

“Catholic Gentry, Family Networks and Patronage in the English Midlands, c. 1570-1630”

by

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## **Abstract**

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Dissertation directed by Professor Paul E.J. Hammer

Networks of affinity and clientage were common features of aristocratic life in early modern Europe. In post-Reformation England, Catholic gentry and nobility utilized networks of family, friends, neighbors and patrons to mitigate the effects of the state’s anti-Catholic policies and also to remain connected to the state. Catholic aristocrats remained significant participants in the exchange of patronage, both as clients and as patrons themselves. Patronage relationships were an important means by which Catholics and the state related to one another and remained bound to one another, and by which Catholics continued to wield influence, both in their local communities and at the national level.

Aristocratic families utilized their various relationships – family, extended kin, friends, neighbors and patrons – as a network from which they drew various forms of support. Catholics relied on their networks for the usual aristocratic concerns of advancement, promotion and marriage, for example, but also for more pressing needs related to their religious nonconformity. This was especially true for recusants, the Catholics who refused to conform even occasionally to the English state church. Catholic families relied on their natal and marital networks, and also on the networks formed and maintained by women. Female networks overlapped but did not replicate male-dominated (or at least male-directed) family networks and thus provided additional avenues of support and patronage on which family groups could draw.

For the gentry and nobility, social status was more important than their religion. Catholics, both men and women, continued to participate in political life in part because that was

the role into which they were born. Many of them also engaged in cultural pursuits that identified them as members of an elite social and economic group, pursuits such as Renaissance building and gardening activities. By engaging with typical features of aristocratic life, which included political engagement, specific cultural activities and participation in the patron-client system, Catholic gentry and nobility remained integral components of English society and political culture.

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## Abbreviations

*APC* = Acts of the Privy Council of England, new series, ed. J.R. Dasent, E.G. Atkinson, et al. (46 vols., London, 1890-1964).

Bindoff, *House of Commons* = S. T. Bindoff, ed., *The House of Commons 1509-1558* 3 vols. (London, 1982)

BL = British Library, London, UK.

*DNB* = *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Hasler, *House of Commons* = P.W. Hasler, ed. *The House of Commons, 1558 – 1603*. 3 vols. (London, 1981)

HEH = Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

HH = Hatfield House, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, UK.

*HMCS* = Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable, the Marquess of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, 24 vols. (London, 1883-1976)

*HMCV* = Historical Manuscripts Commission *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, vol. iii, (London, 1904)

LPL = Lambeth Palace Library, London, UK.

LRO = Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office, Wigston Magna, Leicester, UK.

NRO = Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton, UK.

SCLA = Shakespeare Center Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK (formerly the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust).

TNA = The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew, UK.

VCH = Victoria County History

WRO = Warwickshire Record Office, Warwick, UK.

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## Introduction

In May 1603 Sir Robert Cecil leased the keepership of the Little Park at Brigstock, a royal hunting demesne in the Forest of Rockingham, to Sir Thomas Tresham and his son, Francis Tresham.<sup>1</sup> Cecil's choice of Tresham, an aged Catholic recusant with a reputation as a leading figure among Midlands Catholics, angered some of Tresham's high-born neighbors and mystified even Cecil's steward. Yet Cecil's extension of favor to Tresham was laden with meaning. The grant of office confirmed that despite over two decades of political disenfranchisement, the Treshams – an ancient and esteemed family in Northamptonshire – still had a place in the political and social hierarchy of the county. The Treshams had been clients of the Cecil family since the 1570s; Sir Thomas and his wife, Muriel relied on William Cecil, Lord Burghley and on his sons, Sir Thomas and Sir Robert, for help when Tresham was imprisoned for religious matters and for relief from harassment by local officials. While it might seem counterintuitive that one of the most powerful families in England would offer their patronage to one of the most notorious Catholic recusant families in the realm, in fact it was a relationship of political expediency. Patron-client relationships such as the one between the Cecils and Treshams bound Catholics to the monarch and state, discouraged large-scale rebellion, and thereby helped to ensure maintenance of social order.

Patronage was vital to keeping Catholics integrated into the state, but the process by which that happened has been left unexplored. Indeed, Catholics of gentry status – even militantly recusant ones – remained part of the patron-client system because of their rank and

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Tresham was at the time of this lease already a verderer in the Forest of Rockingham. The lease was granted on behalf of Tresham's son and heir, Francis Tresham, on the condition that Tresham maintained three hundred deer in the Little Park while Cecil carried out improvements in the Great Park. Philip A. J. Pettit, *The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire: A Study in their Economy, 1558-1714* (Gateshead: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1968), 173-174.

status. To deny them patronage would have been to deny their place in the social order, which would have propelled them away from the crown and toward wide-scale rebellion. Gentle and noble families had to work to remain integrated in the patron-client exchange regardless of their denominational affiliation. Patronage took a variety of forms and was employed to a variety of uses. It fostered ties that resulted in employment, office-holding, marriage, securing wardship, and for many upper-status Catholics, mitigation of the punishments mandated by the anti-recusancy statutes of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

An analysis of the role of patronage and clientage in English Catholic life is overdue. Scholars have acknowledged the importance of patronage relationships in shielding Catholics from the full brunt of the anti-recusancy statutes, but no one has yet examined how those patronage relationships functioned or the various uses Catholics made of those relationships. Adrian Morey credited the survival of Catholicism to the gentry and to a greater extent, the Catholic nobles who protected priests and lesser-status Catholics via patronage.<sup>2</sup> He said nothing, however, of the patronage Catholics enjoyed of Protestants nor how Catholics set about securing that patronage, other than a brief mention of the benefits of Court patronage.<sup>3</sup> John LaRocca pointed out that King James made a policy of using patronage to manage recusant Catholics, a dynamic that Howard Reinmuth further articulated in his examination of the generous royal patronage that Lord William Howard enjoyed of James I; neither study, however, explained how Catholics cultivated or maintained their patrons.<sup>4</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes discussed the role of local communities and the patronage of crown officials in lessening the pecuniary

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<sup>2</sup> Adrian Morey, *Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), 42.

<sup>3</sup> Morey, *Catholic Subjects*, 134-135.

<sup>4</sup> John J. LaRocca, "James I and his Catholic subjects, 1606-1612: some financial implications," *Recusant History* vol. 18 (1987): 255-57; also quoted in Diana Newton, *The Making of the Jacobean Regime: James VI and I and the government of England, 1603-1625* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2005), 122. Howard S. Reinmuth Jr., "Lord William Howard (1563-1640) and his Catholic Associations," *Recusant History* vol. 12 (1973-74): 227.

penalties of recusancy, but did not examine the cultivation or maintenance of those patronage relationships.<sup>5</sup> Michael Questier argued in 1996 that “Catholicism became reliant on familial and patronage networks for survival” and traced that survival in his later study of the entourage that surrounded the Browne family, the Viscounts Montague of Sussex.<sup>6</sup> To date, the latter work is the only detailed examination of how patronage functioned in a Catholic framework. Questier’s study revealed the vibrant patronage network that centered on the first and second viscounts and the acutely political life of their family.<sup>7</sup> My study widens the lens; I focus not on one family, but on networks of Catholic families within the Midlands counties of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire as I examine how these families acquired and maintained patrons and the varied uses to which they put the patron-client relationship.

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Patronage was one of the foremost social processes of early modern Europe. Werner Gundersheimer has referred to patronage as a “permanent structural characteristic of...European high culture.”<sup>8</sup> It helped to articulate social hierarchy, to define a person’s position in that hierarchy and was a key feature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English politics and

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<sup>5</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 147-148.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Questier, “Clerical Recruitment, Conversion and Rome, c. 1580-1620,” in *Patronage and Recruitment in the Tudor and Early Stuart Church*, Borthwick Studies in History 2, ed. Claire Cross (York, U.K.: York University Press, 1996), 87.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Werner Gundersheimer, “Patronage in the Renaissance: An Exploratory Approach” in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 4.

aristocratic culture.<sup>9</sup> In the early Tudor period, the monarch used royal and court patronage as a means to motivate the gentle and noble classes to commit their loyalty and service to the monarch and to integrate local and regional political elites into the state – an especially important consideration during the reigns of the first two Tudor monarchs, who had to remain vigilant not to allow the realm to collapse back to the wars of the previous century.<sup>10</sup> By the early Jacobean period, however, the structure of patronage had begun to change. Linda Levy Peck has argued that court patronage under King James was employed not for the assurances of loyalty and service that the Tudors sought, but with the purpose of introducing experts into government as advisors and administrators.<sup>11</sup> My study illuminates how, despite this shift, James and his advisors continued to utilize patron-client relationships as a means by which to bind Catholics to the crown and state and to bring Catholics into significant positions at court or in government.

Early modern patronage was built on a system of individual ties and networks that relied on connections of friendship, kinship and credit. These relationships, which were deliberately constructed and nurtured by both client and patron, yielded favor and advancement to the client and accrued power to the patron; they were, according to Wallace MacCaffrey, “an essential part

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<sup>9</sup> Linda Levy Peck has called patronage the “basis of English politics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” Peck, “Court Patronage and Government Policy: The Jacobean Dilemma,” in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, eds. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (1981), 28.

<sup>10</sup> Peck, “Court Patronage and Government Policy,” 31; Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1640* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, N.Y.: Palgrave, 2000), 12. For the role of Henry VII in establishing England’s first Court to offer “widespread and systematic” cultural patronage to artists and scholars, on which he consciously “emulate[ed] the dukes of Burgundy” see Gordon Kipling, “The Origins of Tudor Patronage” in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel, 118. Stuart Carroll observed a similar dynamic in late sixteenth century France, where the function of the state required “judicious distribution of patronage and the manipulation of networks of personal influence.” Stuart Carroll, *Noble Power during the French Wars of Religion: The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Linda Levy Peck, “Court Patronage and Government Policy,” 28.

of the functioning social machinery.”<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the type of patronage a patron dispensed – social, political, cultural or ecclesiastical – patrons assembled a network (or entourage) of followers, or clients, to whom they granted favors and resources in exchange for the client’s loyalty, service and, perhaps most important, the “reinforcement of power and prestige.”<sup>13</sup> The instability of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries meant that order and power were constantly being negotiated, and increasingly in ways that granted power to local elites.<sup>14</sup> That power included the distribution of patronage and the accumulation of clients for local and regional elites with goods and favor to dispense. Michael Questier’s account of the Catholic Viscounts Montague in Sussex illustrates the intricacies and enduring influence of an aristocratic family and their network of clients, or their “entourage.”<sup>15</sup> As were South Coast Catholics such as the Viscounts Montague, Catholic gentry in the English Midlands were vigorous participants in the patronage system, as both clients and as patrons.

One of the main categories of analysis in this study is that of kinship. Catholics in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire constructed and inhabited social networks comprised primarily of biological and marital relations. While many scholars, beginning with Alan Macfarlane, have regarded the function of kinship in England as both narrow and shallow, with connections and favor extending to aunts and uncles at the most, the picture that emerges in this study demonstrates that extensive affective and effective ties existed and were employed to

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<sup>12</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, “Patronage and Politics under the Tudors,” in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22. See also Wallace MacCaffrey, “Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics,” in *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale*, ed. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, C.H. Williams (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1961), 95-126; Sharon Kettering, “Patronage in Early Modern France,” 839; Kristin Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London, U.K.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 48.

<sup>14</sup> Hindle, *The State and Social Change*, 233.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community*.

the benefit of kinsmen.<sup>16</sup> The dynamic that Miranda Chaytor observed in kinship activities in the village of Ryton, of active and engaged kinship interactions and support that extend beyond the restricted scope Macfarlane detected, is evident here as well.<sup>17</sup> Chaytor's argument was controversial on its publication in 1980, but since then other historians have seen similar patterns emerge from different evidence sets. David Cressy argued that ties of kinship kept people bound to one another even during periods when they did not need to utilize those relationships for patronage; those ties facilitated revivification of the patronage connection when it became necessary.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to kin, upper-status social networks included friends and neighbors. In early modern England, "friend" was used to denote relationships of emotional attachment, trust and support.<sup>19</sup> Friendship was one component of sociability, which some scholars have argued was important to maintaining order within both the household and society at large.<sup>20</sup> Friendships were not only a source of mutual support, but also a significant factor in the accumulation and maintenance of patrons and clients, as Paul McLean's analysis of networks of friends in

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<sup>16</sup> Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, a seventeenth-century clergyman: an essay in historical anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 85-92; Keith Wrightson, "Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex, 1550-1700," in *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle*, ed. Richard M. Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 318-324; Keith Wrightson, "Household and Kinship in Early Modern England," *History Workshop Journal*, xii (1981): 153; Rab Houston and Richard M. Smith, "A New Approach to Family History?" *History Workshop Journal*, xiv (1982): 127.

<sup>17</sup> Miranda Chaytor, "Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *History Workshop Journal*, x (1980): 25-60.

<sup>18</sup> David Cressy, "Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* vol. 113 (1986): 46-47.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, 97. See also L. J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama* (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1937).

<sup>20</sup> Karl E. Westhauser, "Friendship and Family in Early Modern England: The Sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys," *Journal of Social History* vol. 27, no. 3 (Spring 1994): 518. Westhauser defines sociability as the sum of all interpersonal interactions within the space of a day, of which friendship is one part. See also Susan D. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford; New York: Blackwell, 1988).



Renaissance Florence has revealed.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, as Sharon Kettering has pointed out, friendship and clientage became so intertwined in the early modern period that “friend” was also often used to mean “patron” or “client,” especially in France and England.<sup>22</sup> Friendships are typically considered horizontal relationships in contrast to clientage as a vertical arrangement, but relationships were not always so tidily defined. The friendship between William, Lord Vaux and Sir Edward Montagu of Boughton is a case in point: although Vaux, as a member of the nobility, was Montagu’s social superior and in a position to be Montagu’s patron, his recusancy placed him in a position of clientage to the up-and-coming Montagu. The Vaux-Montagu relationship is but one example that vertical and horizontal ties existed simultaneously. Catholics drew their patrons from their social networks: from a group of people with whom they shared a connection, whether ties of kinship, ties of friendship, or the bonds of one’s neighborhood and county.

A study of patronage and kinship is unavoidably also an examination of gentry culture, particularly the combination of values, behaviors and activities that defined that culture in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Scholars of gentry culture in the late medieval period have examined the factors and features that contributed to the making of various gentle identities, including political, social and cultural identities.<sup>23</sup> For the early modern period, scholars such as R.H. Tawney, Hugh Trevor-Roper and Lawrence Stone debated the purported rise of the gentry and the degree to which that status group laid the groundwork for the Civil

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<sup>21</sup> Paul D. McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (London; Durham, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Sharon Kettering, “Friendship and Clientage in Early Modern France,” *French History* vol. 6, no. 2 (1992): 141-142.

<sup>23</sup> Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove, eds., *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Christine Carpenter, “Gentry and Community in Medieval England,” *Journal of British Studies* vol. 33, no. 4 (Oct. 1994): 340-380; Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Wars of the seventeenth centuries.<sup>24</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes built on that body of literature but focused instead on the “tension between the powerful desire for continuity and stability that characterized the landed elite, and their ability to adapt to the changes of two profoundly disturbing centuries.”<sup>25</sup> As they demonstrated in their seminal study of the English gentry, gentlemen and -women had to internalize and behave in accordance with the values of their status group in order to wield authority in their neighborhood and county and in relation to their opponents.<sup>26</sup> More recently, Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott situated Catholics into the broader scope of gentry culture through the lens of one gentle Catholic family in the West Midlands, the Throckmortons of Coughton.<sup>27</sup> Even the most obstinately recusant upper-status Catholics defined themselves first as members of their status group and secondarily as members of a specific religious group, and behaved accordingly.

The Catholicism practiced by Elizabethan and early Stuart Catholics was not the same brand practiced by their grandparents or great-grandparents several generations in the past. To be sure, the reinstitution of Catholicism in England under Queen Mary – brief as it was – ensured a degree of continuity, but Catholicism in the early Elizabethan period was not identical to early sixteenth century Catholicism. The reform initiatives of the Council of Trent further changed the complexion of Catholic belief and practice. Yet even post-Trent, when Catholic belief and

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<sup>24</sup> R.H. Tawney, “The Rise of the Gentry,” *Economic History Review*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1941): 1-38; R.H. Tawney, “The Rise of the Gentry: A Postscript,” *Economic History Review*, New Series, vol. 7, no. 1 (1954): 91-97; Lawrence Stone, “The Anatomy of the Elizabethan Aristocracy,” *Economic History Review* vol 18, no. 1/ 2 (1948): 1-53; Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Gentry, 1540-1640,” *Economic History Review Supplement* no. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1956). For a summary of the debate, see J.H. Hexter, “Storm over the Gentry,” *Encounter* (May 1958): 22-34. Republished in J.H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (London: Longmans, 1961).

<sup>25</sup> Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, eds., *Catholic Gentry and English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (Ashgate, 2009).

practice in theory unified the faithful behind a certain set of doctrinal objectives such as unity of Christendom, the primacy of the Virgin Mary and the certainty of transubstantiation, individual religious belief and practice remained an untidy business that makes a singular definition overly generalized at best.<sup>28</sup> To be a Catholic in England did not necessarily mean that one was a Roman Catholic, or papist, who supported the pope's claim to supremacy in England. In this study, I use Catholic to indicate one who adhered to the rites and practices of the post-Tridentine Catholic church. Technically, that included Catholic believers along a wide doctrinal spectrum, from conformist to recusant. Conformists, or "church papists," were Catholics who conformed to the monarch's expectation (and the statute) that required regular attendance in one's parish church and the taking of communion once each year. These individuals conformed for a variety of reasons: self-preservation, family protection, and the preservation of family lands, fortune, or career are the typical reasons offered. It could be, as well, that individual belief was fluid and could move along the doctrinal continuum; for some Catholics, conformity was meaningful at some times while the refusal to conform (recusancy) was more meaningful at other times.

Scholars are beginning to recognize the difficulty, perhaps the futility, of fitting individual religious believers into specific doctrinal boxes. Rather than ascribing to one religious position, such as "conformist" or "recusant," "Puritan" or "nonconformist," many people tended to float along a wide continuum. Peter Lake and Michael Questier have demonstrated that religious conformity, regardless of a believer's doctrinal affiliation, was contested, negotiated and flexible.<sup>29</sup> Isaac Stephens used the example of Elizabeth Isham to illustrate the broad scope

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<sup>28</sup> Lisa McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642*, Religion in History, Society and Culture 6 (New York: Routledge, 2004); Christopher Haigh, *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England* (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2007); Deborah Shuger, "A Protesting Catholic Puritan in Elizabethan England," *Journal of British Studies* vol. 48, no. 3 (July 2009): 587-630.

of Puritan belief and practice and to argue that “Puritanism” did not fit tidily into a confessional box, but was shaped in part by individual believers.<sup>30</sup> Alexandra Walsham has argued that Catholic strategies for adapting to and coping with enforced Protestantism included degrees of conformity that ranged from partial to full (yet qualified) conformity.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, a number of Catholic families in the Midlands practiced the very strategies that Walsham articulated. And as Walsham points out, conformity was not, for Catholics, an act of “spineless apathy or ethical surrender” but one of positive action that expressed an individual’s moral principles.<sup>32</sup> Conformity signaled a desire to remain a full participant in the conflicting fields of one’s personal faith convictions, in one’s loyalty to the monarch and state, and in their local parish community. This study examines conformist Catholics and recusant Catholics: those who conformed, either regularly or occasionally, to the English church, and those who refused to do so. As the evidence will show, conformist Catholics, those who Walsham calls “church papists” were themselves sometimes a difficult group to define since the degree of conformity varied by individual.

Until recently, the literature relating to post-Reformation English Catholicism underscored Catholics’ marginalization. For seventeenth-century Jesuit scholars and antiquarians, the narrative of marginalization was an effective way to craft arguments for

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Lake, “Moving the Goal Posts? Modified Subscription and the Construction of Conformity in the Early Stuart Church,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2000), 179-205; Michael Questier, “Conformity, Catholicism and the Law,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church*, 237-261.

<sup>30</sup> Isaac Stephens, “Confessional Identity in Early Stuart England: The ‘Prayer Book Puritanism’ of Elizabeth Isham,” *Journal of British Studies* vol. 50, no. 1 (January 2011): 24-47.

<sup>31</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “Yielding to the Extremity of the Time: Conformity, Orthodoxy and the Post-Reformation Catholic Community,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church*, 212. See also Walsham’s *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> Walsham, “Yielding to the Extremity of the Time,” 213.

toleration and emancipation.<sup>33</sup> In their letters back to Rome, Jesuit priests working in England emphasized the persecution endured by English Catholics. Polemicists such as the Jesuits William Allen, Robert Persons and Richard Verstegan, all leading figures in the Allen-Persons party, emphasized the persecution endured by English Catholics, glorified martyrs and criticized English policy toward Catholics, all in attempt to highlight the wrongdoing of the heretic English Protestants, against whom they fought for what they believed to be the true religion. Many of these men portrayed the post-Reformation Catholic body as disconnected from English social, cultural, and political life, cloistered in their manor houses or palaces; living in constant fear of local officials, and interacting as quietly as possible with other Catholics.<sup>34</sup> This narrative was reinforced by Catholic scholars (some of whom were Jesuits themselves) who, working largely from Jesuit sources, the writings of the polemicists and selected state papers, detailed the persecution of English Catholics at the hands of the English state.<sup>35</sup>

Modern scholars extended earlier assumptions in works that adopted sometimes almost hagiographic views of their subjects. J.J. Scarisbrick, Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy, for example, emphasized the degree to which the Reformation was imposed from above on an

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<sup>33</sup> William Weston, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, 1955); John Gerard, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. Philip Caraman (London: Longmans, 1955); Richard Challoner, *Martyrs to the Catholic Faith: memoirs of missionary priests and other Catholics of both sexes that have suffered death in England on religious account from the year 1577 to 1684*, (Edinburgh: T. C. Jack, 1878); J. H. Pollen SJ, *Publications of the Catholic Record Society vol. I: Miscellanea* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1905).

<sup>34</sup> The Allen-Persons party, which was affiliated with the Jesuits, produced the bulk of the critiques against the English monarch, government and England's policies vis à vis Catholics until the Appellant writers rose c. 1600. The Appellants emphasized obedience to the monarch with conditional loyalty to the pope and as such advocated for the body of English Catholics who argued that they could simultaneously be loyal to the state, obedient to the monarch, and Catholic. Thomas H. Clancy, S.J., *Papist Pamphleteers: The Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615*, Jesuit Studies (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1964), 6-7. See also Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36-39.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the work of John Hungerford Pollen, S.J. *Acts of English Martyrs hitherto Unpublished* (London: Burns and Oates, 1891); J.H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth: A Study of their Politics, Civil Life, and Government, 1558-1580, from the Fall of the Old Church to the Advent of the Counter-Reformation* (London; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920).

unwilling populace. They implied that those who resisted the reforms and remained Catholic were martyrs for their faith through their increased political and social marginalization, and that their efforts resulted in the preservation of English Catholicism.<sup>36</sup> William Trimble, working with Jesuit writings, Catholic Record Society publications, and a rather limited set of government documents, emphasized Catholics' isolation.<sup>37</sup> John Bossy's seminal work, *The English Catholic Community*, was conceived as an examination of the Catholic community from within that community.<sup>38</sup> As such, he did not explore larger connections with the "outside world" and, perhaps unintentionally, appeared to extend or endorse the thesis of Catholic marginalization.

I agree that Catholicism was not withering on the vine prior to the beginning of Reformation in England and that it did not die as a result of the early reformations, only to be resuscitated by Jesuits and seminary priests in the 1580s. What we have here is not the preservation of Catholicism through the efforts of English Catholics and their priests, but the development of a new kind of Catholicism centered on manor houses and attic spaces rather than on parish churches, and developing new forms of ritual and practice.<sup>39</sup> The development of this

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<sup>36</sup> J.C.H. Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790* (London; Dublin: Chapman, 1966); Aveling, *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1970); Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: the Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1976). J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Blackwell, 1984); Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (London, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Christopher Haigh, "The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation," *Past and Present* vol. 93 (Nov. 1981): 37-69; Christopher Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series*, vol. 31 (1981): 129-147; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>37</sup> William R. Trimble, *The Catholic Laity in Elizabethan England, 1558-1603* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964). See also Morey, *Catholic Subjects*.

<sup>38</sup> John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>39</sup> For descriptions of these domestic spaces and the priest hides concealed within them see Michael Hodgetts, "A Topographical Index of Hiding Places I," *Recusant History* vol. 16 (1982): 146-216; Michael Hodgetts, "A Topographical Index of Hiding Places II," *Recusant History* vol. 24, no. 1 (1998): 1-54; Michael Hodgetts, "A

Catholicism fits instead within the context of the multiple reformations that occurred over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and explicated by Christopher Haigh and, more recently, Diarmaid MacCulloch.<sup>40</sup>

Until recently, it was almost impossible – and certainly inconceivable – to write a history of Catholics without a heavy reliance on Jesuit sources and the focus on martyrdom and exceptionalism that those sources convey. But by limiting reliance on those sources we are able to situate Catholics not into English religious history, but into mainstream English history.

Michael Questier took the first step in this direction in 1996 through the perspective of conversion accounts; he found that conversion for early modern English people was highly individualized and unstable, regardless of where one sat on the doctrinal continuum. As a result, Catholics (and Puritans and Arminians, for example) are visible as English people – part of English society – rather than as part of a specific religious body.<sup>41</sup> Marie B. Rowlands and the contributors to the volume *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778* emphasized that Catholics of middling and lesser status were integrated into their local communities.<sup>42</sup> Norman Jones's book on the cultural adaptations that occurred in the post-Reformation period described the strategies that families and institutions made in order to accommodate religious difference in

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Topographical Index of Hiding Places III," *Recusant History* vol. 27, no. 4 (2005): 473-520. For a discussion of the ways in which post-Reformation English Catholics adapted their ritual and practice, see Lisa McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1993); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking, 2004); Diarmaid MacCulloch, "The Church of England, 1533-1603," in *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition: Continuity, Change and the Search for Communion*, ed. Stephen Platten (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Marie B. Rowlands, ed., *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778*, A Joint Research Project of the Catholic Record Society and Wolverhampton University (London: Catholic Record Society, 1999).

their midst.<sup>43</sup> As Jones demonstrated, although the state created Catholics as “other” through anti-Catholic legislation, Catholics went on living much as they had before. Ethan Shagan and the contributors to his edited volume, *Catholics and the Protestant Nation*, continued to situate Catholics into the mainstream of English historiography.<sup>44</sup> In fact, much of Peter Lake’s recent work explicates the degree to which Catholics participated in public discourse and in the shaping of policy, faction and even what constituted conformity, throughout the Elizabethan period and into the early Stuart years.<sup>45</sup> Michael Questier’s examination of the entourage that surrounded Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montague, a prominent Catholic in Sussex, demonstrated that Browne’s position as a powerful south-coast aristocrat engaged him and his family with other peers in his region, regardless of their religion. Questier maintains that the Browne family’s centrality in the national political structure contradicts previous scholars’ arguments for marginalization.<sup>46</sup> Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott’s edited collection of the Throckmortons of Coughton further extended this historiographical thread.<sup>47</sup>

Situating Catholics in the mainstream of English social history requires that scholars wrestle free of the traditional methodology and martyr-driven narratives of Catholic history, that

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<sup>43</sup> Norman L. Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Ethan H. Shagan, ed., *Catholics and the “Protestant Nation”: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

<sup>45</sup> Lake has argued that both Puritans and Catholics attempted to shape, or negotiate, the “conformist residuum” in order to “recapture it from the outwardly Protestant national Church” of Elizabeth I and Archbishop Whitgift. Peter Lake, “Religious Identities in Shakespeare’s England,” in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 65; Peter Lake, ““The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I” (and the Fall of Archbishop Grindal) Revisited” in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History, ed. John F. MacDiarmid (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Peter Lake and Michael Questier, “Puritans, Papists, and the “Public Sphere” in Early Modern England,” *Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 3 (2000): 587-627; Lake and Questier, “Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England,” *Past and Present* 153 (1996): 64-107.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community*.

<sup>47</sup> Marshall and Scott, eds., *Catholic Gentry in English Society*.



we change the types of questions we ask and the ways in which we approach those questions. Joining in this effort, I endeavor in this study to examine Catholics in relation to their families, friends and neighbors and also in relation to local and national government. This analysis examines the degree to which these historical actors lived within mainstream English society and helps to situate them into the larger historiographical conversation. By examining multiple families, their networks and how those networks helped to facilitate patron-client relationships, I contribute to a growing scholarly understanding of the mechanics of patronage in early modern England, the place Catholics had in the patronage system, and the enduring influence of upper-status Catholics in their localities, counties and the realm.

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In this dissertation, Catholics are not treated as members of one overarching community, the “English Catholic Community” that John Bossy envisioned.<sup>48</sup> The notion of such a community is problematic for several reasons. “Community” implies a horizontal social arrangement that is inconsistent with the ordering of status groups in early modern England. Even if all English Catholics adhered to identical post-Tridentine doctrine and practice and were therefore doctrinally or ideologically unified, their unequal social, economic and political status complicates referring to them as *a* community.<sup>49</sup> They were not unified: members of this group held divergent ideas about political matters ranging from the royal succession to league with

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<sup>48</sup> John Bossy, *English Catholic Community*.

<sup>49</sup> Benedict Anderson’s ideas of an “imagined community” are predicated on greater horizontal structure than existed in early modern England. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1993).

Spain; they disagreed about militant revolt against the monarch; they were riven from within, the Appellant Controversy being one example. Inconsistent application of anti-Catholic legislation in different areas further problematizes the issue, as local and county governments carried out enforcement in different ways. Furthermore, English Catholics lacked the geographic boundaries that Beat Kümin argues are central to the idea of a community.<sup>50</sup> Rather, Catholics were found throughout the realm and in widely varying environments: urban, rural, champion and wood-pasture. The breadth of their connections to other Catholics was related to the breadth of their connections generally; the greater an individual's or family's status, the more likely they were to have an extensive network that covered a large geographic area and included a wealth of diverse personalities and viewpoints.<sup>51</sup> Michael Braddick has argued against the idea of a single Catholic community, saying that it was actually a collection of "dissident oppositional expressions of religious motive, linked by a common reliance on Rome."<sup>52</sup> Rather than one monolithic community we need to examine the smaller communities, or networks, that comprised the larger body of the Catholic faithful. Networks of friends and relations are therefore useful categories of analysis.

I am interested in the networks formed by Catholic families and individuals in three Midlands counties: Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, an area I refer to as the Central Midlands. These counties are intriguing because of their varied political and religious complexion, their proximity to the capital and, for Warwickshire, to the Welsh borderlands. Politically, Leicestershire was dominated throughout the period under examination here by a

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<sup>50</sup> Beat Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish, c. 1400-1560*, St. Andrew's Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, Hants.; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1996).

