. Between 1571 and 1576, Edmund Tremayne wrote five treatises on Ireland, which he visited several times. In them he discussed governance, the reformation of abuses and reduction of charges,

³³ L. Arnold Weissberger, "Machiavelli and Tudor England," *Political Science Quarterly*, 42 (1927), 596. See also Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London, 1965), 30-76 particularly 40-51; Graham Maddox, "The Secular Reformation and the Influence of Machiavelli," *The Journal of Religion*, 82, (2002), 556-7; Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric from the Counter-Reformation to Milton*, (Princeton, 1994), 85-96, 137; Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640*, (Cambridge, 1995); Emile Gasquet, *Le courant machiavelien dans la pensee et la litterature anglaises du XVIIe siecle*, (Paris: Didier, 1974).

³⁴ See also Weissberger, "Machiavelli and Tudor England," 589-607.

³⁵ See also David Potter, ed., *Foreign Intelligence and Information in Elizabethan England: Two English Treatises on the State of France, 1580-1584*, (Cambridge, 2004).

and the suppression of injustice and tyranny on the island.³⁶ In Robert Beale's many treatises, his expertise is displayed, not in a single region, but in foreign affairs as a whole. Between 1571 and 1597, Beale wrote at least eleven different treatises, on matters ranging from Mary Queen of Scots, the Low Countries, precedents regarding treason, and difficulties facing ambassadors.³⁷ His writing on why France should not support the claim of Mary Queen of Scots was particularly sought after, so much so that Henry Killigrew had it translated into French for distribution to those closely associated with Catherine de Medici and her council.³⁸ Another discourse on the Hanse Towns was approved for publishing by the Privy Council who said it was "written with very good judgment and knowledg, Mr. Beale being a man of speciall experience and exercise in those causes."³⁹

It was primarily their experience abroad, discussed above, that led to the clerks writing, at the request of the Privy Council and individual Councillors, treatises on issues relevant at the time. An excellent example of this is Edmund Tremayne. Tremayne wrote his treatise "Whether the Quenes Matie be to be counselled to governe Irelande after the Irish Maner As it hathe bine accustomed / Or to reduce it as neare as maye be to thenglishe gov[er]nem[ent]" in December 1573. Tremayne had extensive experience in Ireland; he was sent there by Sir William Cecil in 1569 and remained upon receiving an "honourable offer" by the Lord Deputy Sir Henry Sidney to be Sidney's private secretary.⁴⁰ Tremayne remained with Sidney until the latter succeeded in obtaining his recall to London in 1571. While still in Dublin, Tremayne was made aware by Cecil of his preferment to the clerkship of the Privy Council, which office he received when he returned to London with Sidney.⁴¹ Immediately thereafter he began to write reports on the state of Ireland, one in June 1571, another in February 1572 and May 1573, and the above treatise in December of that year. In June of that same year he had returned to Ireland on the Council's orders to address several matters with the new Lord Deputy Sir

³⁶ NA SP 63/30/65-6; NA SP 63/35/21; NA SP 63/40/78; NA SP 63/55/6.

³⁷ BL Add MSS 48049, fols 340-57; BL Add MSS 48017 fols 200-207; BL Add MSS 48014 fols 572-9v; NA SP 12/153/76-7; NA SP 83/23/100; *APC*, XXVIII, 102; *CSP, Elizabeth*, 1569-71, 569-70; *CSP, MQS*, 1586-8, 50-3, 269-73.

³⁸ NA SP 70/121/2158. Killigrew also worked to publish and translate other works against Mary Queen of Scots and circulate them throughout the French court and those closest to the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici.

³⁹ *APC*, XXVIII, 102.

⁴⁰ NA SP 63/30/42.

⁴¹ NA SP 63/30/99.

William Fitzwilliam and to inquire into the state of the country, and it was upon his return that he wrote the latter treatise.⁴²

Edmund Tremayne's treatise regarding the reformation of Ireland was written at the request of Sir Walter Mildmay, a Privy Councillor and Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, having no experience in the area, sought out Tremayne for an explanation of the situation there. Tremayne's work deals primarily with how Ireland should be governed and the role of English settlers there, both of which were the focus of debate at court. The debate centred around the actions of several key individuals: Sidney, Fitzwilliam and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (all brothers-in-law) and additionally Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex and Sir Thomas Smith 1. Following Sidney's recall in March 1571, Sir William Fitzwilliam, already in Ireland, was appointed the new Lord Deputy. Fitzwilliam focused on an approach of decentralized government, rather than Sidney's scheme of having lord presidents and local councils, and due to this sharp difference of opinion, both Sidney and Leicester began almost immediately to criticize Fitzwilliam's plans, and Sidney began a campaign to return. At the same time another agenda for Ireland was being put forward primarily by Sir Thomas Smith 1 and Walter Devereux, the Earl of Essex for colonization of Ireland by native Englishmen.⁴³ The hope was that second sons and other ambitious gentlemen could find profit there. The idea was supported by the queen and in August 1572, Sir Thomas Smith 1 sent his illegitimate son to colonize in Ardes where Smith had been granted land by the queen.⁴⁴ The following July, the Earl of Essex made a separate agreement with the queen for a colony in Ulster, supported in part by crown troops. These schemes were supported by the queen and the Earl of Leicester as an opportunity for the crown to save money. However, with Fitzwilliam's opposition and the negative reaction of the Irish, problems quickly occurred, and in June 1573 Tremayne was sent back to Ireland to assess the situation. By October Essex's men had faced several defeats, and in November Smith's son was killed. It was that December that Tremayne, now back in England, wrote his treatise.

⁴² NA SP 63/41/12.

⁴³ Smith put forward his position in *A letter sent by I.B. Gentleman unto his very frende Maystet R.C. Esquire, wherin is conteyned a large discourse of the peopling & inhabiting the cuntry called the Ardes... taken in hand by Sir Thomas Smith one of the Quenes Maiesties priuie Counsel, and Thomas Smith Esquire, his sonne* (London, 1572).

⁴⁴ See also David Bears Quinn, "Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577) and the Beginnings of English Colonial Theory," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 89 (1945), 543-560; Hiram Morgan, "The Colonial Venture of Sir Thomas Smith in Ulster, 1571-75," *HJ*, 28 (1985), 261-278.

Tremayne clearly addressed the current debate over English settlements in Ireland and firmly opposed such actions. His reason was primarily the fact that the Irish system seemed to corrupt the English settlers. He explained: “Ffrom this humo^r that the mightiest desireth to rule at his pleasure over the weakest / you shall not finde any of o^r nacon to be free / If he come once to possess any thing in that Realme.”⁴⁵ He went further to explain, “I have declared how all men of o^r nacon do growe corrupte & thereby made the more unfitte for gov[er]nem[en]^t when they come once to possesse any thinge there.”⁴⁶ To address this problem, he suggested the principal officers and “suche as shall governe there for the quene, maye come nowe & newe from this Realme,” thereby avoiding using officers who had, in Tremayne’s opinion, been corrupted.⁴⁷ His strong disagreement with English colonization was in direct opposition to the ambitions of Sir Thomas Smith 1, the new Principal Secretary, and additionally the Earl of Essex, as well as Sir Henry Sidney, the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burghley who supported the idea. Edmund Tremayne’s treatise on Ireland not only discussed the problems of the past but also contained solutions for the future. His opinions in some ways supported the ideas of leading Privy Councillors and in other ways did not. However, in all of his statements, his knowledge and experience produced relatively realistic ideas that were his own as well and demonstrated his thoughtful expertise.

Edmund Tremayne wrote his treatise on Ireland to educate a Councillor regarding the situation there both as an individual favour and as part of his role as clerk of the Privy Council. Such assignments formed a link between the diplomatic work of the clerks and their more mundane duties as assistant secretaries in England. These treatises helped the Council and individual Councillors understand a particular situation with the treatises used at the discretion of the Council. One particular use for these works was propaganda and several writings of the clerks served this purpose, particularly during Elizabeth’s reign. Each of these documents served as effective propaganda at a dangerous period and highlight the writing skills of the clerks, as well as how the Privy Council utilized the talent, experience and knowledge of the clerks to gather information and influence public opinion. For example, three different works, published between 1588 and 1594, worked to denounce the Spanish following the Armada attack, and justify the actions of the English in retaliation. The first of these was a translation by

⁴⁵ Huntington Library EL 1701 fol. 1v.