<sup>51</sup> For further discussion of why these dynamics make "community" a fraught term, see Christine Carpenter, "Gentry and Community in Medieval England," *Journal of British Studies* vol. 33, no. 4 (Oct. 1994): 340-380.

<sup>52</sup> Michael Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1700* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 300-301.

great man, the Earl of Huntingdon; his family, the Hastings; and the Hastings affinity.

Northamptonshire, by contrast, was governed by oligarchy, with a number of men fighting for prominence, even dominance, in the county hierarchy. Warwickshire was a blend of these two forms, being dominated in the 1570s and 1580s by the Dudley brothers, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick. After Leicester's death in 1588 and Warwick's in 1590, the county was governed by oligarchy, although that oligarchy was not identical to Northamptonshire's. The political differences, which are examined in Chapter One, resulted in differences in the attitudes toward and treatment of Catholic subjects in the respective counties and also shaped the patronage needs of Catholics in those counties. Through this regional study I hope to be able to gain understanding of the ways in which Catholics operated in their counties and their local communities, where they wielded authority in various forms – socially, culturally and politically.<sup>53</sup>

Although recusant Catholics have drawn more attention from scholars than have outwardly conforming Catholics, a significant number of non-recusant households harbored priests and identified as Catholic households – the Brudenells in the 1580s, the Beaumonts in the 1580s and 1590s and the Shirleys from c. 1580-1615 are but three examples. In this story, “church papists” or strategic conformers are an integral part of the narrative. Catholics formed networks with fairly fluid boundaries, certainly more fluid than those which Bossy recognized. This was not just a condition of Sussex or the Midlands. Sarah Bastow has argued that Catholic gentry in Yorkshire, intent on surviving and even prospering during the Tudor-Stuart period, “work[ed] within the conformist majority” rather than adopting a separatist stance.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach with their magisterial book on the English gentry. Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*.

In an effort to meet the historical actors on their own terms I endeavor whenever possible not to assign people religious labels, since these labels so often tend to encourage artificial categories, but I also remain aware that sometimes those labels are necessary to avoid confusing modern readers. Although there were a variety of reasons for which someone might be recusant, including debt, illness, and apathy, by the 1580s the term “recusant” was usually used to indicate a Catholic who refused to attend parish worship services and to participate in the taking of communion. In this study I use recusant to mean Catholic and recusant; I use “conformist” to denote Catholics who conformed to the English church.

There was a strong gender component to the networks that emerged in this study, as there was to recusancy as a whole. For nearly four decades, scholars have noted that recusancy was particularly attractive to women, but the inverse is also true: recusancy was unattractive to many male heads-of-household because of the inherent risks to property and position.<sup>55</sup> Obstinate recusant women are easier to spot in the archives than are the majority of Catholic women; as Marie B. Rowlands has noted, the aim of the state to control recusant women produced source material that is “biased to reveal those women who were vigorous, active, and capable of making an impression.”<sup>56</sup> Women such as Anne Line, Margaret Clitherow, Jane Wiseman, Eleanor Brokesby and her sister, Anne Vaux tend to dominate the narrative of the female relationship to Catholicism. As Rowlands also pointed out, teasing non-recusant Catholic women out of the

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<sup>54</sup> Sarah L. Bastow, “‘Worth nothing but very wilful’: Catholic Recusant women of Yorkshire, 1536-1642,” *Recusant History* vol. 25, no.4 (2001): 592.

<sup>55</sup> Alexandra Walsham argues that strategic conformity was more attractive to men than was recusancy, with which men risked the loss of office-holding opportunities and their family’s assets. Bossy was among the first to note recusancy’s appeal for women in his *English Catholic Community*, 157. Walsham, on the other hand, argues for an inverse interpretation, that strategic conformity was more attractive to men than was recusancy, with which men risked loss of position and property. Walsham, *Church Papists*, 80; Andrew Muldoon, “Recusants, church-papists, and “comfortable” missionaries: Assessing the post-Reformation English Catholic Community,” *The Catholic Historical Review* vol. 86, no. 2 (Apr. 2000): 252.

<sup>56</sup> Marie B. Rowlands, “Recusant Women, 1560-1640” in Mary Prior, ed., *Women in English Society, 1500-1800* (London: Methuen, 1985), 49.

shadows can be difficult business, mainly because their lives and activities were not well documented or that their sources are no longer extant. While this is true, it is possible to see into the lives of Catholic and recusant women through sources not associated with the monarch, the government and prosecution. Collections of family papers illuminate the lives and activities of women – sometimes only a glimpse, but at other times a more comprehensive view. Examination of the Throckmorton Papers in the Warwickshire Record Office, for example, facilitated Jan Broadway's reconstruction of a young Catholic widow's life after her husband's death.<sup>57</sup> Within collections of family papers is information on a woman's engagement with her family, her efforts to construct and maintain her own network, and her political engagement, mainly in the form of petitions she wrote on behalf of other members of her family or network.

## Sources

This project draws heavily on collections of family papers and the letters found in state archives. Family papers provided me an interior view of family networks: they reveal how and with whom a certain family communicated and how they spoke to and about one another. Letters in state papers and in the collections of high-ranking officials such as the Cecils reveal how Catholics engaged with the monarch, Privy Councilors and other government officials and also how officials spoke to each other about Catholics. Documents in county record offices have provided a view into the inner workings of a county community and the place of local Catholics in that community.

The availability of family papers, or in some cases, the lack thereof, has inevitably shaped this project and has focused the study mainly on prominent gentry families. The survival

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<sup>57</sup> Jan Broadway, "Agnes Throckmorton: A Jacobean Recusant Widow" in *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, 123-142.

of family papers is, unfortunately, often happy circumstance, and for many families such collections no longer exist. For the Throckmortons of Coughton, Treshams of Rushton and Brudenells of Deene we have extensive family collections whereas it appears that the papers of the Vauxes of Harrowden are not extant. The Throckmorton family deposited most of their papers with the Warwickshire Record Office in the late twentieth century, with the residue still in the library at Coughton Court. A large cache of Tresham family papers were discovered hidden in a wall at Rushton in 1828, presumably concealed there in late 1605, coterminous with Francis Tresham's arrest in connection with the Gunpowder Plot. They now fill eleven volumes at the British Library.<sup>58</sup> The Brudenells of Deene still manage their own collections at Deene Park; unfortunately access is difficult to obtain. The Hastings Papers migrated from Leicestershire to the Huntington Library in Southern California. The lack of Vaux family papers is unfortunate but a good deal of the family's interactions and activities emerge from Privy Council Records, State Papers and Jesuit writings. Other Catholics have left such a faint trail in the archives that they sometimes seem hardly to have existed at all: Thomas Palmer of Kegworth, Leicestershire, for instance, seems almost ephemeral; what does exist about him raises more questions than can be answered from the limited sources. The evidence for this study is drawn primarily from the State Papers Domestic series, Acts of the Privy Council, the Cecil Papers at Hatfield, manuscript collections at the British Library, Lambeth Palace, the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California, and from collections in the county record offices in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

This study concentrates on the period between 1570 – 1630, approximately three generations after the promulgation of the papal bull excommunicating Elizabeth in 1570, and ending in 1630. This work does not extend into the era of the Civil Wars of the 1640s, when

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<sup>58</sup> BL Add MSS 39828-39838; *HMCV*, v.

religion and politics in England became radically unstable for the best part of a generation. This multigenerational span will enable me to examine Catholic gentry in England during the cold war period of the 1570s and early 1580s; during periods of open war with Spain between 1585 and 1604 and again in the 1620s, and in times of supposed peace in the early seventeenth century. Throughout the period covered by this dissertation, however, English Catholics were both shaken and stigmatized by the exposure of plots against the sovereign, most famously the Throckmorton Plot of 1583, the Babington Plot of 1586, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Additionally, the latter part of the period under examination here was overshadowed by the great religious conflicts in continental Europe after 1618, which subsequently became known as the Thirty Years' War.

During this period, the English state – the monarch, Privy Council and parliament – implemented a series of increasingly stringent legislation that was intended to drive Catholics into conformity with the English church and to punish those who refused to conform. After 1559, conformity entailed regular attendance at Sunday services and the taking of communion at least once per year. The Northern Rebellion in November 1569, followed by the pope's excommunication of Queen Elizabeth in 1570 heightened anxiety of the possibility of a Catholic coup, anxiety which was exacerbated two years later with the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris. These events increased enforcement of the Act of Uniformity and induced parliament to prohibit the dissemination in England of Papal Bulls.<sup>59</sup> The arrival of seminary priests trained on the continent in 1574 and of the Jesuits in 1580 made clear to Elizabeth and her government that Catholicism in England was not going to die along with the aging Marian priests. Still, the queen and her government were not prepared to legislate conscience, but obedience. Those subjects

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<sup>59</sup> 13 Eliz. C.2: *Statutes of the Realm* vol. iv, 528.

who conformed to the English Church were less a concern than those who refused to attend and who effectively recused themselves from their parish community.

Parliament passed the first anti-recusancy statute in 1581, clearly in response to the arrival of the Jesuits. The act prohibited English subjects from harboring or offering assistance to Catholic clerics and increased the fine for non-attendance at Sunday services from one shilling per week to £20 per month.<sup>60</sup> Throughout the 1580s, recusants and Catholic clerics established a highly organized system of administration, transportation, and protection of itinerant clergy. The 1580s was also a decade of plots against the queen, some benign but some quite serious. The two major plots of the decade were the Throckmorton Plot (1583) and the Babington Plot (1586), both of which intended to unseat Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. The Throckmorton Plot and rising tensions in the Low Countries and France prompted parliament to pass further anti-Catholic legislation. The Act of 1585 primarily targeted seminary priests and Jesuits and the laity who supported them by making it an act of treason to provide financial assistance or shelter to a Catholic priest. The act also prohibited Catholic parents from sending their children “beyond seas” without special license in an effort to quell the flow of upper-status boys and girls into continental seminaries and convents.<sup>61</sup> Following the failed Spanish Armada in 1588 and continued Spanish threats into the 1590s, parliament enacted legislation that specifically targeted Popish recusants in 1593. This act prohibited convicted recusants from travelling more than five miles from their domicile without special license from both secular and ecclesiastical officials.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 23 Eliz. c. 1 *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. iv, 657.

<sup>61</sup> 27 Eliz. c. 2 *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. iv, 706.

<sup>62</sup> 35 Eliz. c. 2 *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. iv, 843.



English Catholics lived in an atmosphere of potential persecution throughout the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, and although the extent of persecution leveled against lay Catholics was not as severe as Jesuit contemporaries or Catholic polemicists would have us believe, it was present nevertheless. The Privy Council used recurrent imprisonment and grants of liberty as a tool by which to manage and observe the realm's most prominent recusants, especially the patriarchs of families who wielded a great deal of influence in their local communities such as the Throckmortons, Treshams, Vauxes, Catesbys and Habingtons. Although an upper-status recusant usually did not have difficulty in obtaining liberty when he or his wife (or his patron) requested it (as explained in Chapter Six), years' worth of intermittent imprisonments took their toll on health, families and finances. Catholics, especially recusant Catholics, lived with an ever-present threat of a raid on their household. In some cases, a household received warning that a search was imminent either through local gossip or through a loose-lipped local official (as happened at Baddesley Clinton in 1591). Although the Central Midlands did not have a violent culture of search and seizure, recusants still needed patrons who could help to shield them from harassment by local officials or neighbors; to mitigate the punishments they incurred for their recusancy; or who could promote them into local office and support them once they were there.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, it is reasonable to surmise that many Catholics, whether conformists or recusants, feared potential policies that the monarch and Privy Council might implement at some point in the future. Men like Sir Thomas Tresham of Rushton, Northamptonshire, maintained relationships with powerful patrons, including Sir Christopher Hatton and the Cecils, as part of a

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<sup>63</sup> None of the three counties under examination here had the kind of violent unrest in the name of persecution that Thomas Felton carried out in east Anglia. See Thomas Cogswell, "Destroyed for doing my Duty: Thomas Felton and the Penal Laws under Elizabeth and James I," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honor of Nicholas Tyacke*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell Press, 2006), 177-192.

larger effort to bind himself and Catholics in general to the state. The many petitions he crafted were designed to persuade and reassure members of the Privy Council and the monarch that they had nothing to fear from English Catholics, most of whom were loyal subjects of the English monarch even though they recognized the pope's authority in spiritual matters.

As Peter Lake and Glyn Parry have pointed out, religious legislation was at times a tool of factional politics and negotiation for power between members of the Privy Council or the monarch's favorites. Both of these scholars have observed that policies regarding the prosecution (or persecution) of Catholics was the result of internal divisions in the Privy Council, driven by individual officials' attempts to apply pressure to the queen to specific ends. Lake has argued that the Puritans responded to suppression of prophesyings in 1577 by working to portray Catholics as the real threat to the Elizabethan regime.<sup>64</sup> For Lake, the cases of Edmund Grindal and Cuthbert Mayne revealed the extent to which religious policy was ultimately a matter of top courtiers working to manipulate both public and royal perception of Puritanism and Catholicism so that those courtiers could promote their own policies and agendas.<sup>65</sup> In his recent work on John Dee, Glyn Parry demonstrated that Elizabethan religious policies, and the legislation in the early 1590s in particular, was the product of a power struggle between Sir Christopher Hatton (until his death in 1591) and Archbishop Whitgift on one side and Lord Burghley on the other. In Parry's evaluation, the toleration that Hatton and Whitgift hoped to secure for Catholics and their anti-Puritan stance was answered by Burghley with further anti-Catholic legislation.<sup>66</sup> The uncertainty created by such factional maneuvering must have enhanced concerns among some

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<sup>64</sup> Peter Lake, "A Tale of Two Episcopal Surveys: The Strange Fates of Edmund Grindal and Cuthbert Mayne Revisited" (The Prothero Lecture), *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6<sup>th</sup> ser. 18 (2008): 138.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>66</sup> Glyn Parry, *The Arch-conjuror of England: John Dee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 219-230.

Catholics, such as Tresham for instance, that they were being used as pawns in a greater political game. Through patronage, Catholic families and leading recusants could enhance their bond to the state and therefore hope to keep a hand in the shaping of policy at the center.

Catholics exhibited a variety of responses to the legislation enacted against them. After the 1593 legislation restricting recusants' movement within five miles of their domicile, some Catholics were cautious to obey the law while others were not. Lady Tresham, for instance, seems to have had a healthy respect for the limits placed on her mobility, especially in the first year after the legislation was enacted, yet her sister-in-law Mary, Baroness Vaux was much more cavalier.<sup>67</sup> Other Catholics were concerned to behave in careful accordance with accepted social and cultural norms in hopes that their neighbors would not have cause to think ill of them or to report them to local officials. Agnes Throckmorton, for example, was concerned that her sons' affinity for horse racing would lead to resentment against Catholics or perhaps even increased persecution if people thought that Catholics had money to spare.<sup>68</sup> And sometimes Catholics felt that office or honor was not worth the potential difficulty of working with men with whom they disagreed on religious matters. Thomas, Baron Brudenell declined to accept Queen Henrietta Maria's offer to make him her chancellor in 1636 in part because he would have been the only Catholic "of the Queen's board"; he feared that his honor and reputation might suffer as a result and preferred to avoid the "weight of the office."<sup>69</sup>

Despite English Catholics' hopes that James VI & I would implement a policy of religious toleration, two minor plots (the Bye and the Main, both in 1603), the king's aversion to papism and his need for the revenue provided by the recusancy fines brought an early halt to any

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<sup>67</sup> *HMCV*, 75-76.

<sup>68</sup> WRO, CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 1/f. 6. This incident is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>69</sup> TNA SP 16/319, f. 224r.

notions of Catholic toleration. The Gunpowder Plot (1605) devised and abortively carried out by a small group of young Catholic radicals put a decisive end to further discussions of toleration. The Gunpowder Plot was the last major plot by a radical Catholic faction until the Popish Plot in the late seventeenth century. The backlash from the Gunpowder Plot did not last long; by 1607 even some recusants were trickling back into political offices, and as Pauline Croft has shown, many of the new baronetcies in 1611 were sold to Catholic men.<sup>70</sup> Yet, as my study helps to illuminate, the Gunpowder Plot did not commence a period of withdrawal or of quiescence on the part of English Catholics. In the three Midlands counties examined here, Catholics, whether recusant or not, remained fully integrated in English society and culture and increasingly made a comeback into positions of political influence, including political office.

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The first substantive chapter in this study examines the local contexts in which gentle and noble families functioned. This chapter describes the physical environment in which Catholics lived, including the topography of the three counties and the economy in each county (e.g. champion, wood-pasture, coal mining). It establishes the spatial relationships between households and the resultant implications – for instance, the ease of communication between households and the distance between those households, which of course was particularly significant after the legislation in 1593 prohibited Catholics traveling more than five miles from their domicile without special license. The chapter also outlines the political structure of each

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<sup>70</sup> Pauline Croft, “The Catholic Gentry, the Earl of Salisbury and the Baronets of 1611,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2000).

county (great man or oligarchy, for example) and why that political structure matters to the Catholic story.

Chapter Two introduces the families in the study and traces the networks formed by those families. Family networks, or affinity groups, included natal and marital kin connections, friends, and neighbors in the county or, for those living close to county borders, neighbors just over the country boundary. These networks often included people of varied confessional affiliation and were rather ecumenical in their composition. Some, such as the Vauxes of Harrowden, Northamptonshire, preferred more insulated groups comprised mostly of recusants, but even they still had Protestants and even a few Calvinists within their wider network. Kinship connections were extremely important to early modern gentle and noble families; they customarily recognized connections that had been made deep into the past and relied on those kinship relationships for legitimacy, economic advantage, and patronage. After establishing the networks of the chief Catholic families in each of the counties under examination here, the chapter then explores the relation of family networks to patronage networks, with special attention to the roles played by family members who achieved prominence at court.

Chapter Three examines the roles, activities and network formation strategies of upper-status English Catholic women in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. The story of Catholic women is often drawn from Jesuit sources, in which they were portrayed as exceptional women, almost saintly in their devotion to the Catholic cause in England, in their pious practices (particularly their self-denial) and in the defiant manner with which they stood against the Protestant enemy.<sup>71</sup> In reality, however, most Catholic women of upper status were

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<sup>71</sup> John Gerard, S.J., *Autobiography of an Elizabethan*; William Weston, S.J., *Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, John Gerard, *The Condition of Catholics under James I: Father Gerard's Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. John Morris, S.J. (London: Longmans, 1872); John Morris, S.J., ed., *The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*

more similar to their Protestant and Calvinist sisters than we have recognized. A gentle or noble Catholic woman's lived experience – her activities and her role in her family and her neighborhood – was consistent with her status more so than with her religion. One important feature of a woman's life was the network she created over the course of her life-cycle, beginning with her godparents, extending outward to childhood friends and the households in which she was educated (if applicable) and, later, including women from her immediate neighborhood and her county community. Women's networks were distinct from natal and marital family networks; they were comprised largely of other women, although included some men. Crucially, a woman's network augmented but did not replace the family networks to which she also belonged. Consequently women, through the connections they made, were able to enhance the support and patronage networks of their families, a dynamic which is particularly visible in female petitioning activities.

Chapter Four explores some of the ways in which Catholics remained engaged with the political state during the period c. 1570-1630, namely through office-holding, military service, and female petitioning. Rather than accepting political defeat or marginalization, upper-status Catholic families remained interested and engaged in governance, in the making and implementation of policy, and in military affairs. Although Catholics, particularly recusants, were marginalized when it came to office holding at the national level, a number of Catholics continued to hold office on the local and county levels. Of course, the more notorious recusants such as Sir Thomas Tresham, Sir William Catesby and Thomas Throckmorton, esq. were largely excluded, but others such as Robert Brokesby, Sir George Fermor, Sir George Shirley and Sir Thomas Brudenell held office at the county or state level (or in some cases, both) in the

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*Related by Themselves*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. (London: Burns and Oates, 1877); Godfrey Anstruther, O.S.B., *Vaux of Harrowden: A Recusant Family* (Newport, Monmouthshire: R.H. Johns, 1953).

Elizabethan and the Jacobean periods. Military service was another means by which both Catholic and recusant men could engage with the political sphere. The petitioning activities in which women engaged frequently had political implications. Women's advocacy of male relatives or friends in prison and their work in relation to the preservation of their family's land and property allowed women – especially gentle and noble women – a voice and an active role in the apparatus of state. This chapter provides an overview of that service while acknowledging that the subject is complex enough, and important enough, to merit a discrete study of its own. For reasons of length I have had to exclude an examination of parliamentary patronage and representation, but that is a subject which merits fresh analysis. I have also had to exclude a discussion of the ways in which Catholic men engaged with the political sphere through literary and antiquarian work; that, too, is a subject in need of further investigation and explication.

Chapter Five investigates cultural engagement of English Catholics, specifically the extent to which Catholics, and even dedicated recusants, successfully engaged in Renaissance building and gardening culture. In the process, they communicated their own religious and social values while also cementing their legitimacy and status as members of the gentle and noble class. Engagement in the political and cultural worlds and participation in networks of friends and relations helped Catholics to remain integrated in patronage networks. In all of their activities, Catholic gentry behaved not as Catholics, but as members of their social and economic peer group. Their attempts to advance in office or to build a garden lodge or to woo the most powerful patron possible were all in keeping with the habits of other gentry and nobility, regardless of doctrinal affiliation.

Chapter Six illuminates how Catholics employed their networks in the exchange of patronage, both as patrons and as clients. State officials and Catholics used patron-client

relationships to create and enhance the ties which bound subject, crown and government to one another. Catholic clients utilized patronage for a variety of reasons, only some of which were related to attempts to ease the penalties incurred by recusancy. Catholics utilized the patron-client relationship for social and legal concerns such as relief from prosecution, release from prison or a move to a more favorable prison; economic concerns such as the protection of property and goods, and the execution of estate business; political concerns such as support for a local or national office; and ecclesiastical concerns such as the continuation of the rights of gentle and noble Catholics to name candidates to an advowson in their possession. The patron-client bond was maintained by a steady traffic of gifts and tokens between client and patron; these bonds helped the state and its chief officials to remain in close contact with a segment of the population that could, the state feared, cause serious trouble if not properly managed.

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And now back to the story with which this chapter began. When Sir Robert Cecil leased the Treshams the keepership of Brigstock Park in 1603, Sir Thomas quickly installed Thomas Walker in the lodge in the Little Park; Walker was a Tresham servant, client and tenant. Perhaps predictably, he was also a Catholic. In short order, the neighbors complained, Walker began to hold Mass in the lodge and “divers” local Catholics “congregatyed themselves thether in the night tyme to be p[ar]takers of his Idollety.”<sup>72</sup> Despite a bevy of complaints to Tresham’s patron and the warden of Rockingham Forest, Cecil allowed Tresham to retain the keepership and Walker to remain in the lodge. In so doing, Cecil made clear that he wielded ultimate authority over that contested royal demesne. In spite of the indignant racket raised by other local men who felt entitled to the position – certainly more entitled than an aged Catholic recusant – Cecil granted

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<sup>72</sup> Pettit, *The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire*, 173-174; HH, Cecil Papers, CFEP Deeds 137/6, f. 87r (pr. HMCS, XXIII, 106).



the small but important local office to his client. In so doing, he acknowledged that the Treshams still had a claim to status and authority in the county, despite over two decades of recusancy and entanglements with various intrigues. Cecil's maneuver was nothing novel, nor was it anything out of the ordinary in his family's relationship with the Treshams. It was merely another expression of the patronage that helped crown officials tether their clients to themselves and to the Elizabethan and Jacobean state; it was a means of rewarding expressions of loyalty and of keeping one's potential enemies close by, in a relationship of reciprocal duty and obligation. It was this need to recognize status, reward loyalty and bind clients that we see played out in the Catholic families of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

## Chapter 1

### Local Context in the Three Counties

William Camden described Northamptonshire as “situate in the very middle and heart...of England.”<sup>1</sup> Warwickshire, too, was in the heart of the island, being equidistant from the “East Coast of Norfolke, and on the other side from the West of Wales.”<sup>2</sup> Northamptonshire and its neighbors, Leicestershire to the north and Warwickshire to the west were, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the center of the English Midlands. One medieval historian has argued that Warwickshire, as the “crossroads of England,” served an important function as the connective tissue that bound together the North and South Midlands.<sup>3</sup> Leicestershire’s geographic location, the many counties with which it shared borders, and the principal roads that passed through the county meant that it, too, was an important Midlands thoroughfare. Leicestershire in the early modern period shared borders with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to the north; Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire to the east; Northamptonshire to the south; Warwickshire to the west; and a tiny sliver of Staffordshire on the county’s northwest corner. Northamptonshire was bordered by Leicestershire, Rutland and Lincolnshire to the north; the Isle of Ely and Huntingdonshire to the east; Bedfordshire to the southeast; Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire along the southern border; and Warwickshire on the west. Over one-third of Warwickshire’s county borders were shared with Leicestershire (to the north and east); Northamptonshire (to the south and east); Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire to the south; Worcestershire to the west; and Staffordshire along the county’s northern border. These counties

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<sup>1</sup> HEH, William Camden, *Britain, or, a Chorographicall Description of the most flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1637), 505.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 563.

<sup>3</sup> Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

sit along an imaginary boundary that distinguishes the East Midlands region from the West Midlands region; Leicestershire and Northamptonshire are traditionally considered part of the East Midlands while Warwickshire is considered part of the West Midlands. For the purposes of this study I often refer to the counties (taken together) as the Central Midlands, based on their location and their physical geography at the heart of England. The three counties share a great deal of similarity in terms of their physical geography, all of them featuring a blend of arable land, forest, and a network of rivers and river valleys that helped to define their borders, terrain, and habitable land.

### **Geographical Context**

#### Leicestershire

Early-modern Leicestershire, on the western edge of the East Midlands, was approximately 891 square miles in size, slightly smaller than the state of Rhode Island in the modern United States.<sup>4</sup> It was primarily an agricultural county with abundant meadow and, to the west of the Soar River, two forest regions: the Charnwood Forest in the northwest of the county and the Leicester Forest just west of Leicester.<sup>5</sup> The county also had coal fields which began to be mined in earnest in the sixteenth century; the Earls of Huntingdon, for instance, were heavily involved in the extraction of coal from their lands around Ashby-de-la-Zouch.<sup>6</sup> Coal was also

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<sup>4</sup> Fuller, *Worthies*, vol. i, 560; The United States Department of Commerce provides information on the size of modern U.S. states and territories on the United States Census Bureau website. See information for Rhode Island at [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/guidestloc/st44\\_ri.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/guidestloc/st44_ri.html) [last revised December 22, 2011].

<sup>5</sup> P. Morgan, ed., *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester, 1979); Eric Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c. 1422-1485* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11-13; Alan Fox, *A Lost Frontier Revealed: Regional Separation in the East Midlands*, Studies in Regional and Local History, vol. 7 (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Fox-Strangways and Arthur Reginal Horwood, *The Geology of the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield* (London: Wyman and Sons for His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1907), 6.

mined a few miles away at Cole Orton, the seat of one branch of the Beaumonts.<sup>7</sup> The majority of the county was covered with boulder clay and keuper marl, both fertile soils, although not the more fertile loam that existed in Warwickshire's Avon River Valley.<sup>8</sup> Agriculturally, the county was divided by the Soar River Valley into eastern and western portions; the east was more agreeable to agricultural cultivation than was the west, which featured less fertile soil.<sup>9</sup> Other principal rivers were the Avon, the Trent and the Wreake. The Avon originated just south of Sulbey in western Northamptonshire and formed a natural boundary between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire (to the south) for several miles before flowing west into Warwickshire. The Trent followed the boundary between northern Leicestershire and Derbyshire while the Wreake originated near Wymondham in the southeast and flowed west to the Soar.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the county town, Leicester, other notable towns included Ashby-de-la-Zouch which from the mid-fifteenth century had a fair; the market towns of Loughborough, Lutterworth, and Melton Mowbray; and Market Harborough, which had a cattle market.<sup>11</sup> Royal influence in Leicestershire came through the Duchy of Lancaster, which controlled Leicester and

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<sup>7</sup> HEH, Camden, *Britain*, 519.

<sup>8</sup> William Camden, *Britannia*, trans. Richard Gough, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 4 vols., London 1806, Georg Olms Verlag repr., Hildesheim and New York, 1974, ii, 301; *VCH Leicestershire*, vol. I, 1-2; D. Holly, "Leicestershire," in *The Domesday Geography of Midland England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. H.C. Derby and I.B. Terrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 319.

<sup>9</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *Leicestershire, An Illustrated Essay on the History of the Landscape* (London, 1957), 3, 18.

<sup>10</sup> BL Royal MS 18 D iii, f. 40r.

<sup>11</sup> HEH, William Camden, *Britain, or, a Chorographically Description of the most flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1637), 522; For more detailed discussion of these market towns see C.J.M. Moxon, "Ashby-de-la-Zouch: a social and economic survey of a market town" (unpubl. PhD diss., Leicester University, 1980); D. Fleming, "A Local Market System" Melton Mowbray and the Wreake Valley 1549-1720" (unpubl. PhD diss., Leicester University, 1980); J. Goodacre, "Lutterworth in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries" (unpubl. PhD diss., Leicester University, 1977), mentioned in Peter Clark, "Small towns in England 1550-1850: national and regional population trends," in *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 92.



Figure 1: Map of Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Christopher Saxton (1576). BL Royal MS D iii, ff. 39v & 40r.

vills scattered throughout the southern and western portions of the county, with a smattering along the northern border with Derbyshire and nestled within the Soar River Valley.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the leading Catholics in Leicestershire resided in close geographic proximity to the Earl of Huntingdon's seat at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, clustered in the northwest corner of the county. The Beaumonts of Gracedieu, for instance, were approximately six miles from Ashby-de-la-Zouch and less than five miles from the Shirley's seat at Staunton Harold. The Palmers of Kegworth were in the same general vicinity although about twelve miles distant from Huntingdon's seat. The Brokesbys of Shoby and the Vauxes of Harrowden were the furthest afield. The Brokesby seat at Shoby was approximately twenty miles east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, near the market town of Melton Mowbray while the Vaux estates of Great Ashby and Little Ashby were in the southwest quadrant of the county, approximately twenty miles to the south of the Huntingdon seat.<sup>13</sup>

### Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire is situated to the south and east of Leicestershire and is, like its neighbor to the north, on the western border of what is traditionally understood as the East Midlands region.<sup>14</sup> Northamptonshire was primarily an agricultural county comprised of fertile meadowlands, particularly in the Nene and Ise River valleys.<sup>15</sup> The county had a veritable web of rivers and tributaries and must have been a watershed. From its headwaters in western

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<sup>12</sup> Acheson, *A Gentry Community*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> BL Royal D iii, f. 40r. The distances provided in these county summaries are estimates based on contemporary maps such as the Christopher Saxton map referenced here.

<sup>14</sup> The size of early modern Northamptonshire is difficult to determine. Contemporary accounts and surveys did not note Northamptonshire's area; Fuller, for instance, noted that the county was long and narrow but did not provide even an estimate of the county's size. Fuller, *Worthies*, vol. ii, 157.

<sup>15</sup> Camden, *Britain*, 505; I.B. Terrett, "Northamptonshire," in *The Domesday Geography of Midland England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 408.





Figure 2: Map of Northamptonshire. Christopher Saxton (1576). BL Royal MS D iii, ff. 43v & 44r.

Northamptonshire the Avon flowed west into Warwickshire whereas the Welland, which originated only a few miles east of the Avon, flowed east along the county's northern border, into Rutland and on to the Fens.<sup>16</sup> The Charwell River began near Hellindon in southwest Northamptonshire and followed the border with Oxfordshire for several miles before leaving Northamptonshire entirely. The Nene River originated in southwestern Northamptonshire, near Daventry; it flowed east through Northampton before turning north, where it flowed past Wellingborough and Oundle in the far east of the county and along the border with Huntingdonshire before draining into the Fens.<sup>17</sup> The Ise, a tributary of the Nene, originated in the west of the county, near Ardingworth and flowed through the villages of Rushton and Newton and the market town at Kettering before joining the Nene near Wellingborough.<sup>18</sup> The thick network of rivers and streams fed the county's abundant meadowlands and, thanks to the tributaries that originated in the county's forests, even fed meadowlands scattered through the less fertile forest regions, at Deene and Apethorpe in the Rockingham Forest, for example.

The Rockingham Forest in the northwest region of the county was by the late medieval period a substantial royal forest; other forested areas were the Whittlewood and Salcey Forests along the southeast border. The Domesday Book notes the presence of ironworks at Corby and Gretton and of smiths at Deene, Greenes Norton and Towcester, all of which were within the precincts of Northamptonshire's forests, but the iron works do not appear to have been in operation in the early modern period.<sup>19</sup> Most of the county had clay soils similar to those of Leicestershire; the northeast corner, however, was part of the fenland region that covered much

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<sup>16</sup> BL Royal MS D iii, ff. 41v, 42r, 43v, 44r.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; Terrett, "Northamptonshire," 411-413.

<sup>19</sup> Terrett, "Northamptonshire," 415.



of Cambridgeshire and East Anglia to the east of Northamptonshire. Most of the settlement of the county, from the Anglo-Saxon period through the early modern period, was on the floor of the Nene Valley, since the land there supported both arable and pastoral farming with plentiful sources of water.<sup>20</sup> The cathedral town of Peterborough was in this region, at the western edge of the fens. The county town, Northampton, was located in the south of the county, a few miles northwest of the Salcey Forest. Northampton was the county's administrative center and from the high medieval period had a market.<sup>21</sup> Other markets were at Kettering in the center of the county and at nearby Rothwell, which was known for its horse fair.<sup>22</sup> Daventry's location on a major east-west thoroughfare c. thirteen miles west of Northampton and the town's abundance of inns suggest that it was a popular spot for travelers to stop for the night.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to Leicestershire, Northamptonshire's principal Catholic families were more widely distributed geographically. The Brudenells of Deene; Treshams of Rushton and Lyveden; Watsons of Rockingham Castle; and the Griffins of Dingley and Braybrooke had their seats in the Rockingham Forest region of the county along with their Protestant and Calvinist neighbors, the Mildmays of Apethorp; the Montagus of Boughton; and Sir Christopher Hatton at Kirby. The Treshams' cousins, the Vauxes of Harrowden, had their principal estates about seven miles downriver from the Tresham seat at Rushton, on the eastern side of the county.<sup>24</sup> The Catesbys, by contrast, had their principal estates of Catesby and Ashby St. Ledgers in the far western

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<sup>20</sup> Glenn Foard, David Hall and Tracey Partida, *Rockingham Forest: An Atlas of the Medieval and Early-Modern Landscape* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 2009), 13.

<sup>21</sup> For Northampton's markets in the medieval period, see P. Goodfellow, "Medieval Markets in Northamptonshire," *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 7 (1988-89): 305-323.

<sup>22</sup> Camden, *Britain*, 510.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 508.

<sup>24</sup> BL Royal MS D iii, ff. 41v, 42r, 43v, 44r.

portion of the county, less than five miles from the Warwickshire border. Paulerspury, the seat of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and, later, his son Arthur (both Protestants) was situated in the Whittlewood Forest in the far southeast corner of the county. His neighbors included avowed Calvinists such as the Wentworths at Lillington Lovell (on a neighboring estate); the Shirleys at Astwell Castle a few miles to the west (and also of Gracedieu, Leicestershire); and his Catholic Throckmorton cousins who although seated at Coughton in Warwickshire, spent most of their time domiciled at Weston Underwood and Ravenstone in northern Buckinghamshire, about eight miles from Paulerspury.

### Warwickshire

Warwickshire in the late medieval and early modern period was more neatly divided into sections than were Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Three regions sectioned the county: the south and east regions were agricultural, or “felden” while the larger north and west regions were covered by the Forest of Arden.<sup>25</sup> Situated between these two regions of Felden and Arden was a transitional zone, the Avon River valley. Altogether, the county was nearly identical in size to Leicestershire: Fuller described Warwickshire as measuring 33 miles from north to south and 26 from east to west.<sup>26</sup> The county had two principal river systems: the Avon, which originated in western Northamptonshire and flowed along the northern edge of the Felden region in southern Warwickshire, and the tributaries that fed the Trent River, namely the Tame, Cole and Blythe Rivers that originated in the Arden region, the Bourne River in northern Warwickshire and the Anker River in the northeast corner of the county.<sup>27</sup> The Feldon region, comprised of nucleated

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<sup>25</sup> William Camden, *Britain*, 561-565; William Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, b3; R. H. Kinvig, “Warwickshire,” in *The Domesday Geography of Midland England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 307-311.

<sup>26</sup> Fuller, *Worthies*, vol. ii, 402.

<sup>27</sup> BL Royal MS D iii, ff. 39v, 40r; The Arrow River in western Warwickshire, a tributary of the Avon, flowed past the medieval market town of Alcester and the Throckmorton family’s seat at Coughton Court. Camden, *Britain*, 565.

villages and open fields, was a chief grain-producing region until the late fourteenth century. Following the black plague, much of the agricultural land was converted to sheep pasture, but as Camden noted in the late sixteenth century, the Felden remained “rich in Corne and greene grasse.”<sup>28</sup>

The Forest of Arden had a mixed economy that shielded the region from economic slumps related to grain or wool, which more directly and adversely affected the Feldon region. The Arden’s economy was comprised of livestock farming, wheat production, oat production, and fish ponds. Timber from the Arden was sent to the salt mines at Droitwich, Worcestershire. An array of crafts related to the Arden’s output sprang up during the late medieval period – tanners, blacksmiths, weavers, tilers and coopers worked their trades from within the precincts of the forest.<sup>29</sup> Economic interests were also served through the harvesting of natural resources: quarrying of the county’s red sandstone, coalmining, ironworking at Coventry, and a market center for smiths and cutlers at Birmingham.<sup>30</sup> By the early seventeenth century Coventry, although within the Arden, was a major market center for wool, coal, grain and cattle.<sup>31</sup> The county’s location as the “crossroads of England” made it a valuable strategic location for trade, communication and war in both the late medieval and the early modern periods.<sup>32</sup> Yet movement throughout the county could be problematic, especially for travelers from the north. Although the roads serving the market center at Coventry and the county’s administrative center at Warwick

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<sup>28</sup> Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499*, 23; Camden, *Britain*, 561.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> N.M. Fudge, “Warwickshire,” *The History of Parliament Online*, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/constituencies/warwickshire> [accessed 4 March 2012].

<sup>31</sup> Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16.

<sup>32</sup> Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 17; Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War*, 15-17.

were fairly good throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the roads going north to Birmingham were quite poor.<sup>33</sup> Thus, unlike Leicestershire, there was no one urban center that served as a focus for the county.<sup>34</sup> The city of Coventry was the principal commercial center, but Warwickshire had several market towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Notably, these towns were spread throughout the three geographic regions of the county: Southam in the Felden region; Bitford, Leamington, Rugby and Stratford in the Avon River valley; and Henley-in-Arden in the Arden region.<sup>35</sup>

The leading Catholic families in Warwickshire were distributed over a wide landscape, yet most densely populated within the region of the Arden. The recusancy returns in 1592 reported Catholic recusants in the parishes of each of Warwickshire's four hundreds.<sup>36</sup> The majority of Catholic recusants resided in Hemlingford and Barlichway Hundreds, both of which lay primarily within the Arden. Hemlingford and Barlichway had 71 and 50 recusants, respectively; Knightlowe Hundred, which was about half Arden and half Feldon, had only ten Catholic recusants reported and Kington, which was almost entirely Feldon, reported 31.<sup>37</sup> The Throckmortons of Coughton were situated at the edge of the Arden, about five miles from their cousins' estate at Feckenham, Worcestershire. Another Throckmorton estate was in the north of the Arden, at Solihull, and near to the Ferrers's seat at Baddesley Clinton, the Catesby's estate at

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<sup>33</sup> Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War*, 17; N.M. Fuidge, "Warwickshire," *The History of Parliament Online*, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/constituencies/warwickshire> [accessed 4 March 2012].

<sup>34</sup> Alan Dyer, "Warwickshire Towns under the Tudors and Stuarts," *Warwickshire History* vol. iii (1976/77), 122-134.

<sup>35</sup> Camden, *Britain*, 561-566; Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 15-16, 514-516, 597-598.

<sup>36</sup> TNA SP 12/243, ff. 203-217. The commissioners distinguished between those who were recusant for non-religious reasons versus those who were recusant for Catholicism.

<sup>37</sup> TNA SP 12/243, ff. 203r - 209r. A small disconnected parcel of Kington Hundred was on the western edge of the Arden, bordering Worcestershire.

Lapworth and the Middlemore's estate at Edgbaston. There were fewer prominent Catholic families in the Feldon; in the returns of 1592 William Underhill of Idlycote and Thomas Blunt were the only gentry Catholics in the Feldon area of Kington Hundred

### **Geopolitical Context**

In addition to the economic value of the market towns and their position as local centers of commerce, the towns also served important political and administrative purposes. Leicester, for instance, was the dominant town in its county; its duchy connections boosted the power and authority of its officeholders.<sup>38</sup> It was also Leicestershire's only borough eligible to send men to parliament. In Northamptonshire, parliamentary experience could be obtained through the shire; the county town; Higham Ferrers, which was part of the duchy of Lancaster; Brackley and Peterborough. In Warwickshire, MPs were elected from the administrative center of Warwick, the commercial center of Coventry, and the shire.

Secular government in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was dynamic and highly variable, between counties and sometimes even within counties. The form and style of governance depended on the balance of power in the county and the personalities of the officeholders, as well as the personalities of the landed families in the area. Factors such as factional strife in the county, the dominance of a magnate family over the region, and the geographical distribution of both church lands and gentry seats shaped a shire's governance and authority.<sup>39</sup>

The balance of power could be precarious, for the fall of a powerful magnate or the decline of a

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<sup>38</sup> Hasler explains that the duchy provided a direct line of influence from the royal court to the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and that as a result the duchy officers wielded a great deal of authority in Leicester, which was a duchy municipality. "Leicestershire 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/leicestershire> (accessed 4 February 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Steve Hindle, "County Government in England," in *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, ed. Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 99.

noble house could undermine the local power structure and its bonds of patronage, as happened with Warwickshire on the death of the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Warwick and in Leicestershire with the decline in prestige of the Earl of Huntingdon in the early seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup>

The three counties under examination here shared borders, a general similitude in local and regional governing systems, and a collection of families who held land in two, if not three, of these counties. Aristocratic families spread their social networks across these county boundaries and thus extended their social influence, political might and overall authority. The Throckmortons of Coughton in Warwickshire, for example, held extensive lands in their home county and at Feckenham, Worcestershire, just a few miles from Coughton and still more at Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire. The extended kin network they created through marriage spread their affinity throughout the Midlands; their immediate circle extended into Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. The Shirleys of Staunton Harold, Leicestershire and Astwell Castle, Northamptonshire also held land in several Midlands counties, including Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Huntingdonshire in addition to their home counties of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, the style and form of regional governance in the early modern period allowed for a great deal of flexibility in the governing “personality” of a given county – whether power in a county was vested in one great man (usually a noble) or in a group of powerful gentry whose status and command of authority was relatively equal to one another. For most of the

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<sup>40</sup> For further discussion of this see Hindle, “County Government,” 99. For Huntingdon’s decline see Claire Cross, ed., *The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings, 1574-1609*, Somerset Record Society vol. LXIX (Frome: Butler & Tanner, 1969), xx-xxii.

<sup>41</sup> Robin P. Jenkins, ‘Shirley, Sir Henry, second baronet (1589–1633)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70620>, (accessed 04 Sept 2011).

Elizabethan period, governance in Leicestershire and Warwickshire stemmed from the authority of a great family and the family's entourage. In Leicestershire and its principal urban center, Leicester, governance was conducted under the watchful eye and the patronage of the Earls of Huntingdon. Indeed, the influence of the Earls of Huntingdon and the Hastings family determined the political landscape of the borough of Leicester and the county. During the Elizabethan period, Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon, was Lord Lieutenant of the county; his deputy lieutenants were his brothers, Francis and Sir George Hastings; another brother, Edward, was steward of Leicester.<sup>42</sup> The chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster held rights of nomination to Parliament via his authority within the borough of Leicester, but since Hastings men populated most of the duchy offices in Leicestershire, the family exercised a great deal of authority through that avenue as well.<sup>43</sup> The Huntingdon influence was so strong through the late sixteenth century that officials in the borough of Leicester, who themselves comprised a tight-knit group of oligarchs, regularly solicited Huntingdon's advice and assistance in business between the borough and the central government.<sup>44</sup>

Richard Cust has described how internal struggles within the Hastings family came to the forefront after the third earl's death and weakened (although did not ruin) the family's authority in the county. The fourth earl lacked his brother's commanding presence, connections at court and close relationship with his brothers Francis and Edward, all of which combined to make him a weaker earl than the third earl had been. He faced challenges to his authority from members of

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<sup>42</sup> *VCH Leicestershire*, vol. 4, 57; "Leicestershire 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/leicestershire> (accessed 4 February 2012).

<sup>43</sup> "Leicestershire 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online* (accessed 4 February 2012); "Leicester 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/leicester> (accessed 4 February 2012); *VCH Leicestershire*, vol. 4, 60.

<sup>44</sup> *VCH Leicestershire* vol. 4, 60; 66.

his own entourage and also from Sir Henry Grey and his son, Sir John.<sup>45</sup> The fourth earl died in 1604 while his heir, another Henry, was still in his minority. It could have been an ideal situation for the Greys of Groby to seize power in the county, but in fact the young earl very capably enlisted his patrons, including the Earl of Salisbury, in helping him to protect the Hastings interest in Leicestershire. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Henry continued to face challenges to his authority from the mayor and burgesses of Leicester and from Henry Grey, first Baron Grey of Groby.<sup>46</sup> The Hastings family's monopoly on authority in the county endured, however. In 1620 Huntingdon, now in his early 40s, still successfully nominated MPs and the burgesses of Leicester expressed their willingness to elect his candidates.<sup>47</sup>

While Leicestershire governance was shaped by the dominating influence of one family, Northamptonshire politics was characterized by its oligarchical nature and by the prevalence of Calvinist Protestantism in the county. From at least the early Tudor period, parliamentary representation was usually divided between the western and eastern portions of the county, with one member coming from the area around Northampton and one coming from the area around Peterborough.<sup>48</sup> For the first half of the sixteenth century, the knights in Northamptonshire “formed a closely knit community”; most of these men were related to one another but no one of them emerged as the chief patron for the county.<sup>49</sup> This trend continued during the late sixteenth

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<sup>45</sup> Richard Cust, “Honour, Rhetoric and Political Culture: the Earl of Huntingdon and his enemies,” in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Manchester University Press, 1995), 86-87.

<sup>46</sup> HEH HA 5429, HAP Box 15, f. 7. In 1611, Huntingdon's nomination of a parliamentary candidate came under attack by Henry Grey, who hoped to strengthen his own influence in the county by sending one of his followers to parliament; HEH HA 4331; HA 5436; HA 5437; HA 5438.

<sup>47</sup> HEH HA 8519; HA 8520.

<sup>48</sup> “Northamptonshire 1509-1558,” *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/constituencies/northamptonshire> (accessed 4 February 2012)



century. W. J. Shiels suggested that “wealth and experience were important factors” in a man becoming one of the most influential members of the Northamptonshire political scene, since a man’s determination to make a career in county office could help him to rise in both influence and status.<sup>50</sup> That was certainly the case with the Montagus of Boughton and with the Spencers of Althorp. A core group of leading gentlemen dominated Northamptonshire office: they sat on the commission of the peace and monopolized other commissions, such as the musters. In the 1580s, for example, this core group included Lord Mordaunt, Sir Walter Mildmay, Sir Thomas Cecil, Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir George Fermor, Sir John Spencer, Sir Richard Knightley, and Sir Edward Montagu. Since the Lord Lieutenant of the county, Sir Christopher Hatton, was preoccupied with business at court, the authority of his office devolved on his deputies, Knightley, Montagu, Spencer, Cecil, and (from 1590) the Catholic Sir George Fermor.<sup>51</sup>

Parliamentary patronage in Northamptonshire rested with a number of individuals. The Earl of Derby controlled the town and borough of Brackley, in the southwest of the county. Sir William Fitzwilliam controlled patronage for parliamentary appointments for Peterborough during Elizabeth’s reign, and the chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster and his officials held sway over the borough of Higham Ferrers, which was part of the duchy.<sup>52</sup> The chancellor’s steward, auditor, and receiver oversaw political appointments and dispensed patronage in the duchy holdings, and thus the Crown had influence over nominations to parliament from this borough,

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<sup>49</sup> “Northamptonshire 1509-1558,” *History of Parliament Online*, (accessed 4 February 2012)

<sup>50</sup> W. J. Shiels, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558-1610* (Frome, Somerset: Butler & Tanner, 1979), 107.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* Spencer served only one year before his death in 1586, after which Sir Thomas Cecil replaced him as deputy lieutenant.

<sup>52</sup> “Peterborough,” *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/peterborough> (accessed 4 February 2012); “Higham Ferrers,” *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/higham-ferrers> (accessed 4 February 2012).

and perhaps also other municipal offices. The town of Northampton, by contrast, exercised almost complete autonomy in its governance, including its choice of men to send to parliament. No one man commanded the authority necessary to emerge as the chief patron or chief man of the county, but this is not to say that Northamptonshire lacked powerful men of high status. Indeed, the gentry who dominated Northamptonshire governance joined together in voting blocks and in so doing were able to function as patrons, as they did in 1593 when their efforts sent Montagu's son, Henry, to parliament for Higham Ferrers.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps more so than its oligarchical nature, Northamptonshire governance was characterized by the prevalence of Calvinists and Calvinist sympathizers in county political offices. W. J. Shiels calculated that of the thirty commissioners of the peace for Northamptonshire in 1584, fully half were Calvinists or sympathizers.<sup>54</sup> By 1580 there were few Catholics left on the bench, but those that were there served an important function. Sir George Fermor, Sir Edmund Brudenell and John Brudenell – Catholics who remained on the county bench after 1580 – provided a connection between the state and the Catholics in each man's network. Shiels argues that although friction existed between Catholics and Puritans, particularly in the central and eastern portions of the county where each group had nearly equal numbers, once Calvinists had control of the majority of county political offices they were content to tolerate their Catholic neighbors.<sup>55</sup> That was undoubtedly part of the equation, but so was the situation of the Puritans: the Elizabethan and early Stuart state demonstrated intent to manage both sets of religious nonconformists. For instance, in the 1590s at the same time the Privy Council ordered county office-holders to raid the homes of recusant Catholics, it also ordered

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<sup>53</sup> "Higham Ferrers 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online*, (accessed 4 February 2012)

<sup>54</sup> Shiels, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 106.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

Catholic men to raid Calvinist houses.<sup>56</sup> Puritans as well as Catholics presented potential problems for the state. This strategy probably worked to keep in check Northamptonshire's radical Protestant adherents while keeping Catholics engaged in the administration of the state and thus still tethered to the crown.

The bishops and deans of Peterborough Cathedral did not possess a great deal of political clout in the Elizabethan or Jacobean years, they had influence over the religious climate of the county and provided a counterbalance to the religious positions of most of Northamptonshire's leading office-holders. By 1558, the dean of Peterborough Cathedral was also the city's mayor, but his powers of patronage were weak in comparison to that of the chief family groups around Peterborough, the Cecils and Fitzwilliams.<sup>57</sup> The religious position of the bishop, however, inevitably shaped the degree of toleration that Catholics and Calvinists could expect. The reluctance of the Marian bishop, David Pole, to prosecute heretics meant that the city saw only one heretic burned, the shoemaker John Kurde in August 1558.

Catholicism – even in its recusant form – was not the only pressing concern on the minds of secular and ecclesiastical officials. Early in Elizabeth's reign the Protestant (and perhaps hot-Protestant) bishop Edmund Scambler was not as inclined to moderation as his predecessor, Pole, had been. Scambler's experience as the minister of an underground Protestant congregation during Mary's reign seems to have cultivated in him some hostility toward Catholics, which is not terribly surprising given the conditions for Protestants under Mary. In 1577 he submitted a return of Catholic recusants who had not previously been certified in the diocese of Peterborough

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<sup>56</sup> In the 1590s the Privy Council asked Catholic men to search the houses of Sir Peter Wentworth at Lillingstone Lovell and Sir Anthony Cope at Hanbury for all books and papers relating to the succession. Sheils, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 115.

<sup>57</sup> "Peterborough 1558-1603," *History of Parliament Online* (accessed 4 February 2012)

and included a certificate of recusants in Huntingdonshire for good measure.<sup>58</sup> Yet Scambler's personal religious convictions did not distract him from his desire to do his duty to uphold the law and to report on those who recused themselves from Protestant service, regardless of their doctrinal affiliation. In 1579 he informed the Privy Council that a great number of Northampton residents refused to attend divine service in their own parishes and instead attended Puritan services at Peter Wentworth's home at Lillingstone Dayrell, just over Northamptonshire's southern border with Buckinghamshire.<sup>59</sup>

Bishop Scambler's successors were even less tolerant of Puritan nonconformity. Bishops Richard Howland (1585-1600) and Thomas Dove (1601-1630) both opposed Puritanism although only Dove succeeded in implementing anti-Puritan policies in the diocese. John Lambe, the chancellor of the diocese from 1615, opposed any deviation from the established church. Shiels describes him as an "arch-enemy of Puritanism"; he gained a similar reputation amongst some Northamptonshire Catholics.<sup>60</sup> In the early seventeenth century, Lambe and Dove, along with John Buckeridge and Richard Butler, archdeacons of Northampton from 1604-1611 and 1611-1612, respectively, were closely associated with the Arminian party.<sup>61</sup>

County and local politics in Warwickshire during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries combined elements of both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Warwickshire had a powerful magnate family as its chief patron through most of the Elizabethan period. Political patronage depended on the whims of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick and his brother, the Earl

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<sup>58</sup> *VCH Northamptonshire* vol. ii, 41

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-6; *APC* vol. 11, p. 219.

<sup>60</sup> Sheils, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 6; Lady Tresham complained of continued harassment at Lambe's hands in the first decade of the seventeenth century, TNA SP14/44, f. 100r.

<sup>61</sup> Sheils, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 7; 87. For Butler, see John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541-1857: volume 8: Bristol, Gloucester, Oxford and Peterborough dioceses* (London: Institute of Historical Research, Athlone Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 122-123.

of Leicester. Yet, similar to Northamptonshire, the gentry wielded a tremendous amount of influence, especially after the deaths of the Earl of Leicester in 1588 and the Earl of Warwick in 1590.<sup>62</sup> After Warwick's death his nephew, Leicester's stepson the Earl of Essex, could have stepped in as county patron, but other than nominating his candidate for MP in Tanworth, did not step into the void left by the Dudley brothers for the county generally. No one patron emerged following Warwick's death. As a result, from 1590 through the end of the 1620s governance in Warwickshire resembled the oligarchical nature of Northamptonshire, the most dominant families during the period 1580-1620 being Throckmorton of Haseley, Throckmorton of Coughton Ferrers, Greville, Wigston, Cave, Puckering, Leigh, and Lucy. The Grevilles briefly attempted to establish themselves as chief patrons but enjoyed only limited success and even then only for the borough of Warwick.<sup>63</sup>

The Crown's decision to leave vacant the county lieutenancy after Warwick's death furthered this oligarchical dynamic. For the thirteen years between Warwick's death and nomination of his successor, William Compton, first Earl of Northampton, Warwickshire's deputy lieutenants, Sir Thomas Lucy and Sir John Harington sat atop the county's power structure. Lucy's long tenure in the lieutenancy might have established him as chief patron in the county had the other men in the oligarchy been weaker figures.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> "Warwickshire 1509-1558," History of Parliament Online, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/constituencies/warwickshire> (accessed 4 February 2012).

<sup>63</sup> *VCH Warwickshire* vol. 8, 503. After Warwick's death, Sir Fulke Greville had "chardge of the Castell and of that which apperteineth there unto." *APC* vol. 21, 441.

<sup>64</sup> "Thomas Lucy (bef. 1532-1600), of Charlecote, Warwickshire," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/lucy-thomas-1532-1600> (accessed 4 February 2012); "John Harington II (c. 1540-1613), of Combe Abbey, Warwickshire; later of Exton Hall, Rutland, *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/harington-john-ii-1540-1613> (accessed 4 February 2012).

The strength of Warwickshire's boroughs and towns meant that local officials were quite powerful in their own right. Corporation officials often did not hesitate to stand their ground in opposition to powerful gentry in county offices, particularly in Coventry. Whereas in Northamptonshire the gentry who dominated county politics did not encounter much resistance from office-holders in local government, in part because those officials often shared the religious (and often also the political) leanings of their social and political betters, local officers in Warwickshire did not always share the religious outlook of county officials whose authority was superior to their own. Many of the corporation officials in the town of Warwick, for example, were conservative in their religious viewpoints. They were not necessarily Catholic, but they did not support Puritan policies and refused to endorse candidates for Parliament whom they thought would promote overtly Calvinist positions.<sup>65</sup> For instance, corporation officials strenuously objected to the political campaign mounted by the Puritan Job Throckmorton of Haseley for one of the borough seats for the 1586 Parliament. Throckmorton enjoyed support from Sir John Harington and from the Grevilles, along with a few principal burgesses. Ultimately, Throckmorton secured his seat, although the bailiff and principal burgesses insisted that he be sworn in as a burgess and that he take an interest in the town's business if he was going to take a seat that was ostensibly under their nomination.<sup>66</sup> Throckmorton's election demonstrates how corporation officials in Warwick retained some control when faced with conflicts with their social betters whose authority they could not effectively countermand, and with a candidate

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<sup>65</sup> This does not necessarily mean that Warwick's officials were Catholics, although a few of them had been described in 1564 as "adversaries of religion." J. E. Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1963), 241-242.

<sup>66</sup> Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons*, 243-244. Richard Cust has pointed out that the "Puritan emphasis on 'active citizenship' and the threat from popery tended to feed into a concern for freely elected Parliaments. It was godly spokesmen who were the most insistent that...freeholders should set aside considerations of unity and hierarchy and choose their MPs on the basis of individual conscience." Cust, "Politics and the Electorate in the 1620s" in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London; New York: Longman, 1989), 161.

whose family had dominated the town and borough of Warwick for much of the sixteenth century.

In part because of the lack of a dominant magnate during the period 1580-1620, Warwickshire's JPs emerged as an autonomous and quite powerful body. Descendants of Sir George Throckmorton of Coughton had populated commissions of the peace in the county throughout the reigns of the early Tudor monarchs. After 1570, however, only the Protestant Throckmortons of Haseley, led by Sir George's third son, Clement, appear in local or county offices. Commissioners of the peace in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries included Sir Thomas Leigh, Sir Fulke Greville, Edward Greville, Sir Thomas Lucy, Clement Throckmorton and his grandson Clement, Thomas Beaufou, Thomas Spencer, John Chamberlain, John Huggeford, and by 1615, Henry Dymock, Edward Boughton, William Combe, and Sir Richard Verney.<sup>67</sup> Many of these men also took a turn as sheriff, as did Leigh and Lucy in the 1580s, Verney in 1590-91 and 1604-05, and Combe in 1607-08.<sup>68</sup> A full analysis of the role Catholic men in the Central Midlands played on the commission of the peace and in the shrievalty appears in Chapter Four below.

The level of tolerance for religious dissent in a county depended a great deal on the structure of governance within that county. A magnate with authority over a region, as the third and fifth Earls of Huntingdon had in Leicestershire, helped to shape the quality of inter-confessional relations as he endeavored to negotiate between his duty to the monarch and state and his responsibility to ensure good order, unity, and maintenance of the peace in his county.

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<sup>67</sup> SCLA DR37/2/Box 83/60; WRO CR1998/Box 62, f. 40r

<sup>68</sup> SCLA Brailles DR18/3/10; SCLA DR10/1901; "Richard Verney (1563-1630), of Compton, Warwickshire," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/verney-richard-1563-1630> (accessed 4 February 2012); "William Combe (1551-1610), of Middle Temple, London and Warwick," *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/combe-william-1551-1610> (accessed 4 February 2012).

Huntingdon, for instance, supported Catholics, Protestants and Calvinists with his patronage and counted them as part of his entourage. Furthermore, as mentioned above in relation to Northamptonshire, Catholicism was not the only pressing concern (nor the most pressing concern) for county office-holders and magnates. Puritanism and popular unrest were two major concerns that weighed on the minds of officials at the center and in the counties.<sup>69</sup> For counties with oligarchical structures, such as Northamptonshire and to an extent, Warwickshire after the death of the Earl of Warwick, relationships between people of different confessional identities could be difficult, especially since what was really at stake was an individual's power, his influence over a region and the ascendant status that accompanied it. In those situations, close patron-client ties were vital to keep individuals on all sides connected to the center.