⁴⁶ Ibid., fol. 4v.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Anthony Ashley of the famous and unique *Mariner's Mirrour*, commonly called *The Waggoner* after its original author.⁴⁸ The work included descriptions and charts of “the courses, heights, distances, depths, soundings, flouds and ebs... of the harbouroughs, havens and ports of the greatest part of Europe.” A valuable tool for navigation, the work was commissioned by the Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham and dedicated to Ashley's patron the new Lord Chancellor Christopher Hatton. Slightly delayed by Ashley's work as clerk, the book, once completed, included not only the charts and navigational information, but also two reports. These reports detailed “the exploits lately atchiued by the right Honorable the L. Admiral of Engla[n]d with her Maties. nauie” -- in other words, the defeat of the Armada -- “and some former seruices don by that worthy knight Sr. Fra: Drake,” referring to Drake's raid on Cadiz harbour in 1587. Altogether the book aided English seamen in navigation, while simultaneously reminding them of the recent and famous exploits of the English navy, and served as a valuable tool for increasing morale and providing instruction.

The second work, written by Robert Beale discussed the next great naval expedition at Portugal in 1589, in which Anthony Ashley participated. The work was called *A declaration of the causes, which mooued the chiefe commanders of the nauie of her most excellent Maiestie the Queene of England, in their voyage and expedition for Portingal* and, like Ashley's work, Beale's pamphlet aimed at vindicating the English navy, in this case, their response to the Armada campaign, and the seizure of Hanse ships which caused political problems until the ships were finally returned.⁴⁹ As Beale did not join in the expedition he no doubt based his pamphlet on the information of others, including Ashley, as well Privy Council discussions on the topic. Although Beale relied on the information of others for his pamphlet, in 1594 it was William Waad's treatise that aided Lord Burghley and others in writing an account of the Lopez plot. Waad participated in the examination of those involved in the affair, and reported repeatedly to Burghley and the Earl of Essex regarding the letters, examinations and demeanour of

⁴⁸ Anthony Ashley, *The mariners mirrour wherin... First made & set fourth in diuers exact sea-charts, by that famous nauigator Luke Wagenar... Heerin also may be understood the exploits lately atchiued by the right Honorable the L. Admiral of Engla[n]d with her Maties. nauie and some former seruices don by that worthy knight Sr. Fra: Drake.* (London, 1588).

⁴⁹ *A declaration of the causes, which mooued the chiefe commanders of the nauie of her most excellent Maiestie the Queene of England, in their voyage and expedition for Portingal*, (London: Christopher Barker, 1589). Several versions including Latin drafts are contained in BL Add MSS 48023, fols 220-244v; See also R. B. Wernham, *After the Armada* (Oxford, 1984), 250-258; Paul E. J. Hammer, “The crucible of war: English foreign policy, 1589-1603,” in Susan Doran and Glenn Richardson eds., *Tudor England and its neighbors* (Basingstoke, 2005), 235-66.

Count Fuentes, Ibarra, Ferrara and others.⁵⁰ Waad's full report regarding the conspiracy survives and the links between his reports and the printed account are obvious.⁵¹ The final document, printed as *A True report of sundry horrible conspiracies of late time detected*, served as additional anti-Spanish propaganda, as well as a reassurance of the divine aid granted to the queen and her ministers in discovering and preventing attacks on her life.⁵²

Perhaps the most relevant and interesting of the written works of the clerks are their treatises on government. Written after becoming clerks and following years of service, the works focus on both the immediate problems of the day and their overall impression of government and the offices within it. While broader themes are evident, matters such as patronage, work experience and even personal frustration are equally evident. These treatises could be considered the writings of elder statesmen: clerks and former clerks whose expertise and insight are clear in treatises that show not only how they served the government they worked for but also the situation they were in. Both individual and general in content, these works summarize the talent and careers of the clerks of the Privy Council.

By far the most famous of all the written works of the Privy Council clerks is Sir Thomas Smith I's *De Republica Anglorum*.⁵³ Oft quoted by historians, Smith wrote a general description of government, the legal system and even the class system in his work. Published posthumously, Smith's description was considered an invaluable learning tool, so much so that Robert Beale would later list it as essential reading for a Principal Secretary.⁵⁴ As his modern biographer Mary Dewar explained, *De Republica* was "an exercise in demonstrating to his chosen audience – the benighted foreigners suffering under their, alas! far inferior foreign institutions – the superiority of all things English," and the document supports this assessment.⁵⁵ Although he completely neglected the Privy Council in his study, Smith's comment that "the most high and

⁵⁰ NA SP 12/248/7,19,22.

⁵¹ BL Add MSS 48029 fols 147-184v. "A discourse of the treasons of D. Lopes and his treasons. Gathered by Mr William Waad one of the clerks of her Ma[jes]te's most honorable Privye Counsell."

⁵² *A True report of sundry horrible conspiracies of late time detected to haue (by barbarous murders) taken away the life of the Queenes Most Excellent Maiestie whom Almighty God hath miraculously conserued against the treacheries of her rebelles, and the violences of her most puissant enemies.* (London, 1594).

⁵³ Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum, the maner of gouernement or policie of the realme of England*, (London, 1583), Copy in BL Add MSS 48047 fols 1-50v.

⁵⁴ Robert Beale, "A Treatise of the Office of a Councellor and Principall Secretarie to her Ma[jes]tie," in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth*, (Oxford, 1925), 428.

⁵⁵ Mary Dewar ed., *De Republica Anglorum, by Sir Thomas Smith* (Cambridge, 1982), 5.

absolute power of the realme of Englande, consisteth in the Parliament,” has been analyzed and debated by historians since its publication, particularly by those focusing on the origins of the Civil War.⁵⁶ Such attention might lead a reader to believe that Smith’s work was unique, yet this is far from the case. Among numerous poems, pamphlets and treatises discussing government which survive, one in particular stands out: Sir Thomas Chaloner’s discourse of virtually the same name. Sir Thomas Chaloner wrote his *De Republica Anglorum Instaurada* while serving as ambassador to Spain in 1562.⁵⁷ Interestingly Smith wrote his *De Republica* simultaneously while ambassador to France. Both of these men were former clerks who had each served in government for at least fifteen years. Despite writing at the same time they did not consult one another on their writing and since, as Smith stated, “in my absence I feel a yearning for our commonwealth,” both took advantage of the relatively quiet circumstances of their embassies to write their descriptions.⁵⁸ Their experience as well as their literary skill qualified them to write their descriptions, and it is most likely due to the simple fact that Chaloner’s work was never translated from Latin into English that kept him from gaining recognition similar to Smith’s for his work. The primary importance of these writings is not their fame or descriptions, it is the fact that these treatises were personal projects completed by elder statesmen who had observed virtually all aspects of government and who wanted to record what they knew. While the other treatises of the clerks perhaps served a more practical purpose than these personal projects, it was in the atmosphere of learned men writing about government that the clerks wrote their political treatises.

The treatises by Smith and Chaloner were general descriptions of the government and country in 1562, however other works used a similarly descriptive format to focus instead on immediate problems in the country. The two most important of these were written by Sir Thomas Smith 1 and Armagil Waad in 1549 and 1558 respectively. Both wrote as former clerks, Smith having advanced to a place on the Privy Council, while Waad wrote from outside of central government, having lost his place on Mary’s accession. Smith most likely sought to prove himself as Principal Secretary, while Waad probably looked for renewed employment under the new regime, and these treatises were likely a means towards those ends. Although their personal circumstances differed, the

⁵⁶ Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, 34.

⁵⁷ Thomas Chaloner, *De Republica Anglorum instauranda libri decem*, (London, 1579).