### **The Social Setting**

The leading families in the Central Midlands in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries came from both ancient families who historically held authority in their county and from new families on the rise. Evaluating the leading families is not as straightforward as it might seem. We often tend to look to the political officeholders of the counties to determine the leading families, but office holding was not the only indication of status. In the period under examination here several ancient families were no longer prominent fixtures in political office but retained their prominent social standing. Families could retain social prominence if they were major landowners and especially if they could claim ancient standing in the county. The Throckmortons of Coughton, Warwickshire, the Treshams of Rushton, Northamptonshire and, at the turn of the seventeenth century the Beaumonts of Gracedieu, Leicestershire are three

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<sup>69</sup> Steve Hindle, "Imagining Insurrection in Seventeenth-Century England: Representations of the Midland Rising of 1607" in *History Workshop Journal* 2008 66(1): 21-61.



examples of families that retained social prominence even after their political star had waned.

In Leicestershire, the principal families socially were the noble families of Hastings and to a lesser extent the Greys of Groby, who in the late sixteenth century were still suffering from the loss of prestige following their attempt to place Jane Grey on the throne. Socially prominent gentry families included established families such as the Catholic Beaumonts of Gracedieu and their Protestant cousins, the Beaumonts of Cole Orton; the Digbys of Tilton, Leicestershire and Stoke Dry, Rutland; the Caves of Rothley, Leicestershire and Barcheston, Warwickshire; the Shirleys of Staunton Harold; Skipwiths of Cotes and Keythorpe; Stokes of Beaumanor; the Turpins of Knaptoft and the minor gentry family of Villiers (minor, that is, until George Villiers's meteoric rise at the early Stuart court).

Northamptonshire's leading families included an array of courtiers as well as county elites: the Hatton, Mildmay, Yelverton and Cecil families, for example, had their seats or at least extensive estates in the county and kept a hand in the county's governing structure and its social scene. The county's oligarchical political structure meant that there were an abundance of prominent families jockeying for position, and this was true for the social context as well. Established families throughout the period under examination here included Vaux of Harrowden; Tresham of Rushton and their slightly less prominent cousins, the Treshams of Newton; Catesby of Ashby St. Legers; Mordaunt of Drayton; Brudenell of Deene; Fitzwilliam of Milton; Griffin of Braybrooke and Dingley; Fermor of Easton Neston; Watson of Rockingham Castle. Other families rose in prominence during this period as their economic and their political fortune increased; families such as the Spencers of Althorp; the Montagus of Boughton; the Knightleys

of Fawsley; the Wentworths of Lillingstone Lovell; the Ishams of Lamport; and the Stanhopes, whose patriarch Sir John was high steward of Peterborough Cathedral.<sup>70</sup>

The Dudley brothers, the Earl of Leicester and his brother, the Earl of Warwick dominated the social scene in Warwickshire when they were resident, Leicester in particular since his residence at Kenilworth was a site that Queen Elizabeth might favor on her summer progresses. Other families with social influence were established families such as the Throckmortons of Coughton; their cousins the Throckmortons of Haseley; the Bromes of Brome Court; the Ardens of Park Hall; the Ferrerses of Baddesley Clinton and their cousins, the Ferrerses of Tamworth-in-Arden; the Catesbys of Lapworth; and newer families such as the Lucys of Charlecote; the Comptons of Compton Wynates; the Archers of Umberslade in the Arden; and the Grevilles of Beauchamp's Court; by the early seventeenth century the Verneys of Compton Verney had joined the Warwickshire firmament.

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Families in the Central Midlands shared bonds of status, affinity and neighborhood. Those bonds were tested in the post-Reformation century; sometimes those bonds were severed but much of the time, despite even bitter disputes, relationships endured. Gentle and noble families shared a sense of aristocratic identity and obligation that could overcome religious disagreement. The networks of support and affinity that Catholic families created and inhabited were vital to Catholics' continued inclusion in their county community and English society more generally, and are the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>70</sup> "Peterborough," *History of Parliament Online*, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/peterborough> [accessed 20 February 2012].

## Chapter Two

### Kinship Connections and Social Networks

The gentry and nobility typically found patrons in the social worlds they inhabited. As a result, patrons tended to have a social or geographical connection to the client – often a kinsman, a neighbor, or a prominent member of the county elite. Social networks such as those discussed here and the women’s networks and cultural networks discussed in subsequent chapters were critical to the formation and maintenance of patron-client relationships for members of the gentry and nobility generally, including Catholics.<sup>1</sup> Patrons were sometimes family members, whether a close relation or a distant relative connected to the client by a biological link that occurred up to a century in the past. Other patrons came through marriage. Still others were friends, neighbors, or other members of the gentry and nobility in one’s county or region. Clients also found patrons through their cultural networks, for instance through common interests in building and gardening.

Family members and extended kin relations were rich sources of patronage and the connective tissue which helped to bind Catholic families to the monarch and government. A family member in the inner circle of the central government or in close proximity to the monarch provided vital connections between their families or clients and higher avenues of power.<sup>2</sup>

Family members could provide an intimately close proximity to that favor, but clientage was not

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<sup>1</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes have argued that kin networks benefited their members in a variety of ways, including patronage, “the opportunity for advancement, marriage brokerage, arbitration in disputes, loans and bonds, protection of dependent orphans, help to the newly married, entertainment, accommodation and sociability.” Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Adams has noted that family members “formed the core” of one’s affinity in the sixteenth century. Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2002), 155. This was especially so after the location of patronage shifted in the early Tudor period away from great magnates and to the monarch and top ministers of state. See Wallace MacCaffrey, “Patronage and Politics under the Tudors,” in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23-24. See also Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients*, 33-36; Malcolm Walsby, *The Counts of Laval: Culture, Patronage and Religion in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century France* (Aldershot, Hampshire; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 79.

automatic within a kinship group – one could not count on being a client just because he was a kinsman. Rather, a potential client had to be an active participant in the establishment of the patron-client relationship; a kinsman seeking patronage had to enter the family patron's clientage rather than simply relying on the family connection for favor or protection.<sup>3</sup> For instance, George Shirley of Staunton Harold, Leicestershire, joined the clientele of his father-in-law, Henry, Lord Berkeley.<sup>4</sup> In the early seventeenth century, Mary Parker Habington and her husband Thomas Habington of Hindlip, Worcestershire were part of the clientage of Mary's brother, William Parker, Lord Monteagle, a rising figure at the early Jacobean Court. Lady Muriel Tresham, widowed shortly after her daughter's marriage to Sir Thomas Brudenell of Deene, became a client of her new son-in-law even while she retained the Earl of Salisbury as her principal patron. Brudenell, for his part, invoked an ancient family connection when he hoped to join the clientage of the Earl of Salisbury. He reminded Salisbury in January 1609/10 that by birth he was "not far off descended from the same stem that your Lordship is happily issued."<sup>5</sup>

Although patronage was important to the gentry and nobility generally in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, it was even more crucial for Catholics than it was for the general population of elites. Patronage helped Catholics to remain connected to various facets of upper-status life and acknowledged that Catholics were still part of the larger corpus of elites. Perhaps even more significant, patronage relationships helped to shield Catholics, especially recusant Catholics, from the full brunt of the state's anti-Catholic penalties. In this chapter I examine the social dynamics of family networks and also how connections between the principal Catholic

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<sup>3</sup> Sharon Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* vol. 16, no. 2 (1989): 434-435.

<sup>4</sup> Sir George was co-executor of Berkeley's will (d. 1612), LLRRO 26D53/1959. The connection with the Berkeleys went back at least to Henry VIII's reign; Francis Shirley and Lady Berkeley were partners in a land transaction/lease in 1538. LLRRO 26D53/441.

<sup>5</sup> *HMCS* vol. 21, 198.

families of the Central Midlands provided patrons, clients, and influence to those Catholic families. In later chapters I explore how family networks and the women's networks discussed in Chapter Three worked to protect Catholics (sometimes even quite militant ones); ensured the continuation of political office or influence; and protected a family's financial interests. All of the analyses of patronage in this dissertation rest on the foundations of the family connections and networks laid out in detail in this chapter.

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In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, family groups shared ties of kinship and friendship that held the potential to overcome the divide caused by religious or political disagreements and that helped to facilitate access to patronage relationships. In late medieval and early modern England, families and their individual members saw themselves as part of a larger kinship group; that group included distant relations such as cousins whose closest biological link rested over a century in the past, or a marital connection several generations in the past. Families drew upon these distant links as well as much closer ones to construct their identity and their kinship group. Gentry, both of ancient status and of more recent origin, drew on genealogy and family histories to construct their legitimacy in the emerging social and economic order of the Renaissance era and strove to adhere to the duties which kinship imposed on individuals.<sup>6</sup>

The networks and the larger social circles to which Catholics belonged were not hermetically-sealed in a religious sense. Rather, family networks were religiously diverse and reflected the strength of friendships that had existed for decades or sometimes even generations and often predated the Reformation. Francis Hastings pointed out in a letter to his brother, the

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Bearman, *Relations into Rhetoric*, 71-72; Norman L. Jones, *The English Reformation*, 50.

third Earl of Huntingdon, that the security and longevity of a gentle or noble house depended on an extensive kinship network and on the family patriarch recognizing the many branches of his lineage group.<sup>7</sup> As this chapter illustrates, despite disagreements (and sometimes quite heated ones) about religious matters, the bonds of friendship and kinship often endured. The recusant Catholic William, third Baron Vaux, shared a close friendship with Edward Montagu of Boughton, a Puritan, with whom he debated theological points. The Catholic Throckmortons of Coughton had an abundance of Protestant and Puritan relatives with whom they continued to socialize. The Calvinist-inclined family of the Earls of Huntingdon had both Catholic relations and religiously conservative clients.

To fully understand the dynamics of the family networks examined here and the effect those networks had on the exchange of patronage, it is essential to consider family relationships, marriages and friendships several generations into the past. Many of the families in this study had long-standing relationships that began in the last half of the fifteenth century or the very early sixteenth century. For instance, it is relevant that difference of religious opinion was not a new concept for families in the post-Reformation period; even before the Henrician Reformation friends and relations held different opinions on worship and religious practice. As is explained in detail below, the Brudenells of Deene were friendly with Lollards throughout the fifteenth century; the relationship of the conservative Brokesbys of Shoby with the reform-minded Hastings of Huntingdon spanned the sixteenth century and extended into the seventeenth.<sup>8</sup> The Vauxes of Harrowden, Throckmortons of Coughton and Treshams of Rushton were unconvinced by reformers and remained religiously conservative throughout the first two decades of the

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Cust, "Honour, Rhetoric and Political Culture," 91.

<sup>8</sup> Joan Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 32; HEH HAP Box 14 (10); HEH HA 5437.

Reformation yet (to varying degrees) all had Protestants and Calvinists as family and friends.<sup>9</sup> Even in the last third of the sixteenth century when the conservative stance of some families coalesced into outright refusal to conform to the new English church, they still maintained relationships with Protestant kin, friends, neighbors and patrons.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the kinship networks of Catholic families in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, to begin to explore the nature of the relationships within and between the networks and to examine the role of family networks in the exchange of patronage. I hope to establish a foundation for a discussion of the role that the networks and individuals within them played in the exchange of patronage, an exchange that resulted in protecting or accommodating Elizabethan and early Stuart Catholics. This chapter will first set out the families under discussion in this study, organized by their county of primary residence or their family seat (should those differ). I will then connect the families to the networks in which they operated and trace connections between the networks, most of which cross county lines – rather artificial boundaries in themselves. Finally, I will explain how the family networks interacted with or shaped patronage and clientage activities within specific families.

## **Leicestershire**

The Hastings of Leicestershire might seem an odd choice to begin a conversation about Catholics and recusancy, especially since they are often associated with Puritanism. Certainly, the hot Protestantism of Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon, marked the family as protectors of

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<sup>9</sup> BL Additional MS 39828, f. 60r; John Burke and Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland, and Scotland* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: John Russell Smith, 1844), 532; Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 592; Claire Cross, *The Puritan Earl: the life of Henry Hastings third Earl of Huntingdon, 1536-1595* (London: Macmillan, 1966).

reformed religion in the East Midlands, but the family also had a number of Catholics and some recusants rattling around their prayer closets. The family thus encapsulates the religious plurality that existed amongst families in the late Tudor and early Stuart periods. Walter, the youngest brother of Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon; George, the second brother and later the fourth earl; and their mother, Katherine Pole, were at the least Catholic sympathizers, if not actually Catholic.<sup>10</sup> In 1586 authorities tracked a suspect connected to the Babington Plot, the Catholic layman John Palmer, to Sir George Hastings's house at Loughborough.<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Porte Hastings, Sir George's wife, was a practicing Catholic; she came from a Catholic family and one of her nephews, John Gerard, was a Jesuit leader on the English Mission.<sup>12</sup> Despite the Catholic – or at least conservative – religious sympathies of Sir George and Dorothy, they allowed the third earl to arrange for their heir Francis to study Calvinist theology in Basle.<sup>13</sup> They also allowed the third earl to arrange the marriages of Francis and his sister Dorothy rather than to seek out Catholic unions, as was common practice among many Catholic families by the late sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> This might have reflected an anxiety to protect the position and reputation of the house and the family name as Sir George drew closer to inheriting as the fourth earl. Indeed, during his nine years as the Hastings patriarch, George appeared more a conservative conformist than Catholic religiously, and continued to perform duties required by conventions of kinship,

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<sup>10</sup> Claire Cross, *The Letters of Sir Francis Hastings*, xviii.

<sup>11</sup> T.N.A. SP12/93, f. 119r; T.N.A. SP12/193, f. 50r.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *English Reformation*, 45.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Claire Cross, *The Puritan Earl*, 344. Norman Jones has argued that in the mid-sixteenth century marriages, even in Catholic families, were often contracted with social and economic considerations in mind more so than religious ones. Jones, *English Reformation*, 50-51. Yet by the latter third of the century and into the early seventeenth century religion became a much more significant factor among both Catholic and Puritan families.



such as protecting the Protestant preachers who had been clients of his brother Henry, the third Earl of Huntingdon.<sup>15</sup>

George's grandson Henry, the fifth earl, was a Protestant but he continued in the tradition established by his grandfather and uncle: that of protecting relations and friends whose religious views differed from his own. From the lifetime of the third earl through at least the lifetime of the fifth earl, the Hastings family counted among their inner circle of kin and clients men and women widely divergent in their religion. Robert Brokesby, head of the Catholic Brokesbys of Shoby, was the client of the Puritan third earl in the mid-sixteenth century and remained part of the Hastings clientage until his death in 1615, during the tenure of the fifth earl.<sup>16</sup> The Hastingses were related to two of the chief Catholic gentry families in Leicestershire, the Brokesbys and the Beaumonts of Gracedieu, and also to the Vauxes of Harrowden, Northamptonshire. These families, and perhaps also the Catholic Shirleys of Staunton Harold, were part of the Hastings network.<sup>17</sup>

The Brokesbys' relationship to the Hastings family augmented their status in their home county of Leicestershire. In 1513, a Robert Brokesby appeared on legal documents as a "vouchee" for Sir George Hastings.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Brokesby (1483- c. 1544) was deputy steward for the Hastings family from c. 1508 until his death in the 1540s.<sup>19</sup> Thomas's legal expertise and possibly also his connections at the Inns of Court surely helped the Hastingses in their various suits with their rivals, the Greys, during the early Tudor period. In the 1560s, Thomas's cousin,

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<sup>15</sup> Claire Cross, *The Puritan Earl*, 31

<sup>16</sup> HEH HA 5437.

<sup>17</sup> HEH HAP Box 14 (10).

<sup>18</sup> L.M.A ACC/0351/139.

<sup>19</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 507.

Robert Brokesby of Shoby sat in Parliament for Leicester, most likely with the support of Henry Hastings, third Earl of Huntingdon. At the time, he was described as “earnest in religion,” but in the decade that followed he – and presumably his family – absented themselves from church enough to attract notice of the bishop.<sup>20</sup> In 1577 Brokesby was reported to the Privy Council as an absentee; by 1581 the bishop was concerned that Brokesby had been swept into the wave of popery rampant in his diocese.<sup>21</sup>

In 1577, Robert Brokesby still had sufficient social status to contract advantageous marriages for his children. His daughter, Alice, wed Lawrence Saunders, the son of Brokesby’s fellow Leicestershire JP, Edward Saunders.<sup>22</sup> Brokesby’s heir Edward married Eleanor Vaux, daughter of the powerful Northamptonshire noble family. Unlike his father, Edward embraced the radical branch of Catholic recusancy that took hold shortly after the arrival of the Jesuits in 1580. He might have been the Brokesby who kept a printing press in his London house in the early 1580s. In any case, he did not support his cause for long; he died in 1581, still in his 20s.<sup>23</sup> His widow and their children, William and Anne, set up housekeeping with Eleanor’s unmarried sister, Anne Vaux. Eleanor seems to have shared her husband’s radical inclinations. She and

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<sup>20</sup> Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488. Hasler does not identify the bishop but whether he was at his Leicestershire estates or his Rutland estates Brokesby would have been under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Peterborough. Prior to the Henrician Reformation in the early sixteenth century, Leicestershire was part of the Diocese of Lincoln. In 1541, however, the Diocese of Lincoln was redefined and many of its holdings allocated to other dioceses. Leicestershire then fell under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Peterborough. W.J. Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1979), 5-6; “Peterborough: Introduction,” *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541-1857: volume 8: Bristol, Gloucester, Oxford and Peterborough dioceses* (1996), Joyce M. Horn, in British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=35336> (accessed 02 April 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488. The Brokesbys’ cousins, the Brokesbys of Frisby on the Wreak (Leices.) were also professing Catholics. During the late sixteenth century they lived primarily in Surrey but relocated to their estate at Frisby c. 1596. To what extent they might have benefited from or been part of the Hastings network is unclear. C.C.A, QSF/49, f. 100.

<sup>22</sup> William Harvey, Augustine Vincent, College of Arms, *The visitations of Northamptonshire made in 1564 and 1618-19*, ed. Walter C. Metcalfe (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), 45.

<sup>23</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 179.

Anne harbored Jesuits, including the Superior of the English Mission, Henry Garnet; offered their homes as central meeting points for English Jesuits; and maintained a school for Catholic boys in their households until at least the 1630s.

The Brokesby-Hastings relationship was a durable one, despite their religious differences. This mutually beneficial relationship between the two families, forged during Henry VIII's reign and cemented by the duty of kinship, helped to create a bond between the families that endured through the early seventeenth century. Until his death in 1615 Robert Brokesby remained part of the Earl of Huntingdon's circle and was a client of the Hastings family.<sup>24</sup> Presumably, his grandson William was as well, until his death in 1606.<sup>25</sup>

Robert's second marriage, to Jane Beaumont, daughter of John Beaumont of Gracedieu, connected the Brokesbys to another Leicestershire Catholic family that was part of the Hastings network.<sup>26</sup> John Beaumont (c. 1508-58/64) purchased Gracedieu in 1539.<sup>27</sup> The following year he married Elizabeth Hastings, the daughter and coheir of Sir William Hastings and cousin to the Hastingses of Huntingdon.<sup>28</sup> Beaumont served as J.P. for Leicestershire and on various

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<sup>24</sup> HEH HA 5437. Other of the Hastings's clients were the Protestant Caves of Northamptonshire, who sought favor from Huntingdon through at least 1609, HA 1283.

<sup>25</sup> Bartholomew Brokesby, a kinsman of Robert, was among a group of men arraigned on charges of high treason in November 1603, accused of plotting to kill King James and his family and replace high officers in government with Catholics. S.H.C. 6729/1/9.

<sup>26</sup> Roger D. Sell, "Notes on the Religious and Family Background of Francis and Sir John Beaumont," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* vol. 75 (1975):305. Jane was the second daughter of John Beaumont and Elizabeth Hastings; she was related to the Vauxes through her sister Elizabeth, Baroness Vaux.

<sup>27</sup> *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* v. I, ed. Rev. Alexander Dyce (London, 1848), xxn.

<sup>28</sup> The Beaumonts' cousins, the Beaumonts of Cole Orton, Leics., were Puritans; they too were related to the Hastings. Hasler positions them in the Hastings network, and they might have been in the late sixteenth century. (Hasler, 416) By 1611, however, Thomas Beaumont of Stoughton, Leics., a younger son of Nicholas of Cole Orton, was a follower of Henry Grey, Baron Grey of Groby, as were by this time Brian, William and Alexander Cave. (HEH HA 4331; HA 4328) Sir William Hastings was a younger son of William, baron Hastings of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Northamptonshire. N. G. Jones, 'Beaumont, John (*d.* in or after 1556)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1873>, accessed 18 May 2010]

commissions in the county, but his shady dealings and abuse of power, particularly as Master of the Rolls under Edward VI, led to his political downfall and the Crown's confiscation of Gracedieu. He went to Parliament three times during Mary's reign but beyond that lost any political might he previously held.<sup>29</sup>

During John's lifetime, relations between his family and the Hastingses were strained at best. Francis, second Earl of Huntingdon, held Gracedieu after Beaumont surrendered it in disgrace, and allowed the Beaumonts to reside there – presumably because his cousin Elizabeth was Beaumont's wife.<sup>30</sup> After John's death c. 1558, Elizabeth recovered Gracedieu from the Hastingses and seems to have reentered the family network. She spent her widowhood at Gracedieu and after her daughter Elizabeth, Baroness Vaux died c. 1557 she raised and educated her grandchildren at Gracedieu. Thus, Garnet's protectors, Eleanor and Anne Vaux; their sister Elizabeth, who later became a nun; and the heir to the barony, Henry, were raised in the very pietistic Catholic household of their Hastings grandmother.<sup>31</sup>

John and Elizabeth's eldest son, Francis (c. 1540-1598) spent his career in law and government. He went to Parliament only once under Elizabeth, for Aldeburgh in 1572, but offered his legal expertise to a number of committees into the 1580s, including a bill regarding the Family of Love and another for the preservation of game, both in February 1581. He was part of the conservative faction at court; at home he was deeply embedded in recusant circles through his connection with the Vauxes and with his wife's family, the Pierrepontes of Nottinghamshire. Despite his conservative stance, occasional recusancy, and suspicions of priest-harboring, he was trusted enough to be named to a committee for legal reforms in 1588. The following year he was

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<sup>29</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 405-406.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>31</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 108.

made sergeant-at-law and in 1593 was raised to justice of the Court of Common Pleas.<sup>32</sup> He identified the seventh Earl of Shrewsbury as his patron but in his work as a judge on the northern circuit seems also to have had the confidence, and perhaps patronage, of his kinsman Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon in the latter's capacity as lord president of the council of the North. The men Francis named as executors to his will in 1598 provide a snapshot of the inner circle of Beaumont's friends: his cousin Henry Beaumont of Cole Orton, George Shirley of Staunton Harold, and Robert Brokesby of Shoby.<sup>33</sup>

Through the sixteenth century, and particularly in the latter half of that century, the Beaumonts were part of the Brokesby-Vaux network in Leicestershire, which was in turn part of the larger Hastings network. Francis Beaumont acted as legal counsel for Anne Vaux in her dispute with her uncle, Sir Thomas Tresham.<sup>34</sup> After Francis's death in 1598, however, his sons attached themselves to the Villiers. The eldest, Sir Henry, died in July 1605, just as he entered adulthood. The second son, the poet Sir John, was a client of his Beaumont cousin Mary, Countess of Buckingham, mother of the Stuart royal favorite George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Despite Sir John's rather well-known recusancy and his Catholic-themed writings, such as "The Crowne of Thornes" and "Of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady," when the Villiers family rose to prominence he became a court poet and in 1627 was elevated to the rank of baronet.<sup>35</sup> Mark Eccles speculated that Sir John's younger brother Francis, the playwright,

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<sup>32</sup> W.J.J., Beaumont, Francis (c. 1540-98), of Gracedieu, Leics., available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/beaumont-francis-1540-98> [accessed 4 January 2012].

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *HMCV*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Eccles, "A Biographical Dictionary of Elizabethan Authors," *Huntington Library Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (April 1942): 293-294. On baronetcies and Catholics, see Pauline Croft, "The Catholic Gentry, the Earl of Salisbury

might also be Catholic, and Roger Sell posits that Francis conformed after the example of his father, the judge.<sup>36</sup> In any event, he was never presented for recusancy and his writings do not betray any religious allegiance. It is possible that he did not much care about religion one way or the other.

The Beaumonts were good friends with their neighbor, Sir George Shirley of Staunton Harold, from at least the early 1580s.<sup>37</sup> Following the Throckmorton Plot in 1583, the Beaumonts were instrumental in helping Sir George avoid arrest for his part in the intrigue.<sup>38</sup> Around that time, George's sister Elizabeth moved to Staunton Harold as the housekeeper for her unmarried brother. After Sir George married Frances Berkeley in the late 1580s, Elizabeth joined the convent of St. Ursula's in Louvain.<sup>39</sup> With the financial support of her family she helped to found the cloister of St. Monica's at Louvain and remained there until her death in 1641. The Shirleys were also close to their Catholic kinsmen, the Ferrers of Horde Park, Shropshire; Thomas Ferrers "entrusted" the education of his son Richard and the upbringing and marriage of his daughter Mary to Sir George Shirley.<sup>40</sup>

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and the Baronets of 1611" in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*, ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (2000), 262-281.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Eccles, "A Biographical Dictionary of Elizabethan Authors": 294; Roger D. Sell, "Notes on the Religious and Family Background of Francis and Sir John Beaumont," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* vol. 75 (1975): 306; P.J. Finkelpearl, *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> In 1586 Sir George inherited Astwell Castle in Northamptonshire; thenceforth the family maintained a presence in the social hierarchy of both counties.

<sup>38</sup> Roger D. Sell, "Sir John Beaumont and His Three Audiences," in *Writing and Religion in England 1558 - 1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory*, eds. Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 196.

<sup>39</sup> Sir George married Frances Berkeley, daughter of Henry, Lord Berkeley of Gloucestershire. Claire Walker, 'Shirley, Elizabeth (1564/5–1641)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45824>, accessed 2 June 2010]

<sup>40</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. ii, 126.

In 1613, shortly after a Privy Council order for the disarming of recusants, Sir George Shirley petitioned the council for the return of his armor, which had been seized on the grounds of Shirley's recusancy. A copy of this letter wound up among the papers of the Hastings of Huntingdon; whether because Shirley was a client of the Hastings or whether a copy of the petition was directed to the Earl of Huntingdon in his capacity as lord lieutenant of Leicestershire is not clear.<sup>41</sup> Despite his suspected popish affiliations, Shirley served as high sheriff of Berkshire in 1603, sat as J.P. for Leicestershire under James and in the administration of the Oath of Allegiance was "as forward and diligent to do this service as other of his fellowe Justices of the said Countie."<sup>42</sup> At least two of his servants, John Smyth and Thomas Fynder, he described as "men of sound religion and honest behavio[u]r" who "ordinarily resort to the Church to heare divine service in the parish where they inhabite."<sup>43</sup> Shirley conformed enough to satisfy both the state's legal requirements and his fellow officers in county administration. In 1611 he had sufficient funds and reputation to participate in King James's initial distribution of baronetcies.<sup>44</sup>

The Shirleys counted among their friends and relations a number of esteemed families. Sir George was friends with Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter and his younger brother, Robert, Earl of Salisbury.<sup>45</sup> Besides Sir George's union with a Berkeley daughter, in 1615 his son Henry married Lady Dorothy Devereux, a daughter of the second Earl of Essex and whose mother,

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<sup>41</sup> HEH HAP Box 14 (10). The Huntington Library, where these papers are held, dates this document sometime between 1603-1622, but the context strongly suggests it could be dated closer to 1613.

<sup>42</sup> HEH HAP Box 14 (10)

<sup>43</sup> HEH HAP Box 14 (10)

<sup>44</sup> Pauline Croft, "The Catholic Gentry, the Earl of Salisbury and the Baronets of 1611," 270n; Marquis of Ruvigny and Raineval, *The Plantagenet Roll of the Blood Royal: Mortimer-Percy Volume*, (1911; reprint, Bowie, M.D.: Heritage Books, 2001), 434.

<sup>45</sup> Pauline Croft, "The Catholic Gentry, the Earl of Salisbury and the Baronets of 1611," 272-273, 280-281.

Frances, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham and wife of Sir Philip Sidney, had remarried the Irish Catholic Earl of Clanricarde and become a Catholic herself. Sir George and Frances's third son, Thomas, married Mary Harpur, daughter of another noted Catholic family. In the mid-seventeenth century Sir Henry Shirley, who inherited the bulk of the family estates, and his younger brother Sir Thomas counted among their friends the Beaumonts and Vauxes. Sir Thomas was a noted antiquarian who was one of a group of scholars who called themselves the "Students of Antiquity." These men – Sir Christopher Hatton, William Dugdale, Edward Dering, William Burton, Sir Simon Archer and Thomas Habington – seem to have been more concerned with the collaborative academic work they performed than they were over one another's religious preferences.<sup>46</sup>

The chief Catholic and recusant families in Leicestershire in the period under examination here were connected in some way to the Hastings family. None of them, intriguingly, appear to have been part of the clientage of the Greys of Groby, who tried (unsuccessfully) throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to reestablish a power base in Leicestershire. The Hastingses and the Greys struggled for dominance of the county in the early part of the century, and for a while at least early in Henry VIII's reign the Greys prevailed. By mid-century, however, and certainly throughout the reign of Elizabeth, the Hastingses enjoyed unmatched authority in Leicestershire.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Marquis of Ruvigny and Raineval, *The Plantagenet Roll of the Blood Royal*, 434; Richard Cust, 'Shirley, Sir Thomas (c.1590–1654)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47732>, accessed 6 June 2010].

<sup>47</sup> Mary L. Robertson, "Court Careers and County Quarrels: George Lord Hastings and Leicestershire Unrest, 1509-1529" in *State, Sovereigns & Society in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of A.J. Slavin*, ed. Charles Carlton with Robert L. Woods, Mary L. Robertson and Joseph S. Block (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Sutton; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 153-169; P.W. Hasler, "Leicestershire 1558-1603," available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/leicestershire> [accessed 4 January 2012].



Kinship connections and political advantage trumped questions of religion for many of Leicestershire's prominent Catholic families. These families maintained connections to the dominant aristocratic family in the county, despite their own Catholicism and the Hastingses' preference for Calvinism. The Brokesbys and Beaumonts were certainly more solidly anchored to the Hastings network than were the Shirleys, but the close affinity between the Shirleys and the Beaumonts in the last two decades of Elizabeth's reign suggests a connection to the Hastings network. In all likelihood, the Shirleys also maintained a presence in the wider network of the Devereux family, with whom they shared an affinity through marriage, while at the same time remaining in the wider entourage of Leicestershire's most dominant late-sixteenth century aristocratic family, the Hastingses.

### **Northamptonshire**

In neighboring Northamptonshire, the Vauxes of Harrowden were one of the most prominent families in the county by the early sixteenth century, due in large part to the family's steadfast support of the Lancastrians during the fifteenth century and, later, the prominence at court of the family patriarch, Sir Nicholas Vaux. Sir Nicholas's mother, Catherine, was a French woman in the household of the last Lancastrian queen, Margaret of Anjou. Years later, Catherine's daughter Jane, Lady Guildford was a lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon.<sup>48</sup> Catherine's son, Nicholas, was raised in the household of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII and grandmother of Henry VIII; he was her client until her death in 1509. Nicholas's status as Lady Beaufort's protégé and client made him one of the top courtiers at the early Tudor court, a position he used to advance his family, to promote the

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<sup>48</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 40.

careers of his children and his stepson, Sir William Parr, and to leverage his authority in his home county of Northamptonshire.

The careers of the Vaux and Parr families were closely entwined in the early Tudor period. Sir Nicholas promoted his stepson's career at court in the first two decades of the sixteenth century and by at least 1520 it seems that Parr, returning the favor, used his position to help his Vaux relatives. Sir Nicholas also held the wardship of Elizabeth Cheyne, the daughter of his niece, Anne Parr, and in 1523 wed Elizabeth to his heir, Thomas.<sup>49</sup> Sir Nicholas's loyalty and service to the crown was rewarded with a peerage in April 1523, as the first Baron Vaux.<sup>50</sup> Lord Vaux died the following month. Within a few years his heir, Thomas, second Baron Vaux was in the retinue of Cardinal Wolsey and launching his own career at court.<sup>51</sup> By 1536, however, Thomas's conservative religious views and his retirement from court made the Parr relatives particularly instrumental in maintaining family connections with the monarch.

The Vaux family remained religiously conservative throughout the Henrician and Edwardian reforms. Indeed, the foundations of the family's later recusancy were forged in Thomas's lifetime and further cemented by his children, all of whom remained steadfast Catholics. During the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign, William, third Baron Vaux was a leading figure in Northamptonshire government. He and his good friend, Sir Edward Montagu of Boughton dealt with vagrants, beggars and poachers; Vaux served on the commission for

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<sup>49</sup> L. L. Ford, 'Vaux, Nicholas, first Baron Vaux (c.1460–1523)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28162>, accessed 9 May 2010]; H. R. Woudhuysen, 'Vaux, Thomas, second Baron Vaux (1509–1556)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28163>, accessed 19 May 2010]; Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. iii, 521–522.

<sup>50</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 35–36.

<sup>51</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 39–40; H. R. Woudhuysen, 'Vaux, Thomas, second Baron Vaux (1509–1556)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28163>, accessed 19 May 2010]

musters in 1569-1570 and on the commission for gaol delivery from 1578-79.<sup>52</sup> Although he served on county commissions and occasionally went to parliament, Vaux was more interested in life as a country gentleman. He was a patron of Renaissance cultural pursuits but also enjoyed lingering aspects of medieval culture. For example, he sponsored a company of players and paid close attention to the education of his children in accordance with new Renaissance-era pedagogies, but also employed a bearward and loved the sport of bear-baiting.<sup>53</sup>

In 1567/8 Lord Vaux hired one of the top scholars in the realm as tutor to his children: Edmund Campion, who was then on top of the intellectual world from his post at Oxford. A deep friendship took root between the family and the tutor, encouraged by Lord Vaux's own intellectual curiosity and the precociousness of his heir, Henry.<sup>54</sup> Henry grew particularly close to Campion; that affinity may have set the course for Henry's life and propelled his resolve to renounce his patrimony in favor of the priesthood. By 1571, around the time Campion left England to pursue training as a Catholic priest, the children of Lord Vaux's deceased first wife went to Gracedieu in Leicestershire, to be raised by their grandmother Elizabeth Hastings Beaumont. Communication between Henry and Campion continued after the tutor had left Vaux's employ. When the Jesuits landed in England in 1580, Campion was among the first to arrive. His former pupil, Henry Vaux, was one of a small group of Catholics who comprised the Jesuits' initial welcoming committee. Henry, his brother-in-law Edward Brokesby, and his kinsman William Tresham joined in these efforts.<sup>55</sup> Within a year Campion was captured and Lord Vaux, his friend and brother-in-law Sir Thomas Tresham, and their kinsman Sir William

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<sup>52</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 104-108.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>54</sup> Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion* (London: Longmans, 1935), 212; Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 100-103.

<sup>55</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 111.

Catesby were charged with hearing Mass and providing Campion physical and financial support, in violation of the statute.

Henry Vaux exchanged his birthright for an annuity in 1583 and passed the Harrowden inheritance to his half-brother, George. Henry had flatly refused to marry after Lord Vaux had negotiated a marriage settlement for him and Lord Vaux, intent on protecting the future of the house, urged his heir to surrender his claim. Vaux then turned to his brother-in-law Sir Thomas Tresham and to his good friend Sir George Fermor to help determine the structure of George's inheritance and of Henry's compensation.<sup>56</sup> Although Henry was intent on going to seminary, he first spent several years laboring to organize financial support and a clandestine network of safehouses for Catholic priests. He died in November 1587, perhaps from an illness he contracted while imprisoned in the Marshalsea during the winter and spring of that year.<sup>57</sup> His sisters, Eleanor Brokesby and Anne Vaux, and their sister-in-law Elizabeth Roper, George's wife, were soon deeply involved with the Jesuits' English Mission. George died in the summer of 1594; his father died just over a year later, in August 1595, and passed the title and estates directly to his grandson, Edward. Elizabeth Roper Vaux, George's widow, was thus pressed into the unenviable position of protecting the heir to the house from efforts of the state to inculcate Protestant values inconsistent with the principles of the family. Edward's wardship was initially granted to a servant of Sir Thomas Cecil. By 1598, however, Elizabeth succeeded in purchasing her son's wardship and thus retained for herself control over her son's education and marriage.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *HMCV*, 28.

<sup>57</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 111, 140, 158, 166, 205.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-232; Jan Broadway, in her study of the widowhood of Agnes Throckmorton, points out both the difficulty and the necessity of a recusant widow securing the wardship of her minor children, and especially that of the family's principal heir. Broadway, "Agnes Throckmorton: a Jacobean Recusant Widow," in *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation*, eds. Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2006), 123-142.

The Vaux family's friendship with the Montagus of Boughton seems to have ceased with the death of William, third Baron Vaux, in 1595. Relationships with Francis and Lewis Tresham (but not their parents, whose loyalties lay with Lord Vaux and his second wife, Mary Tresham Vaux), the Brokesbys, Beaumonts, and Shirleys endured into the seventeenth century, as did the connection with Elizabeth Vaux and her natal family, the Ropers.<sup>59</sup> By the time of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 Elizabeth and her sisters-in-law Anne and Eleanor, and probably also young Edward, Lord Vaux, were close friends with the families of the most radical Catholic men, including the Digbys, Wintours, and Huddlestons.

Although the strict recusant Catholicism of some families weakened in the seventeenth century as later generations sought to recover land and fortune from the crown, the Vauxes remained committed to militant Catholicism through the demise of the male line in the mid-seventeenth century. Throughout this period, most of their friends and at least some of their tenants were recusant as well, or at least religiously conservative. For example, Matthew Kellison, the son of one of the Vaux's tenants, became a priest on the continent.<sup>60</sup> By the mid-seventeenth century the family had cocooned themselves in an environment that was overwhelmingly Catholic, although not exclusively so; the bulk of their social interactions were with members of their extended kin network. For instance, in 1629 Edward's household priest was the son of Edward Bentley of Little Oakley and a cousin of the Ropers.<sup>61</sup> Other than the friendship with the Montagus of Boughton in the late sixteenth century, the Vauxes seem to have counted among their friends only other religious conservatives and Catholics. By the seventeenth

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<sup>59</sup> *HMCV*, 83.

<sup>60</sup> Rev. Wilfred Kelly, ed., C.R.S Records Series, vol. 37, *Liber ruber venerabilis collegii Anglorum de Urbe. Annales Collegii. Pars prima: nomina alumnorum, 1579-1630* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1940), 37.

<sup>61</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 456.

century their friends seem to have been other supporters of the Jesuits, which in itself is probably a reflection of the rift that developed in those years between the Jesuits and secular clergy.

The Treshams of Rushton, relatives of the Vauxes, were an ancient family in Northamptonshire with a landholding presence at Rushton since 1438.<sup>62</sup> Local and crown appointments, land, and advantageous marriages combined to make the Treshams one of the most influential families in the county and in the Midlands region during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. William (d. 1450) and Sir Thomas (d. c. 1471) served Henry V and Henry VI and sided with the Lancastrians during the Wars of the Roses, but the family's status as gentry rather than nobility saved them from the first Tudor's purge of overmighty feudal lords.<sup>63</sup> Sir Thomas's son John (d. 1521) served exclusively in local and county office under Henry VII and Henry VIII and worked alongside other Northamptonshire gentry such as Sir Robert Brudenell (d. 1531), Sir Nicholas Vaux, Sir Richard Knightley, William Lane and William Gascoigne.<sup>64</sup> Their working relationship perhaps laid the foundations of later family connections that resulted in the marriage between the Treshams and Brudenells in the early seventeenth century. John's son and heir, Thomas (1500-1559), was a courtier and served in both state and county offices, and in the process built a strong reputation in his home county of Northamptonshire.<sup>65</sup> Thomas's marriage to Anne Parr, the daughter of William, Lord Parr of

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<sup>62</sup> Foard, Hall and Partida, *Rockingham Forest*, 266.

<sup>63</sup> Finch, *Wealth*, 67. In 1460 a Yorkist purge of Lancastrian supporters attainted, among scores of others, William, the father of the first Baron Vaux, his kinsman Thomas Tresham, and his neighbors William Catesby, Richard Harrowden, and Thomas Green. The attainder was reversed in November 1485 by the newly-crowned Henry VII. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 4-8.

<sup>64</sup> *L & P, Henry VIII*, vol. II, 184, 318.

<sup>65</sup> Tresham's positions included Esquire of the Body to Henry VIII, sheriff of Northampton, J.P., Lieutenant of the forest of Rockingham, and a bevy of local commissions. Finch, *Wealth*, 68; BL, Cotton Titus B ii, f. 336r; S.M. Thorpe, "Tresham, Sir Thomas (by 1500-1559), of Rushton, Northants., History of Parliament Online, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/tresham-sir-thomas-1500-59> [accessed 20 September 2011]; P. R. N. Carter, 'Tresham, Sir Thomas (c.1500–1559)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

Horton and cousin of Queen Catherine Parr, connected the Treshams to one of the most powerful courtier families of the early Tudor period and further augmented the family's status in their county.

By the late sixteenth century the family had spent over 150 years in prominent royal, state and county offices and had acquired a great deal of land in the process.<sup>66</sup> The early years of the Reformation helped to secure financial security for Sir Thomas's heir, his grandson Thomas. The Treshams, like other gentle and noble families – even religiously conservative ones – profited from reform policies such as the dissolution of the religious houses. Perhaps ironically, the same dissolution policies that displaced Sir Thomas's sister Clemence from Syon Abbey also facilitated the consolidation of his group of manors at Rushton into a package of land that allowed him to utilize his property more effectively.<sup>67</sup> Between monastic acquisitions, royal grants, and astute sales and purchases, Sir Thomas left to his grandson an estate much improved over the one he had inherited in 1521. Through shrewd and sometimes ruthless estate management strategies, the younger Thomas substantially increased revenues from the Tresham lands, although at the expense of tense relationships with some of his tenants.<sup>68</sup>

Although the Treshams remained religiously conservative throughout Henry VIII's reforms, the elder Sir Thomas's disagreement with royal and state policy did not have a detrimental effect on the family. He continued to serve in royal and local offices under both

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Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27711>, accessed 23 February 2010]

<sup>66</sup> For a thorough account of the Tresham's land acquisition and management strategies, see Mary Finch, *The Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families*.

<sup>67</sup> Finch, *Wealth*, 68-9; Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 95. For example, Tresham's manors at Rushton were peppered with lands belonging to the Cistercian Abbey of Pipewell.

<sup>68</sup> Finch, *Wealth*, 73-75.

Edward VI and Mary and to sit in Parliament for Northamptonshire until his death in 1559.<sup>69</sup> In fact, he boldly advertised his loyalty to the Tudors when he proclaimed Mary as queen at Kettering in 1553, in defiance of Thomas Cave's orders (as sheriff) to proclaim Jane Grey.<sup>70</sup> Thereafter he appears to have been among the new queen's favorites, or at least among her chief clients. Tresham enjoyed both Crown support and the patronage of William Stanley, first Lord Monteagle, in his bids for Parliament under Mary.<sup>71</sup> The queen went a step further with royal rewards in 1557, when she named him Prior of the newly-restored Order of St. John of Jerusalem, one of the most esteemed Catholic orders in the medieval period.<sup>72</sup>

Sir Thomas's heir, another Thomas, seemed poised to continue on a similar path of service to the Tudors under Elizabeth. The younger Thomas was sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1573 and received a knighthood from Elizabeth at Kenilworth in 1575 in recognition of the "good hope for the vertues" which the queen had seen in him.<sup>73</sup> He was a forest official under the Earl of Bedford, guardian of the Forest of Rockingham.<sup>74</sup> But by 1578, Tresham's Catholic sentiments hardened into full-scale recusancy. In 1580 he was arrested, along with his brother-in-law Lord Vaux, his cousin William Catesby and his friend Edward Griffin of Dingley and Braybrook, on charges of harboring the Jesuit Edmund Campion. His political career in service

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<sup>69</sup> S.M. Thorpe, "Tresham, Sir Thomas (by 1500-1559), of Rushton, Northants., History of Parliament Online, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/tresham-sir-thomas-1500-59> [accessed 20 September 2011].

<sup>70</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 63. The Caves were part of the Grey affinity; see HEH HA 4328, HA 4331.

<sup>71</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol i, 109-110, 120-122.

<sup>72</sup> The Order of St. John of Jerusalem was an ancient and very wealthy order with ties to the Hospitallers.

<sup>73</sup> Sir Thomas Smith points out in *De Republica Anglorum* that knighthoods were bestowed as encouragement prior to military battle or as reward after battle; in recognition of great service done outside of a military capacity; and in recognition of "some good hope for the vertues which do appear in them." Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary Dewar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 67.

<sup>74</sup> *APC* vol. 4, 157.



to the English state was all but over. Still, his desire to make good use of the skills he acquired in his education impelled him to act as petitioner on behalf of English Catholics generally. As a result, he acquired a reputation as a leader among Catholic recusants, so much so that in 1603 the priest William Hill compared Tresham to the Biblical Moses.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the ardent Catholicism of the Rushton branch of the family, their cousins, the Treshams of Newton (Northants) were either Protestants or very careful outward conformists. They certainly did not share the family appetite for recusant Catholicism. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Thomas Tresham of Newton was sheriff of Northamptonshire (1613) and sat on the commission of the peace for the county from the 1590s until at least 1613.<sup>76</sup> In 1624 his son and namesake was the verderer of Rockingham Forest and was charged with reporting on the condition of Higham Ferrers Park.<sup>77</sup> The families remained close, both geographically and personally. The Newton and Rushton estates were near neighbors, situated across the road from one another. The two branches of the family visited one another and corresponded regularly in the Elizabethan and Jacobean years; sometime in 1595 or 1596 Sir Thomas's heir, Francis, acted as a mediator in a dispute that his cousin, Thomas (of Newton), had with John Brudenell of Deene and William Montagu of Stanion.<sup>78</sup> In the early seventeenth century the Newton branch became more significant and acted as protector and patron to their recusant cousins.

Early in 1581/2, Sir Thomas's brother William, a courtier, gentleman pensioner to the queen, servant and client of Sir Christopher Hatton, fled to Paris after a spat with the Earl of

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<sup>75</sup> *HMCV*, 114.

<sup>76</sup> John Burke and Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland, and Scotland* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: John Russell Smith, 1844), 532.

<sup>77</sup> *V.C.H. Northampton* vol. iii, 279-280.

<sup>78</sup> NRO D (F) 143.

Leicester. Unfortunately, he left without the queen's permission and as a result incurred her ire. Sir Thomas's attempts to convince Elizabeth to allow William's return fell flat, but William continued to barrage potential patrons, including Sir Robert Cecil and his agents, with requests to help to affect his return through the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>79</sup> He seems to have finally done so in April 1603, perhaps with the new king's permission, or perhaps he took advantage of the distractions of Elizabeth's recent death and slipped into England unnoticed.<sup>80</sup>

The Parr marriage connected the Treshams to a kinship network with greater power and authority than any to which they had previously belonged.<sup>81</sup> Sir Thomas and Anne's son John wed Eleanor Catesby of Wiston, Northamptonshire; their daughter Isabel married Thomas Pigott in 1533; after he died a few years later she married her sister-in-law's brother, Thomas Catesby. The family relationship with the Catesbys remained strong into the seventeenth century. After John and Eleanor died in 1546, Sir Thomas arranged for the wardship and marriage of their children.<sup>82</sup> Young Thomas became the ward of Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton, Warwickshire. He was raised in the Throckmorton household along with William Catesby of Lapworth, another of Throckmorton's wards, and in 1566 married Throckmorton's daughter Muriel.<sup>83</sup> His friend Catesby married Muriel's sister, Anne. Three years previously Thomas's sister, Mary, became the second wife of William, third Baron Vaux. Thomas and his brothers-in-

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<sup>79</sup> See, for example, William Tresham to Henry Locke, *HMCs* vol. 11, 279; T.N.A. SP 15/34, f. 11r.

<sup>80</sup> *HMCV*, 123.

<sup>81</sup> Bindoff speculates that Tresham's father-in-law, Sir William Parr, helped to secure Tresham's election to Parliament in 1539; Bindoff, *The Commons*, 482.

<sup>82</sup> TNA PROB/11/42B.

<sup>83</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 592.

law remained good friends for the rest of their lives.<sup>84</sup> Thomas was Lord Vaux's legal advisor and acted as trustee for the marriage portions of Vaux's daughters by his first wife, a role which cost him dearly when they accused him of financial improprieties with those funds.<sup>85</sup>

Sir Thomas (d. 1605) and Muriel were keen to arrange marriages for their daughters that were both socially advantageous and Catholic. Elizabeth and Frances married nobles, Lord Monteagle and Lord Stourton, respectively; Mary's husband, Sir Thomas Brudenell, was elevated to the peerage within ten years of their marriage; and Catherine, Bridget and Anne were matched to gentlemen of worth.<sup>86</sup> Recusancy clearly was not a prerequisite for these matches, although Catholicism must have been. Monteagle and Stourton were suspected of Catholicism but do not consistently appear on registers of known Catholics. Brudenell was known to be Catholic during James's reign but conformed enough to satisfy the state when pressed. Parham, too, conformed but was "Catholic at heart."<sup>87</sup> The Tresham's focus on social advancement through the marriages of their children paid off in at least one instance: their granddaughter Catherine Parker (Lord Monteagle and Elizabeth Tresham's daughter) became the Countess of Rivers on her marriage in 1625.

Besides their extensive kin connections, Sir Thomas and Muriel had a healthy complement of friends that connected them to significant networks. Sir Thomas's closest friend was his brother-in-law Lord Vaux; he also remained close with his brother-in-law Sir William Catesby. Tresham's relationship with his servant Thomas Vavasour was underpinned by deep

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<sup>84</sup> Vaux's first wife was buried 12 August 1562, less than one month after the birth of her last child, Anne, on 19 July 1562, which suggests that she died in childbed. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 490.

<sup>85</sup> *HMCV*, 79-87, 99-100.

<sup>86</sup> Catherine was wed to John Webb of Odstock, Somerset. John J. Hammond, "Webb of Great Canford, Dorset, and Odstock, Wilts.," *Notes & Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, vol. 10, ed. F.W. Weaver and C.H. Mayo (Sherborne: Printed by J.C. and A.T. Sawtell, 1907), 212.

<sup>87</sup> *Responsa*, 193.

trust and friendship. Other friends were Jerome Lee; Edward, Lord Morley; William Wickham, bishop of Lincoln; Tobie Matthew, bishop of Durham; his Northamptonshire neighbors Sir Edward Watson, Sir Christopher Hatton, and perhaps Lewis, Lord Mordaunt.<sup>88</sup> Muriel, Lady Tresham was particularly close to her sister-in-law, Mary, Baroness Vaux and also maintained friendships she formed in childhood, namely with the Countess of Derby and the Countess of Bedford.<sup>89</sup> The couple included certain tenants in their inner circle as well. John Flamsted, a fellow recusant and tenant, appears regularly as a witness to legal documents and as either a bond-holder or trustee. His social status was below that of the Treshams, but he was among the wealthier of their tenants and was trusted enough by both the Treshams and the Vauxes to be part of the family network. Sir Thomas and Muriel maintained relationships with members of their peer group that spanned the doctrinal continuum. Their friendships with bishops Wickham and Matthew and with Sir Christopher Hatton seem to have been true friendships – ones that could provide access to patronage, but that benefit was not the chief motivating factor in the relationship. When the Treshams needed serious help from a patron (and thanks to Francis's predilection for risky behavior they often did) they turned to the Cecils.

Sir Thomas and Muriel's two older sons, Francis and Lewis, were hotheads who consistently found themselves embroiled in legal or social difficulties. The eldest son, Francis, was part of a circle of young Catholic radicals in the last two decades of Elizabeth's reign and seems to have included among his friends many of the men who surrounded the Earl of Essex in the late 1590s.<sup>90</sup> His closest friends (whom Lewis shared) were probably those with whom he

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<sup>88</sup> *HMCV*, 33, 75-76, 89, 110, 115; NRO Th 1697 25/1/1604[5]; DRO D3155/WH 582

<sup>89</sup> *HMCV*, 28, 89.

<sup>90</sup> TNA SP12/244, f. 219r; Paul E.J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 175n.

found himself in the hottest water, particularly the Gunpowder Plot conspirators Catesby; Winter; Percy; Henry, Lord Mordaunt; his brothers-in-law Brudenell; Edward, Lord Stourton; and William, Lord Monteagle; and his cousins, Eleanor Brokesby and Anne Vaux. Francis kept up a steady traffic of visits to his Vaux cousins and the Jesuits they sheltered, and Anne Vaux paid a social visit to her cousin at least once. In 1605, shortly after Sir Thomas Tresham's death, Vaux and the superior of the English Mission, Henry Garnet, S.J. visited Francis at either Rushton or Lyveden on their way to Warwickshire. They "supt," stayed the night and continued their journey to Warwickshire the following day.<sup>91</sup>

Lewis did not take part in the rather serious types of affrays that Francis always seemed to be in but provided his own portion of parental hand-wringing just the same. In 1599 his dispute with another student at the Inns of Court grew so violent that young Lewis was expelled from the Inner Temple.<sup>92</sup> Following the Gunpowder Plot, Francis died in prison and Lewis inherited the family estates. For a time he seemed to be improving the family's position: he was made baronet in 1612. Yet his spendthrift tendencies cemented the family's ruin. By 1614 the family seat at Rushton was in the possession of William Cockayne, through both forfeiture of mortgage and outright sale.<sup>93</sup> According to M. E. Finch the Rushton estate fetched over £28,000 for Lewis, which paid his debts and provided him some ready cash. Even with the royal favor he enjoyed as a Jacobean courtier – a knighthood by 1616 and a gentleman of the Privy Chamber – the Tresham finances showed little recovery.<sup>94</sup> By the time he died in 1639 there was little more

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<sup>91</sup> TNA SP14/216/2, 154v. Lady Tresham, still in mourning, kept to her chamber for the duration of their visit.

<sup>92</sup> *HMCV*, xix; *Calendar of Inner Temple Records* vol. i, 428, 431, 445.

<sup>93</sup> Finch, *Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families*, 95-97.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

than a title for his son, William, to inherit, and when William died in 1651 the male line became extinct.<sup>95</sup>

The marriage of Elizabeth Tresham to William Parker, Lord Monteagle in 1589 brought the Treshams closer to another family whose religious conservatism spanned the entirety of the sixteenth century. Elizabeth's grandfather, Sir Thomas (Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem), had a relationship with William, Lord Monteagle thirty-five years previously. Whether theirs was a friendship coupled with a patron-client relationship or the latter exclusively is difficult to ascertain. By the late sixteenth century, however, Elizabeth Stanley, daughter of the third Baron Monteagle, brought the title into the Parker family through her marriage with Edward Parker, Baron Morley.<sup>96</sup>

In the early sixteenth century, Henry, tenth Baron Morley (1480/1-1556) harbored anti-clerical sentiments but opposed Protestant reforms.<sup>97</sup> Henry navigated Edward VI's reign rather well through a combination of absence from parliament at key voting times and through demonstrations of loyalty to his king. Yet perhaps this simply reflected his virtue expressed through loyalty to the dynasty he had served since he was a young boy in the household of Lady Margaret Beaufort. In any event, Morley was friendly with Princess Mary from 1536 through the end of his life; he presented at least eight books to her in the ten years between 1537-1547 and

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<sup>95</sup> John Burke and Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland, and Scotland* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: John Russell Smith, 1844), 532; Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 481.

<sup>96</sup> Mark Nicholls, 'Parker, William, thirteenth Baron Morley and fifth or first Baron Monteagle (1574/5–1622)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21345, accessed 2 June 2010]

<sup>97</sup> James P. Carley, 'Parker, Henry, tenth Baron Morley (1480/81–1556)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21305, accessed 15 May 2010]

supported her claim to the throne in 1553. His relief at the queen's reinstitution of Catholicism was palpable.<sup>98</sup>

Henry's grandson, Henry, eleventh Baron Morley (1531/2-1577) exiled himself to France in 1570 when he found himself unable to conform to Queen Elizabeth's religious settlement.<sup>99</sup> He initially claimed that he had to flee because some of the queen's men were out to destroy him; yet by late August that same year he excused his flight as necessary due to a "scruple of conscience" and, in a separate letter to his patron Leicester, asked him to be guardian to his son Edward, who remained in England.<sup>100</sup> His wife and younger children joined him five years later; his heir, Edward, exiled himself to Paris in 1585 shortly after the death of Edward's wife, Elizabeth Stanley, Baroness Monteagle but it is unclear how long he stayed abroad.<sup>101</sup> He was definitely in Essex by February 1592/3 when he was supposed to meet with Sir Thomas Tresham regarding Elizabeth Tresham's jointure.<sup>102</sup>

Despite efforts of the Elizabethan government to raise and educate Catholic heirs in Protestant environments, Edward's heir, William, seems to have eluded the government's grasp. He was raised as a Catholic in the household of his maternal grandfather, William Stanley, Lord Monteagle and was part of the radical Catholic faction that supported Spanish efforts to influence plans for Elizabeth's successor.<sup>103</sup> He was one of the Earl of Essex's circle of friends and clients,

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<sup>98</sup> *ODNB*, 'Parker, Henry, tenth Baron Morley (1480/81–1556)'.

<sup>99</sup> TNA SP 12/71, f. 14r&v and 16r& v; SP 70/112, f. 94r; BL Cotton Caligula C/II f. 246r; *Cal. Salisb. MSS*, vol. 1, 474.

<sup>100</sup> TNA SP 12/73, f. 101r; *Cal. Salisb. MSS*, vol. 1, 483.

<sup>101</sup> *ODNB*, 'Parker, Henry, tenth Baron Morley (1480/81–1556)'.

<sup>102</sup> *HMCV*, 65-66.

<sup>103</sup> *HMCV*, 88-89; Mark Nicholls, 'Parker, William, thirteenth Baron Morley and fifth or first Baron Monteagle (1574/5–1622)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21345>, accessed 15 May 2010]

but managed to avoid serious punishment for his role in the Essex Rebellion. In 1602 he, Robert Catesby, Thomas Winter and possibly also Francis Tresham organized a journey to Spain to seek out assistance for English Catholics. A few years later Monteagle was bound up in the Gunpowder Plot. Correspondence between Monteagle and his friends Thomas Winter and Robert Catesby makes clear that he knew of the plot at least from early October; according to the Jesuit Henry Garnet, Monteagle was involved by July 1605.<sup>104</sup> Under James, Monteagle made every effort to appear a converted Protestant, although the veracity of his claims is doubtful. His wife, Elizabeth Tresham, ran a Catholic household and in 1609 William Waad suspected Monteagle of harboring students from St. Omer's on his estates in Essex.<sup>105</sup>

Monteagle's good friend and confidante, Robert Catesby, hailed from a family deeply embedded in the radical group of Catholic recusants that plotted against both Elizabeth and James. In the first half of the sixteenth century the Catesbys of Ashby St. Ledgers, Northamptonshire and Lapworth, Warwickshire, were regular figures in administrative offices of their two counties. Although the family was well-connected – Robert's great-grandfather Sir Richard Catesby was in his youth the ward of his stepfather, Sir Thomas Lucy and his future father-in-law, Sir John Spencer of Hodnell, Warwickshire – they were also descended from the notorious Sir Richard Empson.<sup>106</sup> Catesby served in various county offices: in the 1540s he was sheriff in Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire; he was a J.P. for Warwickshire

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<sup>104</sup> BL Cotton Titus B ii, f. 292r; Caraman, *Henry Garnet*, 378-381; John Gerard, *Gunpowder Plot*, 118.

<sup>105</sup> *CSPD* James I vol. 7, 533; Gerard, *Gunpowder Plot*, 258. St. Omer's was a Catholic school for upper-status boys (particularly expatriate English Catholic boys) in the Spanish Netherlands. Founded by Robert Parsons, S.J. in the early 1590s, it was a popular spot for gentry and noble English Catholics to send their sons for their education.

<sup>106</sup> They also descended from the branch of the family that was in service to Richard III; Sir Richard's (d. 1553) grandfather, Sir William, one of Richard III's councilors, was beheaded shortly after Henry VII's accession.



from 1537 and for Northamptonshire from 1539; and sat on numerous committees in the 1540s and 1550s.<sup>107</sup>

When Sir Richard died in 1553 his grandson, Sir William, inherited the family's main estates. He spent his childhood in the household of his guardian, Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton, and in 1566 married Throckmorton's daughter Anne. By 1580 Catesby was one of several men arrested on suspicion of harboring the Jesuit Edmund Campion, a group that included his brother-in-law Sir Thomas Tresham and his friend, Lord Vaux. A quarter-century later his son, Robert, and his son-in-law, Thomas Winter, were fellow Gunpowder Plotters. This particular plot marked the culmination of at least a decade of recusancy and intrigue on Robert's part. He harbored the Jesuits Henry Garnet and John Gerard in the mid-1590s; was part of Essex's circle of followers in the late 1590s and was involved in the Essex Rising of 1601; and was involved with attempts to solicit support from Spain in 1603 (an effort in which he was joined by his kinsmen Francis Tresham and William, Lord Monteagle, two other Gunpowder Plot conspirators).<sup>108</sup>

Although the Catesbys are often affiliated with recusancy, the religious trajectory of this family deviates from that of most other recusant Catholic families. Far from being a religious conservative in the mid-Tudor period, as were Sir George Throckmorton, Sir Edward Ferrers, and Sir Thomas Tresham, Catesby seems to have dabbled in evangelical ideas that exceeded the crown's boundaries for reform. In the late 1540s Sir Richard Catesby sued for a pardon for heresy, Lollardy and various other offenses.<sup>109</sup> His son William was certainly a Catholic, and

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<sup>107</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 592.