⁵⁸ Translated from the Latin in Walter Haddon’s *Lucubrationes* and printed in Mary Dewar, *De Republica Anglorum*, 1. Smith participated with several others in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Troyes in 1564, yet Chaloner faced no major challenges while in Spain. See also *Diplomatic Reps.*, SP14, F100.

political situations under which they wrote were rather similar. Both wrote at the beginning of the reign of a monarch whose authority and political acumen was in doubt. Both authors chose to address the issues which they saw as the most pressing, along with related but more minor issues which needed to be addressed. The first of these treatises, “A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England,” was written by Sir Thomas Smith 1.⁵⁹ While the main text ties the work to issues dominant in 1548 and 1549, it is clear from the preface that the work was begun at the end of 1547.⁶⁰ Although Smith addresses issues as diverse as enclosures and “thoccacion of the Scysme in matters of Relygyon,” his primary concerns were financial.⁶¹ The bulk of the work addresses “what harme comeythe and may come by alteracion of the coyne,” the harm being both to the commonwealth as a whole, but more particularly to the king.⁶² Coinage was a continuing issue with Smith who even went so far as to undertake a historical study of the coin and wages of Roman soldiers.⁶³ Smith’s discussion was well timed, as the economic effects of Somerset’s debasement of the coinage, as well as his agrarian and religious reforms, would soon lead to open revolt.⁶⁴ Smith was not the only clerk to address this subject.

William Thomas, among his various writings for Edward VI, included one on the valuation of the coin, undertaken at the explicit instruction of the king and for his eyes alone.⁶⁵ Coinage remained an issue throughout the reigns of Edward VI and Mary and when Armagil Waad wrote his treatise at the outset of Elizabeth’s reign it was one of the

⁵⁹ Sir Thomas Smith, “A Discourse of the common weale of thie Realme of England,” BL Add MSS 48047 fols 170-226v; published as W.S. Gentleman, *A compendious or briefe examination of certayne ordinary complaints, of diuers of our country men in these our dayes*, (London, 1581). An excellent explanation of the authorship of the “Discourse” is Mary Dewar, “The Authorship of the ‘Discourse of the Commonweal’,” *Economic History Review*, New Series, 19, (1966), 388-400.

⁶⁰ Smith refers to his current seat in Parliament, yet clearly identifies that he is “not of the King’s Council.” The only time in which these two situations coincided was 1547.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Lamond, ed., *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England*, (Cambridge, 1893), 1-9.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Sir Thomas Smith, “A booke touching the wages given to the Romane souldior,” c.1562. Copy in BL Add MSS 48047 fols 140-165.

⁶⁴ Debasement of the coinage was one of many critical political issues during Edward VI’s reign and a point of conflict among the Duke of Somerset, Earl of Warwick and the Privy Council. For more see Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke, 2003), 39-45; Gervase Phillips, *The Anglo-Scots Wars, 1513-1550* (Woodbridge, 1999), 224-49; C. E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester, 1978).

⁶⁵ “Yet syns it is your highnes pleaser to have it secret (which I do much commende) I therefore am the bolder to enterprise the declaracion of my fantasie which I do keepe so secret to this ende, that your Ma[jes]tie may utter these matters as of your owne studie: whereby it shall have the greater creadite with your Counsaill. As for the daunger to be the authour of a newe thinge (which when the tourne commeth I shall declare at leingth) I have wondrefull confidence of suretie in your godnesse.” William Thomas, *The works of William Thomas*, (London, 1774), 170-1.

issues he discussed. A subject of learned discussion, the state of the coinage and its disastrous economic effects on the kingdom remained a problem until Elizabeth's government called in and revalued the coins in 1560-1. For Waad coinage was one of the various reasons for the poverty of the queen and was among the problems his treatise focused on.

Armagil Waad's treatise, entitled "The Distresses of the Commonwealth with ye meanes to remedie them," is of particular relevance because of his political opinion.⁶⁶ Although his treatise is most commonly noted for his advice that religious changes occur "by a littell & littell," his comments regarding the Privy Council are surprisingly both minute and insightful.⁶⁷ Regarding Council meetings Waad wrote the following:

The counsaile of State not to be above vii persones to attend ordinarily in the Court about her ma[jes]ties persone... Their dayes of session to be Mondaye, Wednesdaye and Saterdaye in the forenoones viz betwene vii and eight in the morenyng to serve god / the rest till eleven...

Waad explained his reasoning as follows:

The rare Sitting in Counsaile geveth a certeyn ma[jes]te and authoritie boothe to the Counsailers and Session it self. When you do make stata tempora of sitting in Counsaile and peculiar dayes for the p[ur]pose, they come not w[ith]out a certeyn expectacon of the bussynes you have in hand, by reason of, the intermission of tyme passing before and that the tyme of Sitting is tarryed and looked for as when we doo attend the coming of a great force, the longar that he tarryeth and we look for him the better satisfacon the beholder Recywith when he cometh... Of thither part, we do not so myche esteeme those things that be commune and used every daye.

Having worked as a clerk of the Privy Council and been in Council meetings, Waad understood the role of the Council and was confident enough in that understanding to comment on how the Council should conduct the business before it. Even more significant, Armagil Waad sought to use his understanding of the Council not simply to facilitate Council operations, but to further emphasize the dignity and authority of the

⁶⁶ NA SP 12/1/67.

⁶⁷ "Ffor the cause of Religion: This case is to be warely handled, for it requireth great cunyng, and circumspection, both to reforme Religion, and to make unite between the subiects, being at square for the respect thereof and as I pray god to grant us concord bothe in thagrement upon the cause, and state of religion, and emong our selves for thaccompt of Catholiks and p[ro]testants: So would I wishe that you would p[ro]cede to the reformacon having respect to quyet at home, thaffaires you have in hand w[ith] foreyn princes, the greatnes of the pope and howe dangerous it is to make alteracon in relligion specially on the begynyng of a princes reign / Classes w[ith] small necks, if you power in to them any licor sodenly or violently will not be so fylled, but refuse to receive that same that you would power in to them / howbeit if you instill matter in to them by a littell & littell they are soon replenished." NA SP 12/1/67.

body for which he worked, and by association the office and position of clerk of the Privy Council.

The opinions of both Waad and Smith are part of larger discourses on problems facing the government in the early days of two different reigns and as such their content is multifaceted and diverse. Because these works were intended to advise on a variety of problems, no single area received the author's full focus. In contrast, the remaining major personal writing projects of the clerks discuss one topic exclusively: the Privy Council. These were responses to events within the Privy Council which directly affected or related to the work of the author. Because each treatise reflects different circumstances, different aspects of the Privy Council and councillors appears, yet despite the differences each treatise provides additional insight into the office of clerk of the Privy Council and the men who held that office.

In 1550 William Paget, the first clerk of the Privy Council and by then a member of the Privy Council, wrote out his "Advice to the Kinges Counsaile."⁶⁸ His advice would be echoed by Armagil Waad eight years later in the latter's treatise. Like Waad, Paget set out a pattern for Council meetings and the handling of business. Yet Paget's position and the state of the Privy Council was significantly more delicate then when Waad wrote nearly a decade later. In October 1549 the Duke of Somerset was removed as Lord Protector and Privy Council leadership quickly shifted to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick. Although Paget had worked closely with the Protector he survived Somerset's removal and in December he yielded his office as Lord Comptroller in exchange for becoming Baron Paget of Beaudesert. Less than a month later Paget was sent, along with Principal Secretary William Petre, Lord Privy Seal the Earl of Bedford and Secretary for the French Tongue Sir John Mason to France to negotiate peace with France.⁶⁹ Although Paget did not lead the Privy Council, he remained a significant figure within it and his absence was felt. It was while Paget was away that some of the stronger conservatives were removed. As Sybil Jack has stated, "Warwick ensured Paget was out of the country when he staged his mini-coup against Wriothesley, Arundel and others."⁷⁰ Following the removal of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chamberlain, Warwick ensured the advancement of his own supporters in the Council as well as the addition of new

⁶⁸ William Paget, "Advice to the Kinges Counsaile," in Dale E. Hoak, *The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1976), Appendix 3. Originally in BL Egerton MS 2603 fols 33-4.

⁶⁹ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F77.

⁷⁰ "Paget, William," in *OxfordDNB*.

members. It was at this time that Paget, still in France, wrote his “Advice to the Kinges Counsaill.”