<sup>108</sup> HMCV, 109; John Gerard, S.J., *The Condition of Catholics under James I: Father Gerard's Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. John Morris, S.J. (London: Longmans, 1872); Mark Nicholls, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot* (Manchester, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Manchester University Press), 11-15.

<sup>109</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. i, 592.

William's son Robert, although a Catholic, might have tried to appear a conformist for a short time in the 1590s. Robert's marriage to Catherine Leigh of Stoneleigh, a Protestant, deviated from the typical marriage patterns of Catholic and recusant families, but is probably explained by Catherine's large dowry. Robert and Catherine's children, William and Robert, were baptized Protestants in the mid-1590s, yet the timing of these baptisms, in 1593 and 1595 respectively, was concurrent with Catesby harboring Garnet and Gerard. Catesby might have engaged in church papism in the interest of domestic harmony and preservation of his finances, but he was at the same time becoming more deeply involved in the Jesuit Mission and in the militant wing of English Catholicism.<sup>110</sup> An indenture of 1582 provides a snapshot of the family's network of friends and relations. Sir William Catesby appointed as trustees "his loving friends Sir Thomas Tresham, Kt., Thomas Morgan, Anthony Tirringham, George Catesbie, Edwarde Catesbie, John Catesbie, [and] William Baldwin."<sup>111</sup>

The Catesbys of Whiston, Northants., were cousins to the Ashby St. Ledgers and Lapworth line through John Catesby (d. c. 1474).<sup>112</sup> Through marriage alliances in the mid-sixteenth century they were also related to the Treshams and the Dormers, religiously conservative families that were well known for their recusancy by the latter decades of the century. Eleanor Catesby married John Tresham of Rushton and was the mother of the noted recusant Sir Thomas Tresham; Eleanor's sister Dorothy wed Sir William Dormer and, later, Sir

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<sup>110</sup> John Gerard, S.J., *The Condition of Catholics under James I*, 55-56; Mark Nicholls, 'Catesby, Robert (*b.* in or after 1572, *d.* 1605)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4883>, accessed 4 March 2010]

<sup>111</sup> NRO ASL/1173 2 June 1582.

<sup>112</sup> William Harvey and Augustine Vincent, *The Visitations of Northamptonshire made in 1564 and 1618-19, with Northamptonshire Pedigrees from various Harleian mss*, ed. Walter C. Metcalfe (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), 173-174.

William Pelham.<sup>113</sup> Their brother, Thomas, wed John Tresham's sister, Isabel. If the family held on to Catholicism at all it did not show in their marriage arrangements: Thomas and Isabel's children married into noted Puritan families such as the Yelvertons.

Similar to the Treshams, the Brudenells of Deene rose to prominence in Northamptonshire through a careful combination of office-holding, investment in land, and sheep-farming. In the early fourteenth century the Brudenells came into ownership of small parcels of land in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. The Crown service that followed – most of which related to legal offices – led to additional land through both purchase and royal grant. By the mid-fifteenth century the family held property in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Essex, as well as the properties in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. By the early sixteenth century, Sir Robert Brudenell's legal expertise established him as an authority, particularly with matters related to the office of Justice of the Peace. His appointment as King's Sergeant in 1505 and elevation to a Justice of the King's Bench in 1506 recognized him as one of the foremost legal minds of the early Tudor years.<sup>114</sup> Brudenell was in the perhaps enviable position of not only having the king's trust but also having the king's mother, the powerful Lady Margaret Beaufort, as his patron.<sup>115</sup> His fortunes rose even higher in the next reign: in 1520 Henry VIII appointed Sir Robert Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and in the following year named him to the King's Council.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> DNB, vol. 46, 256-257. Pelham, a soldier, went to the Netherlands in the company of the Earl of Leicester. He died 24 November 1587.

<sup>114</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 21-22; Finch, *Wealth*, 135.

<sup>115</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 22-3.

<sup>116</sup> J. H. Baker, 'Brudenell, Sir Robert (1461–1531)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3766>, accessed 28 March 2010]; Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 25-6.

Sir Robert accumulated further lands and manors, including Stonton Wyville in Leicestershire and, in 1514, Deene in Northamptonshire. By the early sixteenth century, a bevy of Brudenell cousins and nephews owned or leased land in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland.<sup>117</sup> Brudenell's new neighbors at Deene included the Watsons of Lyddington; Elmses of Lilford; Mordaunts of Drayton; Treshams of Rushton; Vauxes of Harrowden; Fitzwilliams of Milton; the Johnsons of Glapthorne, successful wool-merchants who would become Brudenell's agents in the wool trade; and, from 1528, the Montagus of Boughton.<sup>118</sup> Sir Robert's friends included Guy Palmes, Thomas Pigott, William Smyth, bishop of London, his cousins Edward and William Bulstrode, his brother-in-law John Cheney, and perhaps also the Fitzwilliams of Milton.<sup>119</sup>

Sir Robert's eldest son, Thomas, inherited the bulk of the estate, including Deene in 1531; he established his second son, Anthony, at Stonton Wyville in Leicestershire. Thomas preferred life as a country gentleman to a legal career or life at Court. He served in various county offices such as J.P., sheriff, and assorted commissions yet concentrated most of his efforts on estate matters and his antiquarian interests.<sup>120</sup> He was a merchant of the Staple, one of the most significant English trade organizations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but preferred to transact most of his business through the Johnsons.<sup>121</sup> The careers of his predecessors gave

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<sup>117</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 28.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-18, 31. Sir Robert settled the manor of Stonton Wyville on his second son, Anthony, and his daughter-in-law Jane Elkington.

<sup>120</sup> Finch quite thoroughly discussed Sir Thomas's land purchases and estate consolidation strategies so I will not replicate it here. See Finch, 141.

<sup>121</sup> The two families had been acquainted for at least a generation; in the previous generation at least two members of the Johnson family were in service in the Brudenell households. Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 32; 42-43. As Finch points out, by working through the Johnsons Brudenell avoided not only the fees and taxes assigned to wool merchants at this time but also the costs of traveling to various markets. Finch, *Wealth*, 140-141.

him sufficient security and income from land that he was able to remain fairly removed from his mercantile interests – he seems not to have aspired to high offices such as Mayor of the Staple, as did his father-in-law Sir William Fitzwilliam.<sup>122</sup> Sir Thomas's days were spent consolidating his estate and indulging his antiquarian interests. He, and possibly his wife Elizabeth as well, counted the noted antiquarian John Leland among their friends; Leland stayed with them at Deene several times and spent his days sightseeing throughout the countryside with Sir Thomas.<sup>123</sup>

The couple seems to have enjoyed an amicable relationship – certainly not rent with the discord that plagued the marriage of their eldest son, Edmund. Sir Thomas and Elizabeth had eleven children, ten of whom survived them. All but two of the surviving ten married. Lucy became a Maid of Honour to Anne of Cleves when the displaced queen retired to Lewes as the “king's sister” and walked in her funeral procession in 1557.<sup>124</sup> The marriages of Thomas and Elizabeth's children acquainted the family with the Bussys of Hougham, Lincolnshire; the Everards of Shenton, Leics.; the Talyards of Diddington, Hunts.; Griffin of Braybrooke; Harrington of Witham, Leics., and the Topcliffes of Somerby, Leics. – family of the notorious pursuer and torturer of Catholics, Richard Topcliffe. Although Sir Thomas chose a life away from Court, the marriage of his daughter Mary to the son of the Master of the Rolls and Lucy's position as Maid of Honour to Anne of Cleves allowed the family access to important channels of patronage.

Sir Thomas's heir, Edmund, wed Agnes Bussy in 1539 and inherited from his father a decade later. Like his father, Edmund concentrated his energies on local office-holding,

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<sup>122</sup> Finch, *Wealth*, 100.

<sup>123</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 46-47.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-48; 98n. See also NRO Finch-Hatton MSS, 2.

consolidation of the Brudenell estate, and Renaissance-era pursuits such as architecture and building. This generation of Brudenells did not enjoy domestic harmony. Sir Edmund attempted to exclude his siblings from their inheritance provisions; he fought incessantly with his wife; he was embroiled in a land dispute with Agnes's cousins; he philandered; and he restricted his wife's allowance to the point she could not adequately manage a household without turning to her Bussy relations for loans.<sup>125</sup> These factors, along with his sympathies toward Catholics and her Puritan inclinations, drove mounting marital discord.<sup>126</sup> Agnes's death in 1583 must have given both husband and wife relief from their misery. That same year, Sir Edmund married Audrey Rowe. Their union was brief, however; Audrey died shortly after giving birth to their daughter, also named Audrey. Edmund died the following year, without a male heir.

Despite Edmund's inability to protect domestic harmony, the queen and Privy Council relied on him to maintain the peace and mediate disputes in the county. He sat as J.P. with Sir John Spencer, Sir Richard Knightley, Sir Walter Mildmay, Sir Edward Montagu, Sir Thomas Cecil, and his cousin Sir William Fitzwilliam, and in 1576 served on a commission to investigate the theft of some of Mary Queen of Scots' jewels from Rockingham Castle.<sup>127</sup> In 1580 Sir Edmund, now nearly sixty years old, and his friend Sir William Catesby helped to finance Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage to North America, one aim of which was to establish a colony as a safe-haven for English Catholics. Sir Edmund counted among his friends Catesby, Adrian Stokes, Sir Christopher Hatton and perhaps also Sir Humphrey Stafford.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 71, 142.

<sup>126</sup> The Bussy land dispute was not settled until 1589, at the intervention and arbitration of Hatton and Burghley. Finch, *Wealth*, 143; Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 57-58.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-70; NRO FH 2687; NRO FH 602

Edmund's brother John inherited in 1587 and, with the assistance of Hatton and Burghley, brought an end to the family's long-standing dispute with the Bussys.<sup>129</sup> John headed an overwhelmingly Catholic household. His wife, Mary Everard, his aged sister Lucy (former Maid of Honour to Anne of Cleves), Anne Fletcher, a cousin and his wife, and all of the servants were openly Catholic if not outright recusants. Given this "veritable nest of Papists" over which he presided, John was probably Catholic as well, although if he was he concealed it carefully.<sup>130</sup>

By the turn of the seventeenth century, through friendships and kinship, the Brudenells of Deene were overwhelmingly connected with Catholic families, some of which were among the most prominent recusants in the Midlands. Elizabeth Brudenell Griffin's daughter married Thomas Markham of Kirby Bellars and was the mother of Sir Griffin Markham.<sup>131</sup> John's friends, the Treshams of Rushton, Catesbys of Ashby St. Ledgers, and Mordaunts of Drayton, were three of the most staunchly Catholic families in Northamptonshire. Through their steward, Christopher Blunson, the Brudenells were acquainted with the Jesuit John Percy, Blunson's cousin.<sup>132</sup>

When John died in 1606 his wife, Mary, moved to her property at Glapthorne, near Oundle, and lived there until her death in 1636. The inheritance passed to their nephew Thomas, son of John's younger brother Robert. In the summer of 1605 he wed Mary Tresham of Rushton, daughter of one of the most eminent Catholic families in England. His father-in-law, Sir Thomas Tresham, was a sick man throughout the summer and died that September, aged 62. His brother-

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<sup>129</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 89-93. Edmund's brother Thomas inherited prior to John but his tenure lasted only two years. His main contribution to the family narrative was to continue to try to resolve the Bussy dispute (albeit unsuccessfully).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 97n, 98.

<sup>132</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 379-380.

in-law, Francis, died in prison several months later in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot. Brudenell was a particularly attentive son-in-law to Muriel, Sir Thomas's widow. Francis's attainder placed in jeopardy Tresham property and finances; Brudenell audited Muriel's books and helped her with her case in the Court of Exchequer in 1607.<sup>133</sup> He was her sole executor when she died in 1616.<sup>134</sup>

Sir Thomas Brudenell served as both J.P. and deputy lieutenant in James's reign, which was probably the result of some equivocation on Brudenell's part and an indication that society's fear of Catholics in the early years of the reign had begun to abate.<sup>135</sup> His chief interests, however, were in historical matters currently in fashion: genealogy, family history, heraldry and antiquities. He frequented archives in London and the muniments rooms of his friends, where he copied in his own hand documents he considered significant enough to have in his own collections at Deene. In 1611 Sir Thomas was amongst the first group of English gentlemen to receive a baronetcy from James I, along with Sir George Shirley and Sir Lewis Tresham. In 1628, he was elevated as a baron. He and his wife, Mary Tresham, became acquainted with King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria during their frequent visits into Northamptonshire. By the mid-1630s Sir Thomas had moved into the queen's inner circle as one of her favorites.<sup>136</sup>

Like many other families during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, such as the Treshams, Catesbys, Throckmortons, and Hastingses, the Brudenells were religiously diverse and had friends whose religious beliefs differed from their own. In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries family friends included Lollards, although the Brudenells did not profess to be

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<sup>133</sup> Wake, *Brudenells of Deene*, 104.

<sup>134</sup> TNA PROB/11/127.

<sup>135</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 106.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.



Lollards themselves. In the early sixteenth century, as the first hints of Protestant thought and reform arrived in England, Sir Robert Brudenell remained an orthodox Catholic. He endowed a chantry at Billesden, Leics., and according to Wake was no advocate of early Protestant ideas, although his son and heir, Sir Thomas, seems to have embraced Protestantism.<sup>137</sup> At least two children of Sir Thomas and his wife, Elizabeth Fitzwilliam, were Catholics: their fourth and fifth sons, Robert and William, and possibly also their daughter Elizabeth.<sup>138</sup> Robert's wife, Catherine Talyard of Diddington, Hunts., inculcated a strong Catholicism in her children, including two heirs to the Deene inheritance, Sir Edmund and his brother John. Sir Edmund, John, and the next heir, Sir Thomas, conformed outwardly but headed households that were beehives of Catholic activity. Sir Thomas was presented as a recusant several times in the first decade of James's reign (although he was seldom convicted) and was disarmed in 1613 on the grounds that he was a Catholic sympathizer.<sup>139</sup>

The Brudenells' near neighbor, Edward Watson of Rockingham Castle (1549-1617), was religiously conservative but conformed to the state church. The favor he showed to Northamptonshire recusants such as Thomas Colwell and Sir Thomas Tresham sparked suspicions about his own Catholicism at times but he remained a fixture in Northamptonshire political office and was held in high esteem in the county. He was a J.P. from 1577, served on a commission regarding priests in 1591, was sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1591-2, and served as a commissioner for the musters in 1595-6 and again in 1605. Furthermore, the Watsons were

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>138</sup> William was an "openly professing Catholic" who was presented for recusancy at least once, in 1577. Ibid., 49; C.R.S. vol. XXII, 74-75.

<sup>139</sup> Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene*, 117; 'Middlesex Sessions Rolls: 1611', *Middlesex county records: Volume 2: 1603-25* (1887), pp. 70-78. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=65987> Date accessed: 04 May 2010.

overseers of the Rockingham Forest, a privilege connected with their ownership of the Rockingham estate and which carried a great deal of local authority.<sup>140</sup> Through his mother, Dorothy Montagu he was related to the Calvinist Montagus of Boughton; his marriage to Anne Digby connected him to Sir Kenelm Digby (d. 1590), who was friends with the Cecils and perhaps part of the Cecil clientage.<sup>141</sup> In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Edward and Anne's friendships ranged from prominent recusants such as the Treshams to prominent statesmen such as the Cecils. The relationship with the Treshams was a social one; the Watsons were guests at a dinner party at the Tresham's Rushton estate in 1585.<sup>142</sup> The family's inner circle is evident in the list of executors for his father's will in 1584, which included Sir Edward Montagu and Sir Thomas Tresham.<sup>143</sup> The Watsons remained close to their Montagu cousins through at least the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>144</sup>

## Warwickshire

The Throckmortons of Coughton were one of the most prominent and influential families in Warwickshire and the West Midlands by the early sixteenth century.<sup>145</sup> By mid-century Sir

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<sup>140</sup> D. O., "Watson, Edward (c. 1549-1617), of Rockingham, Northants," available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/watson-edward-1549-1617> [accessed 04 January 2012].

<sup>141</sup> Roger Virgoe, "Digby, Kenelm (d. 1590), of Stoke Dry, Rutland," available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/digby-kenelm-1590> [accessed 04 January 2012].

<sup>142</sup> Wise, *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons*, 36.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>145</sup> For a thorough discussion of Sir George Throckmorton's career in the governing structure of the West Midlands and as a Member of Parliament, see Peter Marshall, "Crisis of Allegiance: George Throckmorton and Henry Tudor" in *Catholic Gentry in English Society: the Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation*, Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, eds. (Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 31-67.

George (1489-1552) and his sons had established a veritable empire of office-holding in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, assisted by the family's connection to the Parrs and positions as clients of the Dudleys. In 1550, aged 61, Sir George was apparently still vigorous enough for the Earl of Warwick, lord lieutenant of the county of Warwick, to appoint him as his deputy lieutenant. Sir George and his fellow deputies, Sir Richard Catesby and Sir Fulke Greville, were chiefly responsible for holding musters and for ensuring the county militia was prepared for immediate response to a crisis.<sup>146</sup> A few years later his son and heir, Sir Robert, served in the same capacity, along with Queen Mary's substantial gift of the offices of constable of Warwick Castle and constable and steward of the manor, town, and borough of Warwick.<sup>147</sup> By the late 1560s, the Catholic recusant branch of the family was no longer serving in local political office, which left Throckmorton representation in county and borough administration to the Protestant Throckmortons of Haseley. During James's reign, around 1610, the Catholic Throckmortons moved back into local office-holding. Still, the family did not recapture the mandate they had in county government during the lifetime of Sir George.

Despite the weakening of the political life of the Coughton Throckmortons the family remained one of the chief families in the Warwickshire social hierarchy. Sir George's marriage to Katherine Vaux brought him into the kinship network of two of the most powerful courtier families of the early sixteenth century: the Vauxes of Harrowden and the Parrs of Kendal.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> WRO CR1998/72/15.

<sup>147</sup> WRO CR1998/72/16; WRO CR1998/72/14.

<sup>148</sup> Katherine Vaux's mother, Elizabeth Fitzhugh, first married Sir William Parr of Kendal with whom she had four children. After Parr died in 1483 Elizabeth wed Nicholas, first Baron Vaux, with whom she also had children. Thus, her children with Lord Vaux were half-siblings with her children by Parr. Three of Elizabeth's grandchildren were Queen Katherine Parr; William, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Northampton; and Anne Parr, Countess of Pembroke. The Vaux inheritance, however, descended through a son borne by Lord Vaux's second wife, Anne Green. Thus, some descendants, such as the Throckmortons, shared a blood relationship with the Parrs, while their Vaux half-siblings by Anne Green were related to the Parrs by marriage.

Although the Throckmorton family's rise into coveted positions at court was related to the ascendancy of their Parr relatives, their Vaux grandfather's high status at court was probably also a crucial factor in securing position and favor. In fact, it was probably through his stepfather, Sir Nicholas Vaux, that Sir William Parr got his start at court in 1506. By 1532 Parr, as steward to Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, was in a position to facilitate young Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's entry into Fitzroy's household.<sup>149</sup> In the 1530s and 1540s Sir Nicholas and Kenelm served in the Parr retinue; when their cousin Katherine Parr wed Henry VIII both Sir Nicholas and Clement served in her royal household. Queen Katherine's patronage helped to start and maintain Throckmorton sons – particularly those who shared the queen's Protestant inclinations – in their Parliamentary careers.<sup>150</sup> In the late sixteenth century, the family's position as clients of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his brother Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, helped to buttress their social prominence in Warwickshire.<sup>151</sup>

The social prominence of the family is also evident in their marriage alliances. Sir George and Katherine's daughter Mary wed Sir John Hubaud, Constable of Kenilworth, High Steward to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and one of Leicester's principal servants.<sup>152</sup> This must have strengthened the bond the family already had with their patrons, the Dudleys. Robert

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<sup>149</sup> Stanford Lehmberg, 'Throckmorton, Sir Nicholas (1515/16–1571)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27394>, accessed 13 May 2010]; Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. iii, 60-61, 459.

<sup>150</sup> She influenced Sir Nicholas's return for Maldon, Essex in 1545, Clement's election for Devizes, Wiltshire in Henry VIII's last parliament, and Kenelm's for Westbury, Wiltshire in Edward VI's first parliament. *ODNB*, 'Throckmorton, Sir Nicholas (1515/16–1571)', [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27394>, accessed 13 May 2010]; Bindoff, *The Commons* v. iii, 457-460.

<sup>151</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 3r; LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 41r; Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 154-164.

<sup>152</sup> 'Parishes: Ipsley', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), pp. 123-126. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56995&strquery=huband> Date accessed: 12 May 2010 Mary was born c. 1530 so the wedding must have occurred c. 1550. Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 154-5, 244.

Throckmorton's presentment of Hubaud's uncle Thomas to the parish of Spennall sometime prior to 1588 suggests an ongoing and amicable relationship between the families.<sup>153</sup> Their son Anthony married Catherine Willington, the daughter of a wealthy Warwickshire gentleman and widow of Sir William Catesby of Ashby St. Legers, Northamptonshire.<sup>154</sup> Their daughter Catherine married Robert Winter, who through his sister's marriage was related to the Talbots of Grafton and the earls of Shrewsbury. Anne Throckmorton wed John Digby of Solihull, another of the leading families of Warwickshire. The continuity of friendship and kinship with the families into which Catherine and Anne married was unmistakable in the early seventeenth century, particularly with the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

In the century following the Reformation the intermarriages of the Throckmortons with the Treshams, Ardens, Sheldons, Jerninghams, Berkeleys Digbys and Fortescues situated the family in the midst of a powerful Catholic network.<sup>155</sup> The marriage of Sir George's grandson, Thomas, to Margaret Whorwood provided a direct kinship connection to the household of the Earl of Warwick, since Margaret's sister Anne was the wife of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick.<sup>156</sup> Thomas and Margaret's grandson, Robert, wed Dorothy Fortescue; Dorothy came from a notable family well-connected to channels of patronage. Her grandfather, Sir John Fortescue was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1590s and her father, Sir Francis, was a Knight

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<sup>153</sup> 'Parishes: Ipsley', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), pp. 123-126.  
URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56995&strquery=huband> Date accessed: 12 May 2010

<sup>154</sup> Burke's *Landed Gentry*, vol. iv, 527.

<sup>155</sup> Through the Jerningham marriage, the Throckmortons were connected to the Dacres of Gillesland and Greystoke and to the Brownes of Sussex, the latter being the family of the Viscount Montague, a powerful south-coast recusant family. Henry Jerningham's mother, Eleanor Dacre Jerningham, was a sister of Magdalen Dacre Browne, Viscountess Montague. Furthermore, Anne Dacre Howard, Countess of Arundel, was Eleanor Dacre's sister and thus Henry Jerningham's cousin. For Anne Throckmorton's marriage to John Digby of Solihull, see WRO CR1998/Box 72/4.

<sup>156</sup> Arthur Collins, *English Baronetage* vol. 2, 362.

of the Bath and Member of Parliament despite suspicions about the family's religious stance.<sup>157</sup>

Both men were in the clientage of the Cecil family. In the first half of the seventeenth century Throckmorton family friends included the Brudenells of Deene, the Salways of Wellingborough, the Mordaunts of Drayton, the Habingtons of Hindlip (Worcestershire), the Packingtons of Harvington Hall and the Huddlestons of Sawston (Cambridgeshire), all of whom were religiously conservative and many of whom were Catholic recusants.<sup>158</sup> Yet they had non-Catholic friends as well, including the Temples of Burton Dassett, Warwickshire and Stowe, Buckinghamshire.<sup>159</sup> Many of these relationships endured through multiple generations. Interactions with the Parrs continued through at least the late sixteenth century: a Thomas Parr served in Sir Thomas Throckmorton's household in the 1590s.<sup>160</sup> Even in 1654 there was still a steady traffic of messengers between the Throckmorton and Sheldon households.<sup>161</sup> In the early seventeenth century the Throckmortons conveyed land to the Digbys and leased houses to the Winters, the extended family of Sir George's daughter Catherine.<sup>162</sup> They were embedded enough with the families and networks of radical Catholic anti-government plotters that their seat at Coughton became a focal point in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

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<sup>157</sup> Sir Francis sat in Parliament for the town of Buckingham in 1592 and 1597 and went as knight of the shire in 1600. Thomas (Fortescue) Lord Clermont, *A History of the Family of Fortescue in all its Branches*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. (London: Ellis and White, 1880), 417.

<sup>158</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 2, f. 16r; WRO CR1998/LWB, f. 4; WRO CR1998/Carved Box/39/ff. 3-6; The account books of the Packingtons of Harvington Hall, Worcs., probably landed among the Throckmorton Papers after the marriage between the two families in the early eighteenth century, WRO CR1998/LCB/43, 44.

<sup>159</sup> HEH, STT 1938; STT 1946. My thanks to Rosemary O'Day for calling my attention to this document in the Temple Papers in the Huntington Library, and to the friendship that existed between the Throckmorton and Temple families.

<sup>160</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 86, f. 11r.

<sup>161</sup> WRO CR1998/Carved Box/39/f. 3v

<sup>162</sup> Birmingham City Archives MS 3888/A 1012 & 1013.

These relationships were reinforced by sending children to be raised and educated in one another's homes. Sir Thomas Tresham and Sir William Catesby were raised in the Throckmorton household in the mid-Tudor period. Muriel Throckmorton was raised in the household of Katherine Pole Hastings, second Countess of Huntingdon. In the early seventeenth century Thomas Throckmorton's grandchildren, Thomas and Margaret, were raised in the household of their maternal grandparents, the Wilfords, while their brother Robert resided with his in-laws, the Fortescues at Salden.<sup>163</sup>

The Reformation left the Throckmortons divided in their religious preferences, as it did many families.<sup>164</sup> Sir George and Katherine, their eldest son Robert, and at least two of their daughters, Anne and Catherine, remained Catholics; their seventh son, John of Feckenham (Worcs.) "swore whatever oaths were required of him" while his Catholic wife and children were recusants.<sup>165</sup> Kenelm, Sir Nicholas and George were Protestants, and at least one son, Clement of Haseley (Warcks.) was a Calvinist. Although they differed in religious belief and practice, the various branches of the family remained connected to one another socially and economically.<sup>166</sup> For example, Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton visited his Protestant cousin Arthur Throckmorton at Paulersbury, Northamptonshire in July 1603.<sup>167</sup> The Coughton and Feckenham lines, both Catholic, supported one another through decades of financial penalties that resulted

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<sup>163</sup> W. R. O., CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 26v.

<sup>164</sup> See Claire Cross, *The Puritan Earl: the life of Henry Hastings third Earl of Huntingdon, 1536-1595* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Norman L. Jones, *The English Reformation*.

<sup>165</sup> Peter Marshall, "Faith and Identity in a Warwickshire Family: The Throckmortons and the Reformation," *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, no. 49 (Bristol: 4word Ltd, 2010), 13.

<sup>166</sup> The exception was the lack of any visible connection with their distant cousins, the Throckmortons of Totworth, Gloucestershire. According to Burke, the common ancestors were John Throckmorton and Isabelle Bruges Throckmorton in the early fifteenth centuries. Yet it might also be the case that the two families were not biologically connected at all, since no indication whatsoever of a family connection appears in their family papers nor in official sources. Burke, *Genealogical History*, 83.

<sup>167</sup> HH, CP 101/89 (HMCS, vol. 15, 207).

from recusancy and involvement in anti-government plots in the 1580s. Male descent of the Feckenham line died with Thomas in 1595. The Coughton and Haseley family members, although they sat on opposite sides of the doctrinal spectrum, had in common their disagreement with Elizabethan religious policy. Clement's grandson, Job, was possibly one of the authors of the subversive Puritan Martin Marprelate tracts in the 1580s.<sup>168</sup> His passionate commitment to Puritan ideals excluded him from local and county offices and the income stream that would have accompanied those offices.

The Throckmorton network in the early sixteenth century benefited the family's wards as well as their own children. After Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton died in 1526, Elizabeth, Lady Englefield purchased the wardship of his young son, Edward.<sup>169</sup> Lady Englefield, the sister of Sir George Throckmorton and the sister-in-law of Katherine Vaux, would have had her family's networks available for the promotion of her young ward as well as for her own children. S. T. Bindoff speculates that young Edward might have followed the same educational trajectory as did Throckmorton sons, including studies at the Middle Temple, but it is equally probable that Edward was privately educated with Lady Englefield's son, Francis, especially since the two young men were nearly the same age.<sup>170</sup> The recent royal marriage of the Throckmortons' kinswoman, Katherine Parr, might have helped Ferrers to begin his career at court, but Lady

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<sup>168</sup> R. Tudur Jones, Arthur Long, Rosemary Moore, eds., *Tudor Nonconformist Texts* vol. 1, 1550-1700 (Aldershot, Hants., U.K.; Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2007), 87; Leland H. Carlson, *Master Marprelate, Gentleman: Job Throckmorton Laid Open in His Colors* (San Marino, C.A.: Huntington Library Press, 1981).

<sup>169</sup> Sir Edward Ferrers acquired Baddesley Clinton from Nicholas Brome in the early sixteenth century as part of a marriage settlement between Ferrers and Brome's daughter, Constance. Constance was co-heir with her sister, Isabel, who married one Morrow. Isabel's daughter, Dorothy, married Francis Cokayne. The Cokaynes and Ferrers appear on one another's legal documents into the seventeenth century. 'Parishes: Baddesley Clinton', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 4: Hemlingford Hundred* (1947), pp. 13-19. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42646> Date accessed: 10 April 2010.

<sup>170</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. ii, 128; A. J. Loomie, 'Englefield, Sir Francis (1522-1596)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8811>, accessed 10 April 2010]



Englefield could just as easily have facilitated her ward's entrée at court using her Vaux or Englefield connections. In any event, Edward, along with George Throckmorton, was at court briefly around the age of 20, as steward of the chamber by 1545 and as a gentleman pensioner by 1549.<sup>171</sup> He went to Parliament for Warwick in 1553 and sat as J.P. for Warwickshire in 1555, after which he did not hold even minor local offices.<sup>172</sup> The last appearance he made on the national stage was as a gentleman pensioner at Mary I's funeral.