The unexpressed yet clearly discernible focus of William Paget’s advice was on structuring the procedure of the Privy Council in such a way that effectiveness and cooperation could increase, while the potential for individual domination would decrease. In effect Paget, who failed to control the damage done by Somerset, sought to prevent the same problems under Warwick. To this end Paget advised first that the councillors “love one another as brthren or deere freendes.” However, trusting that stronger measures were required, he proposed a number of changes to allow for free debate without repercussion and the integration of Council members into all aspects of business.⁷¹ To ensure open discussion, Paget suggested “that euery man do speake in convenable maner his opinion and conscience frankly in mattiers opened at the counsaill boorde without reprofte, checke, or displeasir for the same of any parson.”⁷² To further ensure decision-making based on opinion and not fear, Paget suggested the use of a secret ballot, using white and black balls, to decide issues relating to “all offices and benefices of the Kinges gifte.”⁷³ Paget also sought to reinforce the details of Council procedure to ensure group participation in Council business. As Armagil Waad would also later suggest, Paget stated particular days of meetings including minimal requirements of councillors present for decision-making, and reiterated the specific roles of particular officers including the Principal Secretary, Master of Requests and Lord President in conducting business. Of special interest was the role of a specific Privy Council clerk. It was Paget who in 1550 suggested that one clerk handle the Council register, and in it record attendances, take signatures and ensure that all letters, warrants and determinations were recorded for and reviewed by the Council. This is the only change suggested by Paget which was put into effect, and on 19 April, less than a month after Paget’s return to England with his written advice, William Thomas was appointed as the newest clerk of the Privy Council with specific charge to keep the Council register as Paget had suggested.⁷⁴

The greatest significance of William Paget’s “Advice to the Kinges Counsaill” is not that part of his advice led to a change in the office of the clerk of the Privy Council. The key significance lies in the fact that a former clerk and Principal Secretary who

⁷¹ Paget, “Advice to the Kinges Counsaill,” fol. 33r.

⁷² Ibid., fol. 33v.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ *APC*, III, 3.

through his experience fully understood the work, channels of communication and meeting dynamics of the Privy Council, attempted to use his knowledge of procedure to influence the political situation within the Council. This treatise clearly demonstrates how his understanding gained as a clerk influenced treatment of a highly delicate Council situation. Although the majority of his advice went unheeded, Paget's attempt did not go unnoticed. The mirroring of Paget's ideas in Waad's later treatise has already been noted, yet there is an even closer parallel in the device by Edward VI and Sir William Petre for restructuring Council business in 1553.⁷⁵ That plan, first written by Edward VI then refined by Petre, outlined nineteen points regarding Council work, eleven of which directly correlated with suggestions by Paget.⁷⁶ As with Paget's "Advice," the plan, if implemented, would have furthered a political goal – the integration of the king with the Council. Paget's structure limited the effect of any one individual, while the plan of Edward VI and Petre would have guaranteed the participation of the king in Privy Council business. However, like Paget's advice, this plan was never implemented due to the king's increasingly poor health, yet the goals, techniques and basic understanding of how procedure effected politics were the same, and would survive to reappear in a small form in Armagil Waad's treatise in 1558.

William Paget wrote to influence a political situation. Two other clerks wrote in response to a political situation. These clerks, Robert Beale and Thomas Wilkes, focused on the office of Principal Secretary, an office which one had held on a temporary basis, and to which the other aspired. Both treatises demonstrate their knowledge of their office as well as their political perceptiveness. Most importantly, these contain the clerks' personal comments regarding the Privy Council, the office of Principal Secretary, their clerkship, and what it meant to be a councillor. It is in these two treatises that the most insightful opinions regarding their office and the Privy Council are found. As with the writings of Thomas, Paget, Waad and others, Beale and Wilkes wrote in response to a need, in this case the vacancy of the office of Principal Secretary.

On 6 April 1590 Sir Francis Walsingham, long-time Privy Councillor and Principal Secretary, died at his home in Surrey. Speculation immediately began as to

⁷⁵ F. G. Emmison, "A Plan of Edward VI and Secretary Petre for reorganizing the Privy Council's Work, 1552-3," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 31 (1958), 203-210.

⁷⁶ Eg., both set aside a single day for dealing with private suits; Paget designated Sunday, Edward VI and Petre designated Monday.

what man or men would replace him in the powerful office.⁷⁷ It was widely known regarding Lord Burghley that “the whole management of the secretaryship is in his hand, and his sonne already sworne a Counsellor” he would be a “meane to install him in the place forever.”⁷⁸ Although Lord Burghley discreetly advocated the appointment of his son Robert Cecil, other courtiers including William Davison, Sir Edward Wotton, Sir Edward Stafford and even Thomas Wilkes were generally considered on the short list of candidates. Indeed Wilkes’ name was one of the first put forward, the idea circulating as early as January 1591 that he would receive the post.⁷⁹ The two other primary candidates, Robert Cecil who ultimately filled the post under his father for six years, and Edward Wotton both had high hopes of the appointment. Such hopes were strengthened by Robert Cecil’s knighthood in May 1591 and his appointment to the Privy Council that August. The same year Wotton was knighted, and it was written at the end of August that although no secretary had been appointed, “Sir Edward Stafford and Mr. Wotton, were ready to be sworne at Nonsuche that day.”⁸⁰ Although the appointment did not come, Wotton’s hopes remained high in 1592 when Robert Beale dedicated his “Instructions for a Principall Secretarie” to him.

Robert Beale wrote numerous treatises during his lifetime, mostly regarding foreign affairs. Related to this was an area in which he had particularly important experience: the office of Principal Secretary, an office which he filled in place of his brother-in-law Sir Francis Walsingham on several occasions when the latter was ill or away on business. Through his time in the office, his familiarity with foreign affairs, as well as his twenty years as a clerk prior to writing his “Instructions” for Wotton, Beale gained an intimate knowledge of the nature and duties of the office of Principal Secretary, which he used when writing to explain the office to Sir Edward Wotton.

In Beale’s discourse titled “A Treatise of the Office of a Councillor and Principall Secretarie to her Ma[jes]tie,” he focuses on the role of the Principal Secretary

⁷⁷ For more on the Robert Cecil’s long-delayed appointment see Paul E. J. Hammer, “Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir Christopher Hatton, 1590-1,” in Ian W. Archer ed., *Religion, Politics, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2003), 197-268, particularly pages 211-213; Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth*, (London, 1960); 513-521; Alan Haynes, *Robert Cecil Earl of Salisbury 1563-1612: Servant of Two Sovereigns*, (London, 1989), 21-23, 47-8; David Kynaston, *The Secretary of State*, (Suffolk: 1978), 48-9. For more general information on the Secretariat at this time see Florence M. Grier Evans, *The Principal Secretary of State: A Survey of the Office from 1558 to 1680*, (London, 1923); P.M. Handover, *The second Cecil: the rise to power, 1563-1604 of Sir Robert Cecil, late first earl of Salisbury*, (London, 1959).

⁷⁸ NA SP 12/239/159.

⁷⁹ “Wilkes, Sir Thomas (c.1545-1598)” in *OxfordDNB*.

⁸⁰ NA SP 12/239/159.

and the information and conduct required of that individual for success in his office.⁸¹ In his instructions to Wotton, Beale focused on three main areas. The first of these was the performance of the office, including Privy Council meetings, working with the clerks and the information the secretary needed to both know and have on hand for ready reference. In the second section Beale dealt with foreign intelligence discussing each country individually, as well as discussing ambassadors, emissaries and spies. The final section, given the heading “Thinges to be done w[i]th her Ma[jes]tie” focused on how to work with the queen and Privy Council effectively and without giving offence, and contained additional advice on the personal characteristics that a secretary needed to master. While these topics differ widely, Beale gave each his full attention, and the detail with which he approaches each one reiterates Beale’s vast experience and keen observation of these matters.