In addition to the powerful connections afforded Ferrers through his relationship with the Englefields, the marriage of his aunt Anne to Valentine Knightley connected him to the Puritan Knightleys of Fawsley, Northamptonshire and by extension to their friends, the Puritan Montagus of Boughton and the Hastingses of Leicestershire, family of the earls of Huntingdon.<sup>173</sup> Edward Ferrers's marriage in 1548 to Bridget Windsor, daughter of William, second Baron Windsor introduced him to the social networks of his wife's family. Despite his connections and his several manors, Sir Edward remained plagued by financial difficulties throughout his life, perhaps an indication that he was not as skilled in the art of estate consolidation and estate management as were some of his contemporaries, such as the Treshams of Northamptonshire or the Brudenells of Deene.

Scholars such as Bindoff have maintained that Ferrers's failure to progress further at Court was the result of the financial quagmire in which he consistently found himself, yet it is possible that his financial problems were exacerbated by the company he kept and the behavior

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<sup>171</sup> According to Bindoff, Ferrers's title as gentleman pensioner lasted from 1549 until his death in 1564. He was not, however, in attendance at Court throughout that period. His chief duties were as a mourner at the funerals of both Edward VI and Mary I. Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. ii, 128.

<sup>172</sup> T.N.A. SP 11/5, ff. 53r, 53v.

<sup>173</sup> Cross, *Letters of Sir Francis Hastings*, xviii; William Joseph Sheils, 'Knightley, Sir Richard (1533–1615)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15744>, accessed 6 April 2010].

of individuals in his inner circle.<sup>174</sup> Lady Englefield's son, Sir Francis, was a member of Princess Mary's household who supported his mistress's Catholic practice during the reign of Edward VI and was jailed in connection with Mary's Catholicism from August 1551 to March 1552. Early in Elizabeth's reign Englefield received permission to travel abroad but refused to return to England when Elizabeth summoned him and subsequently became deeply embedded with the community of English Catholic exiles abroad. Ferrers's ideological stance as a religious conservative, his personal associations with Catholics at home and abroad, his fiduciary troubles and poor estate management might have combined to prohibit further office-holding. When Ferrers died in 1564 his widow Bridget wed a family friend, Andrew Ognall, who subsequently purchased the wardship of Ferrers's heir, Henry (b. 1550).<sup>175</sup> Ognall and his relations remained a strong and seemingly positive presence throughout Henry's life.

Henry remains the best-known member of the Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Henry trained in law at the Middle Temple but made his reputation as an antiquarian and expert on Warwickshire history.<sup>176</sup> He was active in antiquarian circles and shared his copious knowledge of Warwickshire history with his friend, Willam Dugdale.<sup>177</sup> Ferrers was so well regarded as an authority on Warwickshire history that Dugdale once accepted Ferrers's report of an event rather than researching it for himself.<sup>178</sup> On at

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<sup>174</sup> Bindoff, *The Commons* vol. ii, 128.

<sup>175</sup> SCLA DR 3/316. Ognall must have been a family friend prior to Sir Edward's death; he witnessed Ferrers's agreements as late as December 1563, several months prior to Sir Edward's death in 1564.

<sup>176</sup> Jan Broadway, 'Ferrers, Henry (1550–1633)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9362>, accessed 6 April 2010]

<sup>177</sup> *ODNB*, 'Ferrers, Henry (1550–1633).'

<sup>178</sup> Jan Broadway, "Aberrant Accounts: William Dugdale's Handling of Two Tudor Murders in *The Antiquities of Warwickshire*" *Midland History* vol. 33, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 5. Dugdale's acceptance of Ferrers's oral report is so significant because it represents a rare deviation from Dugdale's otherwise strict adherence to building his historical accounts from documented sources he could cite. It was upon this rigorous methodology that Dugdale built his

least two occasions Henry Ferrers rented his properties to Catholics with deeply subversive ties: in the early 1590s he leased the family seat at Baddesley Clinton to Anne Vaux and Eleanor Brokesby and in 1604 rented his London house situated next door to the Houses of Parliament to Thomas Percy, one of the architects of the Gunpowder Treason the following year. Baddesley Clinton was subject to a raid at least once, in 1591 during the Vaux-Brokesby tenancy, due to reports of Jesuit activity in the household.<sup>179</sup>

Jan Broadway has argued that Henry's diary indicates that he was religiously conservative.<sup>180</sup> Yet it is not clear whether he was a practicing Catholic – he was never presented for recusancy and continued to hold public offices late into Elizabeth's reign. In 1582 Henry wed Jane White; Jane died four years later but the couple had at least two surviving children, Edward and Mary. The family still held the advowson of the Baddesley Clinton parish living in 1643, despite suspicions over their religion.<sup>181</sup>

The Ferrerses' connection with the Bromes of Brome Court, Warwickshire began with the marriage of Henry's great-grandparents, Sir Edward Ferrers and Constance Brome, very early in the sixteenth century. It was a durable relationship; well past Constance Brome Ferrers's death in 1551 the families continued to lease land to one another, stood surety for one another, and witnessed each another's legal documents. In fact, it seems that the Bromes and their descendants, the Cokaynes, regularly rescued the Ferrerses from financial collapse into the early

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reputation as a respected antiquarian. Dugdale's willingness to deviate from his usual method underscores the excellent reputation and store of credit that Ferrers had built in the community of antiquarians.

<sup>179</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 186-192; Stonyhurst College *Anglia* I, f. 73r&v; Gerard, *Autobiography*, 108.

<sup>180</sup> Henry Ferrers's diary, along with other personal papers, is included in BL Add MS 4102.

<sup>181</sup> SCLA DR 3/757.

seventeenth century.<sup>182</sup> Henry Ferrers's circle of friends and supporters included his brothers-in-law John Wilkinson and John Ferrers of Fiddington; the family of his stepfather, Andrew Ognall; the Catholic Throckmortons of Coughton; and antiquarians such as William Dugdale.<sup>183</sup>

Although the Baddesley Clinton line were cousins to the Ferrerses of Tamworth (on the Warwickshire-Staffordshire border), the two branches of the family did not have much contact with one another. They had some friends and relations in common, such as Edward Oldnall and their cousins Francis, Dorothy and Edward Cockayne; these names appear as mortgage-holders and as witnesses to various legal documents for both branches of the family but contact between the two families was rare and a relationship cannot be surmised based merely on kinship.<sup>184</sup> The Tamworth Ferrerses shared a closer connection with the Throckmortons of Haseley than they did with their Baddesley Clinton cousins, perhaps a reflection of the shared religious sensibilities between the Ferrerses of Tamworth and the Throckmortons of Haseley, who were both Protestant. The lack of a relationship between the Tamworth and Baddesley Clinton Ferrerses might have been a product of divergent religious beliefs but it just as equally could have been related to other factors. Certainly, the failure of the two branches of this family to remain connected is an exception among the other families in this study, even those whose members disagreed on doctrinal matters.

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<sup>182</sup> The Bromes and Cokaynes held mortgages and stood surety for the Ferrerses into the second decade of the seventeenth century. In 1595 George Brome and Walter Gifford stood surety for their cousin, Henry Ferrers; Walter Gifford did the same fifteen years later. In 1609 Stephan Brome witnessed one of Henry Ferrers's leases. SCLA DR 3/554; SCLA DR 3/340; SCLA DR 3/337; SCLA DR 3/360; SCLA DR 3/361.

<sup>183</sup> John Wilkinson witnessed several of Henry's legal documents in the early years of the seventeenth century. SCLA DR 3/572; John Ferrers of Fiddington paid an annuity to Henry and his son Edward (b. 1585) in 1616, and made them a loan that same year, SCLA DR 3/377 at 333; SCLA DR 3/378. For the Throckmortons see WRO CR/2981/Dining Room/Wooden Chest/Box 7/Box 22, f. 15r &v.

<sup>184</sup> SCLA DR 3/367; DR 3/613; DR 3/466; NRO C 2063; In 1578 Humphrey Ferrers of Tamworth and Thomas Cockayne were co-feoffees of the Warwickshire manor of Stivichall, SCLA DR 10/2549.

## Networks and Patronage

Family networks provided valuable connections to both patrons and clients for members of the aristocracy. For the gentry and nobility generally these relationships were important in underscoring a family's social prominence and influence in their neighborhood and their county. For Catholics these relationships were of even greater importance: they emphasized that Catholics were not a marginalized "other" but remained integral components of the social and economic hierarchy of their neighborhood and their county. Patronage and clientage also helped to shield Catholics – particularly recusant Catholics – from the financial and legal penalties brought on by their nonconformity and even, for some, the penalties they faced for acts against the state.<sup>185</sup>

The large cache of surviving family papers for the Treshams of Rushton allows for an extensive reconstruction of their patronage relationships in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and illuminates the role of networks in one family's patronage relationships. The Treshams cultivated and maintained an array of patrons, all of whom had a presence in the various networks the Treshams inhabited. The Earl and Countess of Bedford were neighbors of the Treshams in Northamptonshire; the Countess was Lady Tresham's aunt and patroness; the Earl was guardian of Rockingham Forest when Sir Thomas Tresham was a minor forest official there in the 1570s.<sup>186</sup> Lady Tresham's uncle, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, was a family patron until his death in February 1571/2; in a letter of 1568 Sir Thomas referred to Sir Nicholas as "my Master."<sup>187</sup> Another of Lady Tresham's uncles, John Throckmorton,

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<sup>185</sup> The role of patrons and patronage in reducing the legal penalties for radical Catholics is examined in Chapter Six.

<sup>186</sup> The Earl of Bedford was lord of the manor of Oundle from 1549-50 to 1585, when he died. He settled the manor on his wife, Bridget, in 1580, with remainder to his male heirs. VCH 'Parishes: Oundle', *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 3* (1930), pp. 85-101. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx>? Date accessed: 14 September 2010.

brokered patronage for the Treshams at least once: following Francis Tresham's involvement in the Essex Rebellion. Sir Thomas's cousin, Thomas Tresham of Newton, lived across the road from Rushton and offered his advice and protection to the main branch of the family. After his death in the early seventeenth century his descendants continued the relationship. Edward Watson of Rockingham Castle was a friend, neighbor and patron. William Wickham, bishop of Lincoln was a garden enthusiast and remained friendly with Sir Thomas long after Tresham's incarceration in the bishop's palace. After Wickham's death Tobie Matthew, bishop of Durham took on some of Wickham's clients, including Sir Thomas.<sup>188</sup> Tresham and his brother William were clients of their Northamptonshire neighbor, Sir Christopher Hatton. The family's primary patrons, however, were the Cecils – William, Lord Burghley and his sons Sir Thomas and Sir Robert. Very rarely did Sir Thomas seek assistance from a patron outside of his family, cultural or county networks, and then he appealed to a top statesman, Sir Francis Walsingham.<sup>189</sup>

William Tresham, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and William Parker, Lord Monteagle were courtiers whose positions helped to tether their families to the monarch and the political center. As mentioned above, the Treshams relied on Lady Muriel's uncle, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, for patronage in the 1560s and early 1570s. Although the surviving evidence does not reveal much information about patronage efforts William Tresham made on behalf of his family group, his close proximity to Sir Christopher Hatton and the family's references to Hatton as a patron strongly suggest that William Tresham brokered patronage for his family.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> TNA SP15/14, f. 4v.

<sup>188</sup> *HMCV*, 115-116.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45. It appears that this effort was unsuccessful, despite initially appearing promising. See *HMCV*, 61. The strategy of maintaining multiple patrons is explored in further detail in Chapter Six.

The Throckmortons of Coughton had several extended family members as patrons, including Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and their cousins the Middlemores. Until his death in 1572 Sir Nicholas was certainly the most powerful connection the family had to the monarch, the court and the state. After Sir Nicholas's death his steward and cousin, Henry Middlemore, served in Queen Elizabeth's household from at least 1585 and as a groom of the queen's privy chamber from c. 1588. As such he provided a crucial connection to the court for his Throckmorton cousins.<sup>191</sup> The Middlemores held positions at court in close proximity to the monarch well into James I's reign: Henry's son Robert was equerry to James I and his daughter Mary was one of Queen Anne's Maids of Honour.<sup>192</sup>

Furthermore, through Sir Nicholas and his brothers, Sir John and Clement Throckmorton, the family belonged to the clientage of the powerful Dudley family. Sir Nicholas, Sir John and Clement Throckmorton had been members of the Earl of Northumberland's retinue from at least 1553 and were among the very few of Northumberland's servants that also appeared in Robert Dudley's household. Simon Adams has noted that of the eight men who made the transition from Northumberland's household to that of his son, the Earl of Leicester, the Throckmortons provided three – nearly half of the “first generation” of Leicester's clientage.<sup>193</sup> The relationship provided benefit to both families. In the 1560s, for instance, the Earl of Leicester relied on Sir John Throckmorton, recorder of Coventry in Warwickshire, to help facilitate Leicester's

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<sup>190</sup> BL Add MS 15891, f. 81; BL Add MS 39828, ff. 72; BL Add MS 39828, f. 78; *HMCV*, 23-24; Sir Nicholas Harris Nicholas, *Memoirs of the life and times of Sir Christopher Hatton, K.G.* .... (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), 351-353.

<sup>191</sup> Nicholas, *Sir Christopher Hatton*, 301.

<sup>192</sup> *HMCS* vol. 1, 266; Joseph Lemuel Chester, ed., *The Marriage, baptismal, and burial registers of the collegiate church or abbey of St. Peter*, Westminster (London: [private], 1876), 114.

<sup>193</sup> Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 154-5. It is possible that Sir John Throckmorton's parliamentary seat in 1553 was due to Northumberland's patronage.

influence in the town; he rewarded Throckmorton's efforts with Dudley patronage.<sup>194</sup> Sir George Throckmorton wed his daughter Mary to Sir John Hubaud, who was "one of Leicester's closest servants."<sup>195</sup> Sir George's grandson, Thomas, married Margaret Whorwood, whose older sister Anne had been Ambrose Dudley's first wife.<sup>196</sup> Through these marriage alliances the Throckmortons were able to solicit patronage from within their greater family network and from a family group much more powerful than their own.

By the 1570s, the Throckmortons' relationship with the Dudleys had weakened, due in part to a rupture in the patron-client relationship between the family's chief patron, Sir Nicholas, and the Earl of Leicester.<sup>197</sup> Although both the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Warwick continued to extend forms of social patronage to the Throckmortons in the 1570s and 1580s, they no longer provided the Throckmortons with political support. Instead the brothers preferred to consolidate their authority in Warwickshire via their own political appointments and influence. Still, Warwick's third wife, Anne Russell Dudley, Countess of Warwick continued to offer her patronage to Thomas Throckmorton in the 1590s, after her husband's death. As a member of the queen's Privy Chamber, the countess was in an ideal position to act as a patron. By 1594, a few years after the deaths of Robert and Ambrose Dudley, Thomas Throckmorton had joined the

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<sup>194</sup> Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 164, 336.

<sup>195</sup> Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 244. Hubaud was also sometimes spelled Huband; William Dugdale in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* explained that the name derived from "Hubald" and referred to them as Hubaud. Simon Adams, too, spells the name Hubaud. William Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.... (Printed at London by Thomas Warren, 1656), 550. Available at <http://www.archive.org/details/antiquitiesofwar00dugd>. Date accessed: 12 January 2012

<sup>196</sup> Shortly after her father's death in 1545, Anne Whorwood became the ward of John Dudley, Viscount Lisle. By the following year she had wed his son, Ambrose Dudley. Bindoff, *The Commons, 1509-1558*, vol. iv, 610. She died in May 1552, on the same day as her two-year-old son John Dudley. Within a month, Northumberland acquired the wardship and marriage of Anne's younger sister, Margaret, who married Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton.

<sup>197</sup> The change in the relationship and the ramifications for Throckmorton family clientage is examined in detail in Chapter Six.



clientage of Sir Robert Cecil.<sup>198</sup> His son and heir, John Throckmorton, was a Cecil client as well.<sup>199</sup> Cecil was not part of any of the visible Throckmorton networks. It is possible that Throckmorton was able to form this relationship through his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Tresham, who was a Cecil client, or through one of his kinsmen, such as Arthur Throckmorton of Paulersbury. It is also possible, although less likely, that he made the connection on his own.

The ascendancy at court of William Parker, Lord Monteagle, shortly after King James's accession helped to connect recusant members of his family group to the state and provided them with a valuable stream of patronage.<sup>200</sup> Lord Monteagle's sister, Mary Parker, had married into the recusant Habington family of Hindlip in Worcestershire. As relatives of the Babingtons and suspected of a role in the Babington Conspiracy of 1586, the family was associated with insurrection and remained under scrutiny into the seventeenth century.<sup>201</sup> After the Gunpowder Plot Mary Habington, Monteagle's sister, petitioned the king for her husband's pardon.<sup>202</sup> As a nobleman's daughter and sister, Mary Parker Habington would have been accustomed to both the receipt and distribution of patronage, and would have been well informed as to how to navigate the patronage system.<sup>203</sup> Rather than appeal directly to the king, Lady Habington relied on her brother, Lord Monteagle, as her broker. Although Monteagle and his sister were raised as

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<sup>198</sup> HH, CP 49/86 (*HMCS* vol. 7, 135); *HMCS* vol. 4, 571.

<sup>199</sup> *HMCS* vol. 9, 193.

<sup>200</sup> BL Add MS 19402.

<sup>201</sup> Thomas Habington's older brother, Edward, was executed for his role in the plot of his cousin, Anthony Babington, to murder Queen Elizabeth. Broadway, "To equall their virtues," 4.

<sup>202</sup> John Gerard, *The Condition of Catholics under James I: Father Gerard's Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot*, ed. John Morris, S.J. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1971), 266-7.

<sup>203</sup> Young gentle and noble women received instruction on the art of patronage as part of the education that prepared them to run a household. Vanessa Wilkie has examined this within the household of Anne Spencer Stanley, Countess of Derby, who instructed her three daughters in the art of patronage. See Vanessa Wilkie, "'Such Daughters and Such a Mother': The Countess of Derby and her three daughters, 1560-1647," (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2009).

Catholics, around the time of James I's accession Monteagle began an earnest campaign to convince the king of his conversion to Protestantism, in hopes of launching a career at Court.<sup>204</sup> By virtue of his conversion and professions of loyalty Monteagle was able to garner enough favor with the king to augment his own clientele. By late 1605 and through 1606 Monteagle was basking in the reflected light of his purported discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. The loyalty he demonstrated by exposing the plot to the king helped him to provide protection through his patronage for family members subordinate to him, most notably his brother-in-law Thomas Habington.<sup>205</sup>

Patron-client bonds also developed through relationships of service related to the household, particularly when families had extensive histories of interaction. In Leicestershire, the Brokesbys of Shoby had been in service to the Hastings family in Leicestershire from the Henrician period at least; by the Elizabethan period they were long-standing clients of the Hastings family and the Earls of Huntingdon. For Robert Brokesby this family relationship resulted in protection for his Catholicism and support for his continuous role in local and county government. Brokesby's coreligionist, John Beaumont of Gracedieu, Leicestershire, was another Hastings client. For the Hastingses, a large entourage comprised of notable and ancient families was instrumental in their ongoing tussle for county prominence against the Greys of Groby. The loyalty and service of men like Brokesby and Beaumont mattered far more than their preferences for Catholicism. In Northamptonshire, the Johnsons were long-standing servants and clients of the Brudenells of Deene, and the Vavasours were for the Treshams of Rushton. In early seventeenth century Warwickshire, the Alcester butcher George Kempson and his brother

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<sup>204</sup> BL Add MS 19402, f. 143r.

<sup>205</sup> Jan Broadway, "'To equall their virtues': Thomas Habington, Recusancy and the Gentry of Early Stuart Worcestershire," *Midland History* (2004): 8.

Thomas entered into service with the Throckmorton family and subsequently into their clientage. Within two generations that relationship had helped the Kempsons to rise into the lesser gentry.<sup>206</sup>

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### **Conclusion**

Families constructed networks of support through biological and marital relationships and drew some of their patrons from those networks. The Catholic families examined here relied on ancient kinship connections to enhance their legitimacy and to expand their respective networks. Through those connections and the relationships that derived from them families created webs of mutual support and obligation that were beneficial in land transactions, marriage and wardship, social prominence (especially in their home county) and in the pursuit of both patronage relationships and the accumulation of their own clientages.

The families in this study were domiciled in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, either as their seat or as a principal residence, but spent a good deal of their time at residences in neighboring counties, especially Worcestershire and Buckinghamshire, and in London. Although each of the families formed and maintained relationships within their local communities, their wider networks from which they drew the bulk of their support and patronage reached beyond their county's borders.

Two major networks have come to light in this chapter: one focused on the Hastings family and the earls of Huntingdon in Leicestershire and another centered on the set of interconnected families in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire who were part of the vast Cecil

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<sup>206</sup> In an agreement between George Kempson and Lord Brooke dated 1661 Kempson is referred to as "George Kempson of Alcester, gent." W. R. O. CR 1886/Box 416/7/2. 'Parishes: Haselor', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), pp. 108-115. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56992> Date accessed: 14 December 2011.

clientage, particularly the Throckmortons of Coughton, Warwickshire and the Treshams of Rushton, Northamptonshire. The Vauxes of Harrowden provide an intriguing connective tissue between the two groups since they were part of both the Hastings clientage and the Cecil clientage.

The families in this study relied on their natal and marital kin for friendship, hospitality, favor, and protection. These relationships were of particular importance when the religious disobedience of entire families or their individual members endangered a family's land, goods, revenues, or a family member's life. Through the variety of relationships a family had in their respective networks – especially with those with whom they disagreed theologically – Catholic families remained integrated in gentle and noble culture, retained social authority in their county and remained bound to the state and the monarch through relationships of service, patronage and clientage.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Catholic Women: Roles, Activities and Network Formation**

Women formed networks that were distinct from the networks of their natal and marital families, but that augmented those family networks and supported the family's patronage activities both as patrons and as clients. Networks provided women with friendship, emotional and material support. For Catholic women, networks were important for survival and protection. The survival of nuns displaced from their convents in the early Reformation period or a conspirator's widow in the Elizabethan period, for instance, depended on the hospitality of the women in her network. Networks were also significant factors in the protection of Catholic priests and the ability of their female protectors to create a secure household and safe networks of support. Catholic women, and especially recusant women, relied on the networks they created to foster and maintain relationships with other women (and sometimes men) whose social status, influence and connections could help a woman to secure her husband's release from prison, to protect her family's financial interests, to save her son's life. It was to those patrons, who were usually drawn from within a woman's network, that she directed her petitions.

A woman's network began to form soon after her birth, with the selection of her godparents. Her network expanded as she grew older, as she made connections with peers her own age and with older women who could (and did) act as mentors and patronesses as she grew into adulthood. Through marriage, a woman constructed new and emotionally powerful ties with her husband's family and kin, thereby further enlarging her network.<sup>1</sup> Such networks helped women in their daily work as keepers of grand households: in activities that ranged from

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible that marriage afforded women benefits that unmarried women could not realize. Yet further research needs to be done before we can assert that unmarried women had fewer opportunities than did married women to expand their pool of relationships. It is possible that singlewomen formed networks differently and that they could have established networks that provided the same kinds of support or benefits, albeit from different sources, outside of the marital relationship.

mundane tasks such as securing provisions for the household to highly sensitive and charged political situations such as petitioning a male relation out of prison (or worse). English gentlewomen and noblewomen relied on their female relations, on the women with whom they formed relationships early in life, and also, of course, on powerful men. All women, regardless of status, had networks that afforded them friendship and support, both moral and material. Such relationships provided support during difficult times and from which assistance was garnered at critical points in a woman's life or the life of her family. As Barbara Harris has noted, the friendships and relationships that women formed with one another were laden with emotional importance and with material and political significance.<sup>2</sup> For Catholic women these networks were at times a lifeline. Many Catholic women faced social marginalization or at least isolation in their local communities as a result of their religious affiliation, particularly in times of political crisis.

From the 1580s onward, Jesuits and seminary priests wrote accounts that presented Catholic women as modest and humble, yet sharply effective in the preservation of their religion through the protection of priests and the pious raising up of children. Occasionally, some became martyrs for their faith. These kinds of hagiographic accounts are gradually being modified by modern scholars. As a result, we are increasingly able to see them as women rather than as saints, and set into their proper contexts in terms of status, activities, neighborhoods and networks. John Bossy in his *English Catholic Community* maintained that between 1570-1620 English Catholicism was in a "matriarchal" era, wherein women were "active and proselytizing rather than merely domestic."<sup>3</sup> Marie Rowlands is concerned not with all Catholic women but

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara J. Harris, "Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550," in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. James Daybell (Aldershot, Hampshire; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 22.

with recusant ones, those whose refusal to attend the state church thrust them into the official records of the English government.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Sarah Bastow has examined Catholic women in Yorkshire, but focused primarily on the persecution suffered and the “household Catholicism” promoted by Catholic women.<sup>5</sup>

While accurate, these kinds of assessments provide an incomplete picture of the lives of Catholic women. In a recent essay on Agnes Throckmorton, Jan Broadway demonstrated that, while limited in agency by their sex, recusant women of high status could and did “exploit their overt powerlessness to advantage in some circumstances.”<sup>6</sup> Even a young Catholic widow could exert some control over the upbringing, marriage and future of her family’s heir. Further, Catholic women were not constrained by the spatial boundaries of the household. They moved outside of the household to protect and promote their religious viewpoints in their communities and among their networks, often in public contexts and in public spaces. Megan Hickerson has noted a similar dynamic in her study of the portrayal of Protestant women in John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, evidence abounds that Catholic women behaved much as Protestant and Puritan women did, from their household activities to their habits of network formation and the ways in which they used their networks, particularly in times of family crisis. Performance of accepted gender expectations was more important than religious identity.

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<sup>3</sup> John Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, 153-158.

<sup>4</sup> Marie Rowlands, “Recusant Women, 1560-1640,” in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500-1800* (London, 1985), 149-80.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah L. Bastow, “‘Worth nothing but very wilful’: Catholic Recusant women of Yorkshire, 1536-1642,” *Recusant History* vol. 25, no.4 (2001): 591-592.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Broadway, “Agnes Throckmorton: A Jacobean Recusant Widow” in *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, 123.

<sup>7</sup> Megan L. Hickerson, “Gospelling Sisters ‘Goinge up and Downe’: John Foxe and Disorderly Women,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 35, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 1035-1051.

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### **Women's Duties and Expectations of their Behavior**

Loke to thy householde wysely,  
and bryng them up playnely in vertue and godlynes,  
That hereafter they doo not come  
to no myschaunce and lewdenesse.<sup>8</sup>

Prescriptive writers of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries advocated largely domestic roles for women of all confessional identities. Women were advised to be chaste, silent and obedient, restrained in voice and temper, modest, and discrete while they carried out the business of running their household and raising the children in the household.<sup>9</sup> Women at all social levels and of all religious affiliations spent their days fulfilling multiple roles, all of which centered on managing the household and childrearing. Aristocratic women oversaw and provisioned large households, dispensed charity from the household, visited the poor or destitute in their locality, supervised the secular and religious education of their children and, in many instances, practiced homeopathic medicine.

These kinds of domestic expectations obscure the reality of women's roles as integral partners in the family economy. Women were engaged in socially-acceptable gender activities but they were also were involved in estate management, marriage arrangements, and wardships, all of which introduced revenue streams to the family coffers and which provided aristocratic

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Bansley, *A treatyse, shewing and declaring the pryde and abuse of women now a dayes* [Imprinted at London: In Paules Church yearde, at thee sygne of the Starre. By Thomas Raynalde, [ca.1550]], 5. Henry E. Huntington Library Rare Books 358516, STC 517:02.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) [STC (2nd ed.), 3565.5], 37-41; Suzanne W. Hull, *Women According to Men: The World of Tudor-Stuart Women* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996), 149; Susanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1982).



women with the substance of their careers.<sup>10</sup> Women were active petitioners to patrons, friends, and other women with influence when they needed assistance in securing a good placing out of their children, with marriage negotiations, and more acute situations such as securing the release of a husband from prison. In the midst of this women engaged in activities that displayed their feminine virtue and honor, activities such as needlework, clothwork, prayer, and reading of devotions or scripture. Besides displaying virtue, all of these activities were opportunities to instruct children, especially daughters, by demonstrating the behaviors that daughters were expected to replicate.<sup>11</sup>

Singlewomen performed these activities as well. Following the Throckmorton Plot in 1583, Elizabeth Shirley, barely twenty years old, moved to her brother's seat at Staunton Harold, Leicestershire, to take charge of his household. She stayed until Sir George married in the late 1580s.<sup>12</sup> Sir Robert Spencer of Althorp asked his singlewoman daughter, Mary, to keep an account book of her own expenses starting in 1610; she did so until a few months prior to her death in 1613.<sup>13</sup> In the first half of the seventeenth century, Mary Throckmorton of Coughton and Elizabeth Isham of Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire, despite inhabiting nearly opposite ends of the doctrinal spectrum, lived out fairly similar lives and performed strikingly similar activities.

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<sup>10</sup> Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers, 1450-1550* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Stephens, "Confessional Identity in Early Stuart England: The "Prayer Book Puritanism" of Elizabeth Isham," *Journal of British Studies* vol. 50, no. 1 (Jan. 2011): 44; Barbara Harris, "Women and Politics in Early Tudor England," *The Historical Journal* vol. 33, no. 2 (1990): 260-263; see also Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*; Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550*.

<sup>12</sup> Claire Walker, 'Shirley, Elizabeth (1564/5–1641)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45824>, accessed 2 June 2010] Intriguingly, Elizabeth Shirley was a Protestant when she arrived at Staunton Harold and a Catholic when she left. So resolved was she in her conversion and in remaining single that upon leaving her brother she entered the convent of St. Ursula's at Louvain and remained for the rest of her life.

<sup>13</sup> BL Add MS 62092; Edith Snook, "The Greatness in Good Clothes: Fashioning Subjectivity in Mary Wroth's *Urania* and Margaret Spencer's Account Book (BL Add. MS 62092)," *Seventeenth Century* vol. 22, no. 2 (Oct. 2007): 225-226.

Neither Throckmorton nor Isham ever married, although Isham nearly did at one point. Both remained in their natal homes as deputy estate managers, confidantes, and housekeepers to male heads-of-household. As illustrated above, Throckmorton was an integral component of her father's estate management, particularly after Mary's mother died in April 1607.<sup>14</sup> She oversaw the education of the children raised in the Throckmorton household and maintained a place in her own networks of women, neighbors and local businesspeople.<sup>15</sup> For instance, when in the midst of a family dispute Throckmorton's aunt, Lady Terringham, refused to sell her the rabbits she had promised, Throckmorton, annoyed but unfazed, quickly procured them from another supplier.<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Isham was a trusted confidant and advisor to her brother, Justinian, particularly after the death of his wife in 1638. She counseled him during his negotiations for a second marriage and expressed her misgivings about disagreements over jointure. She also stepped in as surrogate mother to her four young nieces; she oversaw their education and provided for their spiritual upbringing. As part of their religious formation Isham wrote a spiritual autobiography dedicated to the girls, as Isham's mother had done for her a generation earlier. Isham also kept bees and practiced homeopathic medicine, embroidery and lacemaking, all of which were traditional feminine pursuits tied to the maintenance of the household.<sup>17</sup>

The experience of Catholic women was, of course, different from non-Catholic women in some significant ways, particularly in relation to spiritual activities. Although aristocratic

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<sup>14</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 10.