In brief, Beale discussed several topics that shed an interesting light on the office of Principall Secretary. Regarding Council meetings, Beale urged that the Principal Secretary must “first have in a sev[e]rall paper a memorial or Dockett of those w[hi]ch he mindeth to propoude and have dispatched at everie sitting.”⁸² He further encouraged the Secretary to force the Councillors to focus and work “for you shall finde that they will not meete so often as you would desire” and so “when the Councell meeteth, have a care that the time be not spent in matters of small moment, but to dispatch such things as shalbe propounded unto them.”⁸³ The majority of Beale’s treatise focuses on the information the Principal Secretary needed at hand to ensure the smooth operation of business. His list of documents is extensive, and includes “Sir Thomas Smithe’s booke” along with such things as copies of commissions and instructions to the Councils in the North and Wales, the pedigrees of the noblemen of the realm, a book of maps, the rates of victuals for soldiers and sailors and examinations of priests and traitors.⁸⁴

Beale advised the Principal Secretary further on administrative matters, particularly relating to the clerks of the Council. He advised the secretary to have the clerks keep a record of the messages they sent, as well as records of attendance, bonds, recognizances and letters, separate from the Council record for easy reference.⁸⁵ Additionally he advised the secretary to utilize the clerks “when anie businesses cometh

⁸¹ Beale, “A Treatise of the Office of a Councillor” in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth*, 423-443; manuscript from BL Add MSS 48149 fols 3v-9v.

⁸² Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, 424.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 428-9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 425-6, 428.

into [his] handes... to distribute the same and to use the helpe of such her Ma[jes]tie's servants as serve underneath him."⁸⁶ This simple statement reiterated the fact that the clerks primarily served the Principal Secretary as part of their daily duties, yet it also emphasizes the fact that work of the clerks was directly linked to that of the Secretary, just as Beale likely sought to connect himself personally to Wotton. Beale further wrote his advice in detail touching matters of foreign affairs, gathering intelligence and on a more personal note regarding how to work with the queen. His opinion regarding the queen has the same tenor as Wilkes' and Paget's advice on working with Councillors; it seems that the knowledge was most likely gained through negative experiences. Beale gives the following words of caution:

Learne before your accesse her Ma[jes]tie's disposic[i]on by some in the Privie Chamber w[i]th whom you must keepe credit, for that will stande you in much steede... Shew yourselfe willinge to pleasure anie of her Ma[jes]tie's kin... When her highness is angrie or not well disposed trouble her not w[i]th anie matter w[hi]ch you desire to have done unless extreame necessitie urge it.⁸⁷

All this advice, from how to run a Privy Council meeting, to dealing with the queen, was intended to help a Principal Secretary work efficiently and effectively. His discussion on the knowledge and documents a secretary needed was particularly telling of the vast nature of activities involving the Principal Secretary. Robert Beale's experience in these different activities as a clerk and acting secretary produced these instructions that would have undoubtedly aided Sir Edward Wotton had he been appointed to the post. Unfortunately for him, his expectations of 1592 were for naught and the position remained vacant for a time.

Beginning in 1593 a new Privy Councillor, the Earl of Essex began to push for filling the post of Principal Secretary which Sir Robert Cecil continued to execute unofficially. As the years passed the situation remained unresolved, while Lord Burghley refrained from attempting to obviously advance his son, until finally in July 1596, while Essex was abroad on the Cadiz expedition, Sir Robert Cecil was finally appointed to the office of Principal Secretary.⁸⁸ Following Cecil's appointment, Sir Thomas Wilkes began work on a treatise which he dedicated to the secretary. Wilkes was on an embassy to France directly following Cecil's appointment and returned that

⁸⁶ Ibid., 426.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 437-8.

⁸⁸ For a description of the machinations involved in Cecil's appointment see Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999) 368-71.

September, and it was sometime between his return to England and his subsequent return to France with Cecil in January 1598 that he wrote his treatise.⁸⁹ He called it “A Briefe and Summary Tactake shewing what appertaineth to the place, dignitie and Office of a Councillor of Estate in a Monarchie or other Common wealth.”⁹⁰ In this treatise Wilkes divided his thoughts into two sections: “The ffirst shall containe the description of a councillor, And The second, how to give counsell in every thing propounded by his Soveraigne.”⁹¹

More than the works of any of the other clerks, Thomas Wilkes’ treatise focuses on what a man needed to do to become a Councillor. Although the work was addressed to the Principal Secretary Sir Robert Cecil, the content seems more appropriate for men hoping to become Councillors and not for a man who already was one.⁹² While it is possible that Wilkes wrote to Cecil in hope of gaining his support and patronage Wilkes, like Robert Beale, was now over fifty years old, leaving a stronger impression that he wrote to advise the much younger Cecil rather than in hope of advancement or promotion, although financial consideration was likely hoped for. Wilkes describes in detail the training a future Councillor required, including a university education to learn grammar, rhetoric and logic, and also travel abroad to familiarize himself with foreign languages, topography and government.⁹³ This was not all, of course. A man needed to know the “State and Government of his native Country.. the Discipline of the Church and Ministeries established in thie Realme by Act of Parliament... the lawes of the Realme” and “the Science and Discipline of War.”⁹⁴

Wilkes’ point in this was to show what a good Councillor needed to be, yet it is more than that. Wilkes explained “Machiavell sayth there bee in the cours of all Princes three kinds of counsellors. Some have wisdom and sufficiency of themselves, obtained by use, and experience had of many services: And they are most to bee esteemed of Princes.”⁹⁵ Wilkes argued that knowledge gained from practical experience produced the best kind of Councillor. This, combined with Wilkes’ lengthy list of knowledge a

⁸⁹ *Diplomatic Reps.*, F161, F171. It was during the embassy with Cecil that Wilkes died.

⁹⁰ BL Stowe MS 296 fols 7-21.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 8r.

⁹² Robert Cecil eventually wrote his own treatise on the secretariat, *The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie’s Place, with the perill thereof*, (London: 1642); copy in BL Add MS 39288 fol. 6v. A similar treatise which focused more on the secretarial aspect of the office was written by Angel Day, *The English Secretorie*, (London, 1592), pages 108-143 in particular.

⁹³ BL Stowe MS 296 fols 8r-9r.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, fols 9r-10r, 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 8r.

Councillor needed, creates Wilkes' formula for the best Privy Councillor: a man who was university educated, had travelled abroad, and who knew the details of laws and government through service to that government. In a way he argued that men like the clerks of the Privy Council, himself included, would make the best Councillors. Wilkes explained that he and the other clerks had been taught by the Privy Councillors themselves. Wilkes wrote of himself that he hoped that "tenne yeares Experience in a Schoole of State, under such, soe many, and soe grave and rare Schoole Masters, might have bredd in me any proportion of judgment worthie my Education."⁹⁶ In Wilkes' judgement there could be no better preparation to serve with the Privy Council than to learn from them.

Following his discussion of a counsellor, Wilkes turned his focus to the Privy Council itself. While most of the discourses by the clerks contain some description of the Council, Wilkes' treatise gives the best description of the Privy Council's areas of authority. Wilkes divided them into "matters of State concerning the Government of the Realme... secondly, the Common Greife of the Subjects," and last "Quarrells and Affaires happening amongst the Nobilitie and principall Men of the Realme and their ffolowers" or in other words, the King's Peace.⁹⁷ Within these divisions are such responsibilities as attempting war, concluding treaties, sending ambassadors, levying money, dispensing justice and ensuring the common good. Of course, Sir Robert Cecil would have been familiar with these areas, but more than anything this shows that Sir Thomas Wilkes fully understood the extent and depth of the Privy Council's responsibility. It is perhaps because of this understanding that he, like William Paget and Armagil Waad before him, discussed how best to conduct and act during a Privy Council meeting. Apparently discussions in Council could become heated and Councillors obstinate. Thomas Wilkes, in his advice, focused more on what an individual needed to do to avoid these problems and ensure smooth Council meetings:

Ffirst, when the bodie of the Counsell is assembled, to consult of causes, wherein the wisdome & sufficiency of every counsellor is to bee employed & shewed, that his minde & cognition bee not drawn awan and occupied in or about other conceipts... Secondly, let him beware of singularity in himself, and not insist or cleave too fast to his opinion delivered of every proposition. Thirdly, to be willfull, headstrong or opinionative is a dangerous ffault found in many Counsellors, who aswell to shew the Quintessence of their witts, as for their particular respects & ends, will oftentimes maintaine their opnion against their

⁹⁶ Ibid., fol. 7r.

⁹⁷ Ibid., fols 11-12.

conscience and knowledge, and will come around with arguments or purpose to quail and oppress others as a contraction of faction (whereof there are too many in the courts of Princes) whose opinion perchance hath been more soundly delivered than theirs.... Our Counsellor must also forbear to make long Speeches in Counsell, not onely for that they are tedious, but that every Man may have time and meanes to Speake...⁹⁸

Essentially, Wilkes instructed Sir Robert Cecil to pay attention, be flexible in his opinions, and not be long-winded. It is entertaining to imagine what Councillor or particular Council meeting Wilkes had in mind when he wrote his advice.

These treatises of Robert Beale and Sir Thomas Wilkes together create what is probably the best description of the Privy Council and more importantly the role of a Principal Secretary as a gentleman, administrator and servant of the crown. The description and insight of these treatises demonstrates not only the experience and keen observation of these clerks, but also the maturity and understanding of two men who had observed the Privy Council and Principal Secretary for twenty years each. The same is true of all the clerks who wrote these political treatises. As personal projects they reflect their concerns and ambitions as individuals, yet as professional commentaries, they demonstrate the knowledge, professional experience and political consideration of clerks who observed and occasionally participated in the work of the Privy Council.

Taken as a whole, the writings of some of the clerks of the Privy Council exhibit several important aspects of their lives and careers. They wrote for others to advance their careers, and they wrote for the Privy Council as part of their duties as clerks and officials. Their personal projects were both literary and commentary, demonstrating their scholarship as well as their analytical skills. Their writings were sometimes general, sometimes specific, occasionally naïve yet primarily insightful. They summarize the careers of men who used their knowledge and practical skill to advance and excel in their work, and yet were influenced by events and circumstances that inspired them to contribute their opinions. Overall they are the works of men who studied in a “Schoole of State” and whose writings reflect that study.

⁹⁸ Ibid., fols 18v-19v.

CONCLUSION

The above has been a study of the Tudor clerks of the Privy Council: their lives, careers and the office they held. These three areas of focus are joined together because a greater understanding of one leads to a greater understanding of the others. The similar education and personal backgrounds of the clerks defined the essential qualifications for office, while their patronage ties, gained both before and during their clerkship, allowed for easier acquisition of additional offices and financial considerations. Experience abroad, a common clerkship qualification, led to repeated work for the Council as diplomats, and fostered greater ease when acting as conduits between the Council and ambassadors in London. The record of the Council – the registers diligently created by the clerks – reiterates the clerks' close ties to Council business, while simultaneously preserving the changes to the clerkship, including the number of clerks, their salaries, and additional or altered work requirements. Not limited to working solely for the Privy Council in the Council chamber, the clerks also worked in the counties and in Parliament, as well as in a host of smaller offices, to build up prestige and financial stability. Yet even these offices maintained their ties to the Council, as evident for example in the effort to ensure the placement of new clerks in Parliament and their appointments as Justices of the Peace. Ties to individual Councillors, fostered primarily for the purpose of patronage, appear strongly in their early careers and in embassies abroad, while the connection between the clerkship and office of Principal Secretary reappears continuously in both correspondence and the execution of their duties. Their ties to the Council, varied work both in England and abroad, education and observations of Council meetings are all apparent in their treatises. Thomas Wilkes referred to his time as clerk as being in a “School of State under such, soe many, and soe grave and rare Schoole Masters,” and the benefit of this education is clear in the political writings and overall careers of the clerks of the Privy Council. That four clerks eventually joined the Council further reiterates the value of the clerkship in a career, and the connection between the clerks and the Council they served.

A study of the clerks and office of clerk of the Privy Council is not an isolated area of research. It relates to the study of government and government officials, a gentleman's career path, and of course the Privy Council. The clerks were ambassadors, members of Parliament, Justices of the Peace, and courtiers, and subject to all the positive and negative aspects of those positions, and any study of these roles should

include the clerks, as individuals if not as a group. Additionally, the clerks highlight the role of office in establishing a career, the common factors required to rise within government, the efforts of courtiers and officials to establish financial stability, and the continued necessity of patronage, despite the growth of administration in Tudor times. These were areas in which the clerks of the Privy Council and their office were not unique, but indicative of greater trends in administrations and among government officials. However, certain common features of the clerks stand out, such as their far greater number of foreign missions, seats in Parliament, additional offices and ties to the Privy Council in comparison to other officials and particularly other clerks. The office of clerk of the Council also has both similarities and differences in comparison to other offices and clerkships. The general qualifications for office were very similar, yet timing and circumstance, such as a change in regime, more directly effected the Council clerkship, due to the proximity to Council and the centre of power. While other clerkships established attendance rotas and fee schedules, no other changes to office protocol and procedure were as assiduously recorded, or clearly connected to Council concerns, as the Council clerkship. Overall the office of clerk of the Privy Council changed throughout the Tudor period because of timing and circumstance, the Council itself, and most importantly the men who held the office.

The clerks of the Privy Council were never just clerks, utilized by the Council only as secretaries or messengers. From the first Tudor clerk to the last, other responsibilities outside the foundational record-keeping assignment were an essential part of the clerkship. Work abroad and with ambassadors, handling investigations and intelligence gathering, as well as participation in county and Parliamentary work, were not abnormal for the clerks, indeed they were standard practice. The Privy Council not only allowed, but encouraged, the clerks to fill additional offices and responsibilities to enhance their careers and to aid them financially. Perhaps it is the active cooperation between Councillors and the clerks beyond the basic parameters of patronage that makes their circumstance and office so unique.

Active cooperation between clerks and Councillors further reiterates the importance of personal ties in the operation of the Privy Council, and the centre of government. Such personal ties, and the active participation of Councillors in the selection of men with whom they worked, are evident in the appointment of the clerks. The Council selected the men who filled the clerkship, and therefore the common qualifications, attributes and skill sets of the clerks (university education, foreign

experience, etc.) demonstrate what the Council felt was necessary for the office. This led individual Councillors, in a further exercise of patronage as the appropriate circumstances arose, to advance men with those qualifications. These common skills ensured that the clerks were qualified to perform a variety of tasks away from the Council chamber, and the range of assignments show the implicit trust on the part of the Principal Secretary, in particular, but also on the part of Councillors and the Council as a group. Through the clerks, in these assignments and in the additional offices which Councillors helped them procure, the Council extended its reach to other areas of government, into the counties and overseas, just as the monarch used the Councillors themselves to extend royal influence and ensure proper supervision and execution of the royal prerogative. The clerks were tools of the Council and Councillors, and how they were used reveals as much about the Council, and the Councillors' hands-on approach to government, as it does the clerks who served under them.

The clerkship of the Privy Council was not a static office. Significant changes during the reign of Elizabeth I demonstrate how the office and the clerks adapted to changing needs. Longer terms in office, due primarily to a more stable Council, and the increase in the number of clerks to four for the majority of the period, meant that the clerks could rotate with ease without duties being left untended, while at the same time allowing for clerks to hold additional offices and fulfil the variety of assignments given to them directly from the Council. The additional offices helped to offset their static salary, while reinforcing the patronage relationship with Councillors and the sovereign, who helped in the acquisition of these offices, licenses and land grants. The longer periods in office, the greater number of clerks and the additional offices meant that, more than ever before, the clerks were vital to central government than had they acted as merely secretaries. This also reiterates the common practice, particularly in the Elizabethan period, of government being handled by a small group of men who were repeatedly called upon to perform a variety of tasks, which is seen most strongly in the numerous foreign missions of the clerks. Working closely with Councillors in a variety of duties further strengthened personal ties between clerks and Councillors. Although criticism arose about exclusivity, and government benefiting a few instead of many (as in the case of monopolies) the clerks were among those receiving the benefits rather than the detriment of the exclusivity and patronage. These changes in the Elizabethan period, and several others discussed previously, are significant not only for the clerkship, but also in demonstrating how the Privy Council helped the clerks adapt to changing

circumstances, while simultaneously using the clerks to help in administration and to further their own patronage influence.

The creation of the office of clerk of the Privy Council in 1540 defined the Council itself as an official, administrative body with authority directly delegated by the crown. As a defined body, with established routines, operational procedures and general administrative functions, the 1540 Council could adequately aid in the operation of government under Henry VIII, and smoothly transitioned to a ruling Regency Council under Edward VI. Without the creation of the clerkship, and the register which was the clerks' primary responsibility, the details of Council work and how Councillors fulfilled their duties, particularly during times of heightened responsibility during Edward VI's minority and the rule of two queens, would be unknown. The role played by the clerks, both in their standard duties and in their common extraordinary duties abroad, in Parliament, and in the counties, demonstrates how the Privy Council performed and delegated its work to its trusted assistants and fellow courtiers. As the clerks observed the Council's work, both in the Council chamber and in their interactions with individual Councillors, they gained insight and experience regarding government and the Council itself, and that insight is evident in both their writings and in the promotion of several clerks to the Council board. It is through the writings, careers and experiences of the clerks of the Privy Council, that the work of the Council and the men who comprised it come to light.

Understanding the clerks of the Privy Council is essential to understanding the Council itself, especially as several clerks later joined the Council, particularly as Principal Secretary. Yet the clerks of the Privy Council remain a valid topic of study in their own right. They are excellent examples of officeholders, courtiers, ambassadors, and gentlemen who succeeded in establishing their careers, status and financial stability. As individuals they were traitors, spies, poets, bureaucrats and even historians, and as a group they were officeholders who excelled in their labours. They provide a glimpse into the Tudor court and administration and deserve recognition.

This is a study of the nineteen clerks of the Tudor Privy Council, yet the clerks and their office remained following the death of Elizabeth I. At the accession of James I, four Council clerks continued to work for the king's Council: Sir Anthony Ashley, William Waad, Thomas Smith² and Thomas Edmondes, with the latter three being knighted at James I's arrival. These four were joined in time by others, including Sir Ralph Winwood and John Corbett, followed by Clement Edmondes, George Calvert, and

Dudley Norton, all eventually knighted. The Elizabethan clerks continued in royal service for the remainder of their lives. Ashley retired after twenty three years as clerk and Smith died in office after eleven years. Waad served for twenty seven years and became Lieutenant of the Tower in addition to his clerkship, but was forced to resign from both offices in 1613 when he refused to be a party to the murder of Thomas Overbury. Thomas Edmondes remained a clerk for fifteen years, following which he joined the Privy Council as Comptroller of the Household in 1617 and worked in the Council for a further thirteen years before retiring to his estate. This pattern of service and advancement continued into the Stuart clerks, with three of the four first Stuart clerks becoming Principal Secretary, although Sir Clement Edmondes died before actually filling the office. The office of clerk of the Privy Council continued until 1860, and although the Privy Council remained, the administrative functions formerly filled by the clerks are now handled by office staff. Yet, while the clerkship remained, the example of the first clerks continued unabated. The office of clerk of the Privy Council survived for over three hundred years and with only two brief exceptions four men held the post simultaneously with the fixed salary of fifty pounds, as established by Tudor precedent.

The office of clerk of the Privy Council evolved throughout the Tudor period in response to the needs of both the men who held the office and the Council itself. The office and the clerks are examples of the continued personal nature of Tudor administration and the growth of bureaucracy. The clerks were secretaries in the sense that they wrote letters and kept the Council's record. Yet their lives demonstrate that they were never restricted in activities or office, and both the clerks and Councillors actively worked to expand their role in government as individuals and as Council officers. Due to circumstance, the work and efforts of the Privy Council, and the desires of the clerks as individuals, the clerkship of the Privy Council, formed in 1540, had, by 1603, become a regimented office and yet retained the flexibility to allow its officers to enhance their careers and provide for their personal security. The careers of the clerks, particularly those who advanced to the Council itself, demonstrate that they succeeded.

APPENDIX ONE

CLERKS OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

Name	Start Date	End Date	Reason for Leaving
William Paget	10 August 1540	23 April 1543	Councillor (P.S.)
John Mason	23 April 1543	By 17 November 1545	Resigned for other office
William Honing	23 April 1543	By 20 May 1550	Fall of Somerset
Thomas Chaloner	29 September 1545	By 12 May 1552	Resigned for other office
Thomas Smith 1	3 January 1548	17 April 1548	Councillor (P.S.)
Armagil Waad	17 April 1548	30 July 1553	Removed by Mary I
William Thomas	19 April 1550	31 March 1553	Resigned
Barnard Hampton	24 September 1551	1572	Died
Francis Allen	30 July 1553	1570	Died
William Smith	30 July 1553	23 December 1566	Unknown
Edmund Tremayne	3 May 1571	17 September 1582	Died
Robert Beale	24 June 1572	27 May 1601	Died
Thomas Wilkes	18 July 1576	2 March 1598	Died
Henry Cheke	18 July 1576	5 September 1581	Resigned for other office
William Waad	7 October 1584	23 August 1613	Forced Resignation
Anthony Ashley	19 March 1587	31 May 1610	Retired
Daniel Rogers	5 May 1587	11 February 1591	Died
Thomas Smith 2	By September 1595	27 November 1609	Died
Thomas Edmondess	29 June 1599	January 1614	Resigned for other office

NOTES:

P.S.: Principal Secretary

William Thomas resigned in anticipation of the accession of Mary I.

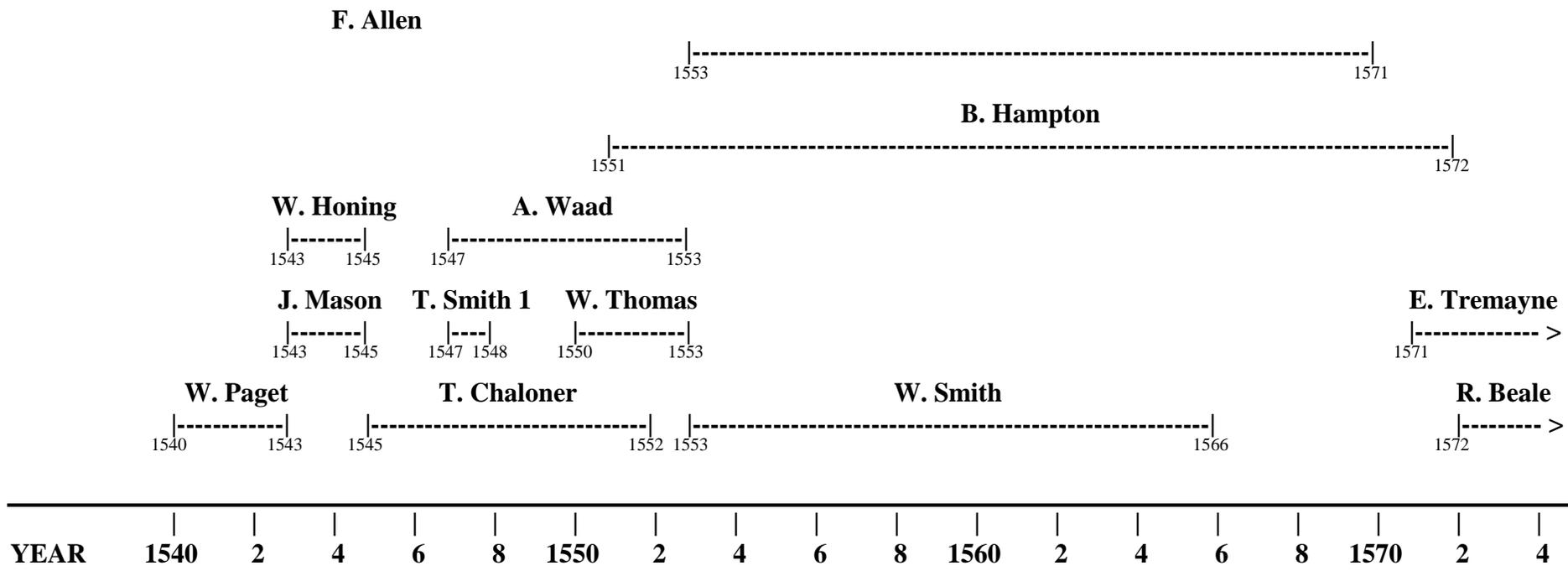
William Smith is not found in records following 1566. Presumably he died or retired.

William Waad was forced to resign after being accused (as Lord Lieutenant of the Tower) of stealing jewels from Lady Arabella Stuart, and supposedly for refusing to aid in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.

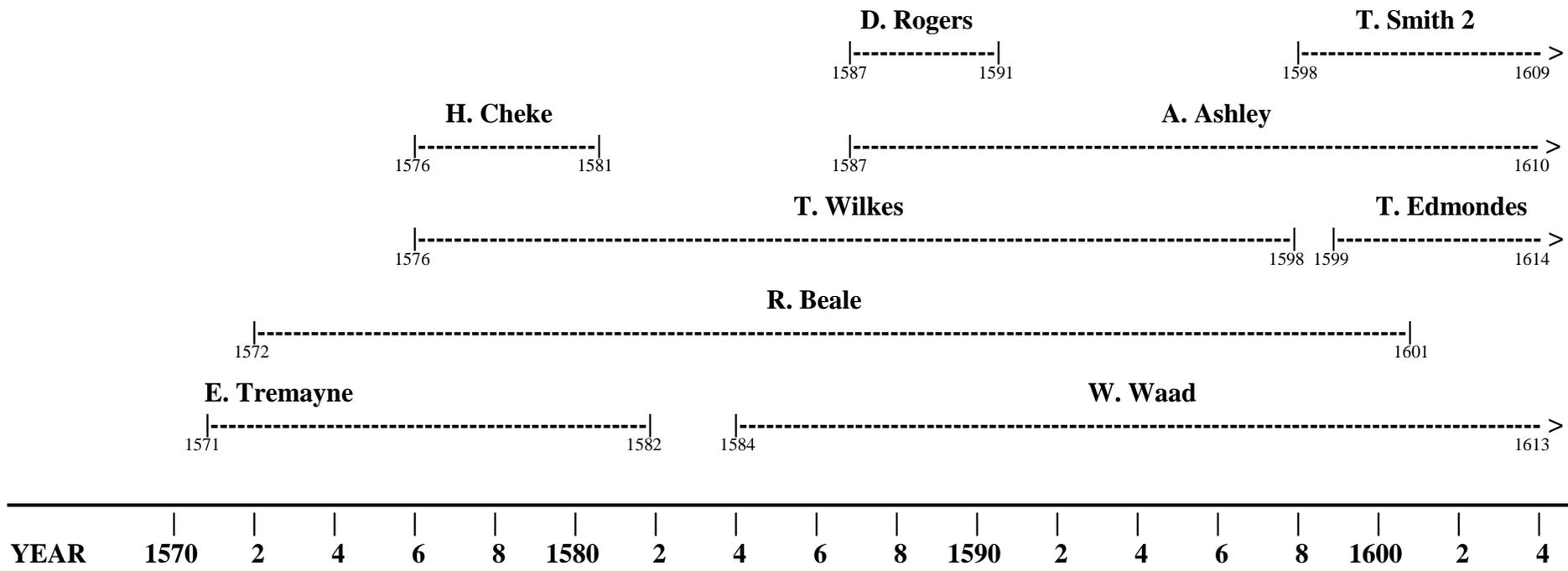
SOURCES INCLUDE:

PPC, 4; *APC*, I, 118, II, 156, 183-4, III, 3-4, 362, IV, 419, IX, 166, XIV, 385, XV, 111, XXIX, 740, XXXII, 496-7; *L&P*, XVI, 107(3), XVIII, i, 623(65), XX, ii, 910(41), 1068(38); *CSPD*, 1603-11, 615; *CSPD*, 1611-18, 198; *CPR, Edward VI*, II, 3-4, III, 187, IV, 285; *CPR, Elizabeth*, III, 67(467), V, 168(1357), 449(3147), IX, 106(667); NA C 66/1245,1478,1974; NA E 403/2261; *OxfordDNB*.

For a full list of clerks with references see http://www.history.ac.uk/office/privycounc_intro.html#list.



APPENDIX TWO
CHRONOLOGY OF CLERK APPOINTMENTS



APPENDIX TWO
CHRONOLOGY OF CLERK APPOINTMENTS

APPENDIX THREE

APPOINTMENT OF A CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

The tenth day of August, in the 32 yeare of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lord, King Henry the Eight, King of England and of Fraunce, Defendor of the Faith, Lord of Ireland, and in Earth Supreame Heade imediately under God, of the Church of England, an order was taken and determined by His Majesty, by thadvice of His Highnes Privy Counsell, whose names herunder ensue.

The Archbishop of Canterbury.
The Lord Audley of Walden, Lord Chauncellor of England.
Thomas Duke of Norfolk, Lord High Thresorer of England.
Charles Duke of Suffolk, Great Master of the Kinges Howse, & President of the Counsell.
William Erle of Southampton, Lord Privy Seale.
Robert Erle of Sussex, Great Chamberlaine of England.
Edward Erle of Hartford.
John Lord Russell, Great Admirall of England.
Cuthbert, Bishop of Duresme.
Steephen, Bishop of Winchester.
William Lord Sands, the Kings Chamberlaine.
Sir Thomas Cheiney, Knight, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Threasorer of the Kings Howsehowld.
Sir William Kingstone, Knight, Comptroller of the Kings Household.
Sir Anthony Browne, Knight, Master of the Kings Horse.
Sir Anthony Wingfeeld, Knight, Kings Vice Chamberlaine.
Sir Thomas Wriothesley, Knight, the Kings Secretary.
Sir Ralph Sadlier, Knight, the Kings Secretary.
Sir Richard Rich, Knight, Chancellor of the Augmentations.
Sir John Baker, Knight, Chancellor of the First Fruites and Tenthes.

That ther shold be a Clerke, attendant uppon the sayde Counsell, to write, enter, and regester all such decrees, determinations, letters and other such things as he should be appointed to enter in a booke, to remaine alwaies as a leeger, aswell for dischargin of the said Counsellors, touching such things as shold pass, from tyme to tyme, as also for memoriall unto them, of their owne proceedings. Unto the which office William Paget, late the Queenes Secretary, was appointed by the Kings Highnes, and sworne, in the presence of the said Counsell, the day and yeare abovesaide.

NA PC 2/1/1.

APPENDIX FOUR

REGISTER ENTRY STYLES

Entry Style A

	<i>At _____ the _____ day of _____</i> <i>being present</i>		
	<i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name</i>		
	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/>		
	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

Entry Style B

	<i>At _____</i> <i>the _____ day of _____</i>	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/>	
	<i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i>	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
		<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/>	
	<i>At _____</i> <i>the _____ day of _____</i>	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/>	
	<i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i> <i>Name Name</i>	<i>Paragraph _____</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

APPENDIX FIVE

“OTHE OF A CLERK TO THE COUNSELL”

“You shall sweare to be a trew and faithfull servaunte unto the Quenes Ma[jes]tie as one of the Clerkes of her heighnes previe counsell. You shall not know or understand of ane manner of thinge to be attempted don or spoken againste her Maiesties person, honor crowne or dignitie Royall but you shall lett and w[i]thstand the same to the uttermoste of your power, and either do or cause it to be revealed either to her Ma[jes]t[i]e self or to her previe counsell. You shall kepe secrett all matters comitted and revealed unto you, or that shalbe treated of secretly in counsell: And if anie of the saide treaties or counsells shall touche any of the counsellors, you shall not reveale the same unto him but shall kepe the same untill soche tyme as by the consent of her Ma[jes]ti[e] or the counsell publication shalbe made thereof. You shall to your uttermost beare faith and trew allegiance to the Quenes Ma[jes]tie her heres and lawfull successors and shall assiste and defende all Jurisdicons premenens and authorities graunted to her Ma[jes]tie and annexed to her crowne against all forrain Princes persons prelats or potentats etc by acte of parliament or otherwise. And generally in all things ye shall doe as a faithfull & trew servaunte and subiectt ought to doe to her Ma[jes]ty so helpe you God and thee holye contents of this booke.”

BL Additional MS 48018 fol. 4.

Recorded by clerk Robert Beale, 1575.

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BL Add MS 48049

BL Add MS 48149

BL Add MS 481116

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BL Cotton MS Otho C. x.

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