<sup>15</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 11.

<sup>16</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 11; Lady Terringham was Thomas Throckmorton's half-sister, and Mary Throckmorton's half-aunt. The tension between these families might have been a product of a complicated relationship between the children of Sir Robert's first wife and the children of his second wife.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Clarke and Erica Longfellow, "Introduction to the online edition: '[E]xamine my life': writing the self in the early seventeenth century," *Elizabeth Isham's Autobiographical Writings*, Constructing Elizabeth Isham Project, University of Warwick Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/projects/isham/texts/> accessed 9 May 2011.

households typically had chaplains and spaces for religious life – chapels and prayer closets, for example, Catholic households with a resident Catholic cleric were (after 1581) in violation of the law, both for harboring the priest and for hearing Mass. Some recusant households, such as that of Anne Vaux and her sister Eleanor Brokesby, harbored the Jesuit Superior of the English Mission or harbored multiple priests. Such households took enormous risks and necessitated the formation of an insular network with strong patrons who could help to protect the household and its inhabitants.

Despite the expectations of both prescriptive writers and polite society to the contrary, women had to be able to “wield authority” in order to competently and efficiently manage the household and help to safeguard a significant portion of the family economy.<sup>18</sup> Grace Coolidge has remarked on this with respect to female guardianship among the Spanish nobility, namely that the “preservation of family, power and lineage was more important than the prescriptive gender roles” of early modern Spain.<sup>19</sup> In England, too, women could not be completely submissive and still fulfill their responsibilities as effective guardians of the household, its members, its real property and its revenues. In practice, English aristocratic women, whether Catholic, Protestant or Calvinist, wielded authority within their own families and also their local communities. They derived support for their activities and in the transmission of their daily lives from the networks of family, friends and patrons with whom they surrounded themselves.

## Networks

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<sup>18</sup> Tim Stretton, “Women,” in *The Elizabethan World*, ed. Susan Doran and Norman Jones (London, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2011), 338.

<sup>19</sup> Grace Coolidge, “‘Neither dumb, deaf, nor destitute of understanding’: Women as Guardians in Early Modern Spain,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 36, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 673.

Women inhabited networks of friends, relatives and patrons that overlapped but did not replicate the networks of their families. Therefore, female networks augmented the connections of a woman's family and provided additional resources and assistance for the administration of day-to-day life and during times of crisis. These relationships were more than patronage connections or relationships of convenience. Female networks provided English aristocratic women with the same kinds of mutual support and protection that Bernard Capp has observed in the networks formed by women of middling and lesser status.<sup>20</sup> The friendships that comprised significant components of an aristocratic woman's network were an important connective tissue of their social existence and a political tool for their husbands and families.<sup>21</sup> The populations within women's networks can be divided into five main categories: godparents; the other women with whom a woman was raised; the girls a woman raised; a woman's natal and marital relatives; and her friends.

A woman's network began to form almost from the moment of her birth, with the women who surrounded her parents, especially those who surrounded her mother, and the godparents her natal parents selected. An invitation to stand as godparent was a sign of honor, an indication that the parents considered an individual honorable enough to take on the serious responsibility of spiritual guardianship of their child.<sup>22</sup> The selection of godparents implied healthy reserves of social credit between a child's parents and the individuals they asked to stand as their child's spiritual guardians and therefore sheds some additional light on both family and female

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<sup>20</sup> B. S. Capp, *When Gossips Meet: women, family and neighborhood in early modern England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 284.

<sup>21</sup> Harris, "Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550," 22.

<sup>22</sup> Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: ritual, religion and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1997), 157.

networks.<sup>23</sup> English gentle and noble babies traditionally had three (or occasionally, four) godparents; two were same sex as the child. One of those same-sex godparents – often a grandparent – decided the child’s name and commonly gave the child the godparent’s own name.<sup>24</sup> This surely explains the abundance of young Muriels in the larger network inhabited by Muriel Tresham: her niece Muriel Throckmorton (b. 1560), another niece, Muriel Vaux (b. 1570), who was a favorite of both Lady Tresham and her husband, and Muriel Vavasour, a daughter of Thomas Vavasour, a servant with whose family the Treshams had a long and close relationship. Godparenting helped to further strengthen the bonds between families and also the bonds within a woman’s network. Given the close relationship between Muriel Tresham and her sister-in-law, Mary, Baroness Vaux, Tresham’s daughter Mary (b. 1578) could well have been Vaux’s goddaughter and namesake, an act which enhanced the connection between the two families. Vaux might also have been godmother to her son George’s daughter, Mary, to whom she left a legacy in her will.<sup>25</sup> Muriel Tresham’s aunt and patroness, Bridget, Countess of Bedford, might have stood as godmother for Tresham’s daughter Bridget. Margaret Sheldon was godmother to at least one namesake, Margaret Anderson, the daughter of Sheldon’s servant Richard Anderson.<sup>26</sup> Lettice Shirley, the daughter of Dorothy Devereux Shirley and Sir Henry Shirley, was undoubtedly named for her maternal grandmother, Lettice Devereux Dudley, Countess of Essex.<sup>27</sup> Even when godmothers did not christen a same-sex child with their name,

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<sup>23</sup> Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 157-158.

<sup>24</sup> Harris, “Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550,” 23; Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, 95; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 150. Cressy noted that in the Stuart period a child sometimes had four godparents, two of each sex.

<sup>25</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 231.

<sup>26</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 73/5.

evidence of the relationship is often visible in wills. Barbara Harris has found that goddaughters were “among the most common legatees outside the circle of close relatives who received the great majority of women’s benefactions.”<sup>28</sup>

The legacies Catholic women left in their wills provide an additional snapshot of their networks. Women tended to leave legacies to their natal sisters, children, goddaughters, servants and sometimes to their nieces or grandchildren. Mary Throckmorton of Feckenham (d. 1586), the singlewoman daughter of Sir John and Lady Margery and sister to the conspirator Francis, left legacies to her mother, her sister Ann Wigmore, her sister-in-law Anne (Francis’s widow), and her brothers Thomas and George.<sup>29</sup> Margaret Sheldon (d. 1589) left bequests to nearly all of her Throckmorton granddaughters. Her largest bequests were to the two eldest, Muriel Berkeley and Elizabeth Griffith. Their younger sisters received combinations of money and goods – even her grandson’s wife Agnes received a kirtle. The only granddaughter explicitly excluded was Margaret Griffin, which could have been the result of an ongoing dispute between Griffin’s husband and natal family over property attached to her marriage portion – a dispute in which Margaret Griffin sided with her husband.<sup>30</sup> Mary, baroness Vaux (d. 1597) left £300 to her granddaughter Mary, who was probably also her goddaughter; £200 to her grandson William; £100 to each of her three younger grandchildren; 500 marks to two of her own children, Ambrose and Muriel; and her coach, coach horses and their furniture to her good friend and

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<sup>27</sup> HEH Rare Books, Arthur Collins, *The Peerage of England: containing a genealogical and historical account of all the peers of that Kingdom....*, vol. iv, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 1779), 273

<sup>28</sup> Harris, “Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550,” 23-24. Martha Howell, writing about women’s alliances in France, argues that women’s networks or alliances can be traced through their wills. “Fixing Moveables: Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai,” *Past and Present* no. 150 (1996): 3-45.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Crisp, *Abstracts of Somersetshire Wills, copied from the Manuscript Collection of the late Rev. Frederick Brown* vol. 4 (privately printed for F.A. Crisp, 1889), 41.

<sup>30</sup> WRO CR 1998/CD/Folder 52, f. 7; CR 1998/CD/Folder 52, f. 9; TNA PROB 11/75.

confidante, her sister-in-law Muriel Tresham.<sup>31</sup> Margaret Throckmorton (d. 1607) left bequests to her daughters and two of her servants.<sup>32</sup> Muriel Tresham (d. 1611) named only one grandchild in her will, although by the time she died she had at least four granddaughters and one grandson.<sup>33</sup> She bequeathed £200, her “Cabinet” and its contents to her six-year-old granddaughter (and probably her goddaughter) Catherine Parker, whom she affectionately called Cate.<sup>34</sup> Bequests of this nature emphasize the connections that existed across generations in female networks.

An aristocratic girl inhabited a network comprised of aunts, sisters, cousins, sisters-in-law, and “foster” sisters – other girls raised in her natal household as well as the other girls she met over the course of her education. A young girl’s experience in the household to which she was sent for education or service was a critical factor in the construction of female networks, in part because the relationships she formed could, with proper attention, sustain her throughout her life.<sup>35</sup> A girl’s parents decided on the household in which their daughter would be educated, but once she arrived in that household much of the work involved with making attachments was up to her. In the mid-sixteenth century Muriel Throckmorton Tresham was raised in the household of the Earl of Huntingdon, under the supervision of the Countess of Huntingdon, Katherine Pole

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<sup>31</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 231. Vaux’s son Ambrose was a spendthrift and in general a disappointment; her daughter Muriel, who had once been the favorite of her aunt and uncle, Muriel and Sir Thomas Tresham, secretly married a Tresham servant in 1597, then spent several years attempting to defraud Tresham into a double-payment of her marriage portion. Judging from Vaux’s bequest to her daughter the two were still working under a strained relationship.

<sup>32</sup> WRO CR1998/46EB.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth and Lucy Tresham were born between 1594-1598. Frances Parker, Cate’s physically disabled sister, was born in 1606, see Dom Adam Hamilton, O.S.B., ed., *The Chronicle of the English Augustinian Canonesses...at St. Monica’s in Louvain...a continuation 1625-1644* (Edinburgh; London: Sands and Co., 1906), 29.

<sup>34</sup> TNA PROB 11/127 (1611).

<sup>35</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 232.

Hastings. She spent her formative years with the other girls in the Huntingdon household: the Countess's daughter Elizabeth Hastings (and perhaps also her sisters Frances, Anne and Mary), and Elizabeth, Lady Herbert, a cousin of the Hastingses.<sup>36</sup> These relationships were valuable to Tresham throughout her adulthood. Elizabeth Hastings' marriage made her the Countess of Worcester; both she and Lady Herbert were sources of patronage when Tresham's husband was in prison.<sup>37</sup> In the 1580s, Mistress Katherine Dymocke was part of Muriel's household and part of Tresham's continually-expanding network.<sup>38</sup> Henry, Eleanor, Elizabeth and Anne Vaux were raised and educated in the household of their maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Hastings Beaumont, from 1571-1581.<sup>39</sup> While there they may well have come into contact with children in the household of the Beaumont's cousins at Cole Orton, including their young cousin Mary, later the Countess of Buckingham, and also with the extended Hastings network, of which their grandmother was a part.<sup>40</sup>

Although these early experiences were instrumental in network formation for young women, Catholic families in the central Midlands that had endured regular prosecution for recusancy (or feared a resurgence of that prosecution) either chose not to send their daughters into other households at all or placed them into households with whom they had an intimate and, usually, a natal connection. In other words, they turned inward, to family members in their

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<sup>36</sup> *HMCV*, 26-27, 30-32. The Countesses of Huntingdon reared many young aristocrats in their respective households. The third countess, Katherine Dudley Hastings, for example, raised Margaret Dakins (later Lady Margaret Hoby) and three of the Devereux children: Walter, Penelope and Dorothy. Claire Cross, *The Puritan Earl*, 60.

<sup>37</sup> *HMCV*, 26-27, 30-32.

<sup>38</sup> TNA 12/172/113, f. 169r.

<sup>39</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 108.

<sup>40</sup> David L. Smith, 'Villiers, Mary, suo jure countess of Buckingham (c.1570–1632)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May 2005; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/92425, accessed 6 May 2011]



network and fellow Catholics, rather than outward to the most advantageous placement they could secure. The Treshams of Rushton, for instance, kept their girls at home in the 1580s and 1590s. This might have been due to some financial retrenchment, but it might equally have reflected a desire to keep the family together while Sir Thomas was imprisoned and to maintain as much control as possible over their children's upbringing. The Treshams placed their heir, Francis, with a Catholic noble family, the Earl and Countess of Worcester. Even if they could have secured a place for their daughters with Lady Tresham's aunt, the Countess of Bedford, the Countess's Calvinism would have been a significant impediment; such a placement would have virtually ensured that the Tresham girls would have become Protestants. Regardless of their reasons for keeping most of their children at home, in doing so the Treshams reflect a growing trend among late-sixteenth elite families: the decline of "fostering" one's children out to other households.<sup>41</sup> As a young widow in the early years of the seventeenth century, Agnes Wilford Throckmorton of Moor Hall sent one of her daughters to her in-laws, Thomas and Margaret Throckmorton and another, Margaret, to her cousins Sir William and Margaret Roper.<sup>42</sup>

A family's preference for placing their children with other members of the family network might also have been a condition of their social status. The status of the Throckmortons of Coughton was by the early seventeenth century considerably weakened from its zenith in the middle third of the sixteenth century and was probably roughly equivalent to the status of the Protestant Newdigates of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire. The Newdigates preferred to rotate their children between the various households of their family network. Their daughters were at as

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<sup>41</sup> Susan Bridgen, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds*, 75. Bridgen notes that this practice endured in Ireland during the sixteenth century even as it declined in England.

<sup>42</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 1, f. 2r; Jan Broadway, "Agnes Throckmorton, Elizabethan Recusant Widow" in *The Gentry in English Society: the Throckmortons of Coughton from Reformation to Emancipation* (Ashgate, 2009), 138.

many as five households prior to their mother's death in 1618: an aunt's household at Perton, an uncle's household at Gawsworth, and in the households of the Brereton, Fitton and Holcroft families.<sup>43</sup> These kinds of placements would have strengthened the bonds of family in a woman's network, but they would not have done much to introduce a young woman to the kinds of connections she would need in adulthood, particularly the kinds of relationships Muriel Tresham had the opportunity to form with future patronesses.

Women further expanded their networks when, as mistresses of their own households, they took young women and men into service; thereby reinforcing relationships with families both lower and higher on the social scale. In the 1580s and 1590s Muriel Tresham had in service the daughters of the Vavasours and the Parkers. The Vavasours were a recusant family and the Tresham's most trusted servants. Muriel Vavasour, daughter of Sir Thomas Tresham's agent Thomas Vavasour, was a friend and companion of Tresham's daughter Elizabeth, Lady Monteagle, and by 1589 was in service as her gentlewoman.<sup>44</sup> Despite ongoing squabbles with Sir Thomas Tresham over the young Lady Monteagle's jointure, Edward Parker, 12<sup>th</sup> Baron Morley and his wife Elizabeth Stanley, Baroness Monteagle sent their eldest daughter into service with Lady Tresham in 1595.<sup>45</sup> In 1607 Margaret Throckmorton had in service at Weston Underwood Mistress Catherine Bickerson, a relation of a former Throckmorton servant; one of her granddaughters; and William Jerningham, her daughter Eleanor's young brother-in-law.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Vivienne Larminie, "The Lifestyle and Attitudes of the Seventeenth-Century Gentleman, with Special Reference to the Newdigates of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire." Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, U.K., 1980, 302.

<sup>44</sup> *HMCV*, 50.

<sup>45</sup> *HMCV*, 90; Mark Nicholls, 'Parker, William, thirteenth Baron Morley and fifth or first Baron Monteagle (1574/5–1622)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21345>, accessed 07 May 2011]

After Margaret's death in May of that year, their instruction would have continued under the direction of Margaret's daughter Mary, the new mistress of the house. This manner of network formation was not tied to religion, but to status; the Protestant Newdigates of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire displayed similar placement habits. When Anne Newdigate died in 1618 her three daughters went to live with the family of her former servants, the Salters at Daventry.<sup>47</sup>

When women took into service the offspring of long-term trusted and loyal servants, such as the Treshams did with the Vavasours, the bonds between the families strengthened and thereby augmented the networks of both the employer and the servant. Catherine Bickerson, who was with the Throckmortons at Weston Underwood in 1607 was probably a relation of Margaret Sheldon's servant Elizabeth Bickerson and Thomas and Margaret's servant Thomas Bickerson, who was in service in the early 1590s.<sup>48</sup> Sheldon's will indicates that she had been especially fond of Elizabeth; when the woman married another of Sheldon's servants in 1589 Sheldon amended her will to provide both Elizabeth and her husband, Robert Large, enough material goods and property to give them a firm foundation on which to build their married life.<sup>49</sup> Both Margaret and Thomas Throckmorton left legacies to Catherine Bickerson in the early seventeenth century. For Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, such bequests indicate that a true friendship had developed between mistress and servant; it certainly seems so in this case.<sup>50</sup> The presence of Bickerson women in service to members of the Throckmorton network in the

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<sup>46</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 82/a note of servants kept at Weston, 9 January 1607 (not foliated). Bickerson was identified only as "Mistress Bickerson" in this document but is named in full in Thomas Throckmorton's will, WRO CR1998/Box 73/3b, 12 Jan 1611.

<sup>47</sup> Larminie, "The Lifestyle and Attitudes of the Seventeenth-Century Gentleman," 184.

<sup>48</sup> T.N.A. SP12/243, f. 212r.

<sup>49</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 73/5.

<sup>50</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 105.

1580s and again two decades later suggests that the Throckmorton and Bickerson women were friends and part of one another's networks despite the different places each occupied on the social scale.

In households of mixed religious affinity the fostering-in of extended family members could simultaneously provide a woman the support of her network and exacerbate strained family relationships. Throughout her tempestuous marriage, the Calvinist Agnes Brudenell received her Topcliffe relatives at her marital home at Deene Park, the Brudenell family seat and favorite home of her husband, the Catholic Sir Edmund. The most notorious of the Topcliffes was Agnes's cousin Richard, who in the 1580s and 1590s was a notorious persecutor of Catholic laity and priests. Agnes had raised Topcliffe; she oversaw his education in the 1540s and assured him an annuity throughout his adulthood.<sup>51</sup> Neither of them much liked Sir Edmund. That common bond, in addition to Topcliffe's desire to lay claim to some of Agnes's lands, kept him firmly situated in Agnes's network.<sup>52</sup> Much as Topcliffe would have relished the opportunity to have Brudenell convicted for recusancy or priest-harboring and weaken his hold on Agnes's lands, he could not risk a raid on the Brudenell household at Deene, which would embarrass Agnes and perhaps endanger his annuity and any possibility that he might benefit from her will.<sup>53</sup> The Topcliffes had been part of Agnes's network since she was a young woman; her cousins Anne and Catherine Topcliffe had been educated in the household of their kinswoman, Agnes's mother, Lady Neville, and Anne Topcliffe had married Thomas Brudenell, Agnes's brother-in-law.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 71-72.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-82.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

Kinswomen were prominent fixtures in female networks regardless of their religious affiliation.<sup>55</sup> Mothers, natal sisters, sisters-in-law, daughters, aunts, nieces and grandmothers appear in all of the networks for which extant evidence allows reconstruction. Agnes Brudenell's mother, Lady Neville, lived with Agnes and her husband after Antony Neville's death. Agnes's sister-in-law and cousin, Anne Topcliffe Brudenell, visited one another regularly; Anne spent long stretches of time as Agnes's houseguest each year.<sup>56</sup> Margaret Throckmorton and her mother, Margaret Whorwood Sheldon, both Catholics, remained close especially after Sheldon was widowed in 1570. Throckmorton co-signed (with her husband Thomas and son Sir John) land transactions that benefited her mother in her widowhood and was one of the executors named in her will, both of which are a clear indication that Margaret, and not simply the male members of her marital family, was an active participant in caring for her aging mother.<sup>57</sup> Muriel Tresham remained close with her natal sisters, her own daughters and her daughter-in-law Anne Tufton Tresham. At least one kinswoman lay in and delivered her baby in Muriel's household: her daughter Mary Brudenell lay in and delivered her eldest son, Robert, at Lyveden in 1607.<sup>58</sup>

Recusant women carried out regular visits with other women in their networks, even after the legislation of 1593 restricted their movement by requiring them to secure licenses to travel. Tresham's daughters visited one another regularly in adulthood, even when their marriages separated them geographically. Tresham's daughters Elizabeth, Lady Mounteagle and Catherine

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<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 127.

<sup>55</sup> Harris, "Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550," 36.

<sup>56</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 71.

<sup>57</sup> Notation of one land transaction undertaken by Margaret and Thomas Throckmorton and their son Sir John is kept at the Shropshire Record Office, SRO 1045/357, n.f.

<sup>58</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 105.

Webb visited their sister, Frances, Lady Stourton in the summer of 1601.<sup>59</sup> The Monteagle's seat at Great Hallingbury, Essex was nearly 150 miles distant from the Stourton's seat at Stourton, Wiltshire. Lady Tresham was particularly close to her husband's sister, Mary, Baroness Vaux, whom she counted amongst her closest friends.<sup>60</sup> The close geographical proximity of around ten miles between the Tresham and Vaux households would have allowed for more frequent visiting than many women were able to do.<sup>61</sup> Eleanor Brokesby and Anne Vaux developed a close relationship with their sister-in-law, Elizabeth Roper Vaux, especially as the three women became enveloped in the Jesuit Mission. In the early seventeenth century Agnes Wilford Throckmorton had visits from her Wilford relatives, including one from her mother or her sister-in-law Anne Newman Wilford, the wife of Agnes's brother James.<sup>62</sup> Lady Tresham also maintained a connection with her maternal aunt, Bridget Hussey Russell, Countess of Bedford, although the tone of her correspondence with Russell suggests that their relationship was more formal than the ones she shared with her childhood friends or immediate family.<sup>63</sup> Mistress Whorwood, Margaret Throckmorton's cousin, lived with the Throckmortons at Coughton long enough to be presented there for recusancy. She may have been in service with them prior to her

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<sup>59</sup> *HMCV*, 110-111. The visit probably occurred at the Stourton's seat in Wiltshire but could also have occurred at their London residence. Lady Monteagle and Lady Webb had residences in the country and in London; it is not clear from the evidence how far they traveled to visit their sister.

<sup>60</sup> The network of Tresham women is particularly visible in the flurry of activity that followed Francis's arrest for alleged complicity in the Essex Rebellion. BL, Tresham Papers, Add. MSS 39829, f. 51; *HMCV*, 108-109.

<sup>61</sup> The distance between the Vaux seat at Harrowden and the Tresham seat at Rushton was c. 10 miles. From the Vaux's smaller residence at Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire to Rushton was c. 13 miles.

<sup>62</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 1, f. 4r; The letter from Mary Wilford to her mother would have been sent either by Agnes's sister Mary or, more likely, by her niece, who was probably in service at Stafford Castle at this time. See also *The publications of the Harleian Society* vol. 13, ed. Walter C. Metcalfe (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1878), 322-323; *Newsletters from the Caroline Court 1631-1638: Catholicism and the Politics of Personal Rule*, Camden 5<sup>th</sup> ser. vol. 26, ed. Michael Questier (Cambridge: Royal Historical Society, 2005), 193; Jan Broadway, "Agnes Throckmorton: A Jacobean Recusant Widow" in *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, 128. The letter from Mary Wilford to her mother would have been sent either by Agnes's sister Mary or, more likely, by her niece, who was probably in service at Stafford Castle at this time.

<sup>63</sup> *HMCV*, 28-29.

marriage or she may have simply been a houseguest. In any event, by 1592 the Throckmortons had left for their estate at Weston Underwood, Worcestershire and Whorwood had left as well, at which point she disappears from the record.<sup>64</sup>

For Catholics, the hospitality or protection a kinswoman offered could be critical to survival. Sir Thomas Tresham's great-aunt Clemence, a nun displaced from Syon Abbey, retired to the Tresham seat at Rushton and remained as part of the household until her death in 1567.<sup>65</sup> Nearly two decades later, following her husband's execution in connection with the Somerville Plot, Mary Arden moved back to her natal family's seat at Coughton.<sup>66</sup> During the last decade of Elizabeth's reign Mary Everard Brudenell and her husband Sir John had several women domiciled in their Catholic household. Mary's sister-in-law Lucy Brudenell, an elderly former nun; Mistress Anne Fletcher and her three maidservants; her nephew Thomas Brudenell along with his wife Mary Tresham and her gentlewoman, Muriel Vavasour; and a bevy of Catholic servants.<sup>67</sup>

Eleanor Vaux Brokesby and Anne Vaux and their sister-in-law Elizabeth Roper Vaux constructed networks that relied heavily on kin connections and a close group of other recusant Catholics. Starting in the mid-1580s Eleanor and her singlewoman sister Anne were at the center

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<sup>64</sup> TNA SP12/243, f. 212r. Mistress Whorwood would have been a descendant of Margaret's elder half-sister, Ann (d. 1552), the first wife of Ambrose Dudley. When she died her share of the Whorwood estates descended to her father's great-nephew, Thomas Whorwood. Margaret Whorwood Throckmorton and her half-sister were their father's co-heirs; Margaret's mother, another Margaret, survived her husband. Her second husband was William Sheldon.

<sup>65</sup> Audrey Butler, "Clemence Tresham of Rushton and Syon," *Northamptonshire Past and Present* vol. 5 (1974): 91-93; Virginia R. Bainbridge, "Syon Abbey: Women and Learning, c. 1415-1600," in *Syon Abbey and its Books: reading, writing and religion, c. 1400-1700*, eds. E. A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2010), 102.

<sup>66</sup> TNA SP 12/243, f. 207v. Michael Hodgetts has said that Arden was the mistress of Coughton in the spring of 1592/3, but the Privy Council record on which he relies for this describes her only as dwelling there and notes that the house is Thomas Throckmorton's. *APC* vol. 24, 148.

<sup>67</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 94.

of a network of Jesuits and their lay protectors. The sisters made careers of harboring priests and providing space for Catholic worship in their various homes and, later, ran an illicit school for Catholic boys from their household. Together, Eleanor and Anne sheltered the superiors of the English Mission (John Gerard and Henry Garnet in succession) for nearly twenty years, which made their household a hub of Jesuit activity and the sisters themselves central figures in the Jesuit mission.<sup>68</sup> The Vaux sisters created a network that was far more insular than Muriel Tresham's, probably out of necessity since there was a constant and strong Jesuit presence in their household. In addition to the Jesuits, the household included Fr. Gerard's infirm mother, Eleanor's two children and her cousin Frances Burroughs. In the early seventeenth century Eleanor's grandsons William and Edward Thimbleby and, later, Lord Abergavenny's grandchild were educated by the Vaux's Jesuit schoolmasters.<sup>69</sup> Their network included their sister-in-law Elizabeth Roper Vaux and, from the mid-1590s, their half-sister Muriel Vaux (namesake of her aunt Muriel Tresham), and Anne's friend Lady Digby, with whom she went on pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well in 1605.<sup>70</sup>

Although women had friendly and often very close relationships with members of their wider kinship group, their friendships provided them a significant emotional attachment that was different from their other relationships, even when those friendships were with women in their kinship group. A close friend was someone a woman could trust as a confidante, someone who helped with activities such as helping to birth one another's children and who offered support (material and emotional) in the raising of children or the maintenance of a household. Muriel

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<sup>68</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 186; Fr. Gerard's letter containing this reference is printed in full in Stonyhurst MS Anglia I, f. 73.

<sup>69</sup> *Responsa*, 373-74; 448-50; TNA SP16/299, f. 80r.

<sup>70</sup> TNA SP 14/216/2, f.139.



Tresham's closest and most enduring friendship was with her sister-in-law Mary, Lady Vaux. They corresponded and visited one another regularly, and Muriel talked favorably about her "sister" with her husband, Sir Thomas. Lady Tresham's alliance with her sister-in-law set her against the other Vaux women, Lord Vaux's daughters from his first marriage, Eleanor and Anne, and the Vaux's daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Roper Vaux. Despite the overwhelming insularity of Elizabeth Vaux's network, she had a few friendships, such as one with the Earl of Northampton, that allowed her to cultivate connections beyond the family, and therefore assembled a network with slightly more breadth than her Vaux sisters-in-law had done.<sup>71</sup> One of her closest friends, Agnes Fermor Wenman, relied on Vaux for support in her spiritual life; Wenman's husband opposed and at times forbade his wife's Catholicism. With Vaux's help Wenman arranged a schedule whereby the Jesuit John Gerard could visit her when her husband was away.<sup>72</sup>

A woman's network of friends comes most clearly into view at points of crisis. In January 1583/4, shortly after the discovery of the Throckmorton Plot, searchers interrupted a Catholic Mass at Throckmorton House in London. Margery Throckmorton of Feckenham was present, along with her daughters Mary and Anne, her daughter-in-law, and Francis Throckmorton.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in the aftermath of the Essex Rising in 1600/01 the core of the Tresham women's networks are visible, as Francis Tresham's sisters, wife, mother, father and uncle scrambled to find a sympathetic patron that could mitigate the damage and, ideally, save Tresham's life. Elizabeth Roper Vaux's network appears in detail in the abundance of official correspondence surrounding the Gunpowder Plot. Vaux counted among her friends Dorothy

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<sup>71</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 290, 321, 400.

<sup>72</sup> Gerard, S.J., *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, 169-170.

<sup>73</sup> TNA SP 12/167, f. 144r.

Huddleston, wife of her cousin Henry; her cousin Agnes Fermor Wenman and Agnes's parents, Sir George and Mary Fermor; Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton; Mary, Lady Digby, Sir Robert Catesby, Sir Everard Digby, and possibly the brothers of Sir Griffin Markham.<sup>74</sup> In the spring of 1605 a letter Vaux sent to Wenman was intercepted by Wenman's mother-in-law, who gave it to Wenman's husband. Vaux's comment to her friend that "Tottenham would soon turn French" convinced many, including Wenman's Protestant (or at least conformist) husband and mother-in-law and Vaux's own father, that Vaux knew about and supported the plot. Vaux, of course, insisted she had no knowledge of the event until Sir George and Lady Fermor happened "by accident" to stop by Harrowden on 6 November and tell her what had happened in London.<sup>75</sup> The previous day, 5 November, Henry Huddleston and his very pregnant wife, Dorothy, had called; Huddleston departed on Thursday morning (7 November) but Dorothy remained with Vaux.<sup>76</sup> Other visitors to Harrowden in the early days of November 1605 were Catesby, Digby, and a servant of one of Sir Griffin Markham's brothers.<sup>77</sup> The government's interrogations of her sister-in-law, Anne Vaux, revealed her wider network that included plot conspirators and also her friendship with the singlewoman Dorothy Habington, sister of the recusant antiquary Thomas Habington of Hindlip, Worcestershire.<sup>78</sup> Vaux's network covered a wide geographical area; it

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<sup>74</sup> Agnes Fermor Wenman was a granddaughter of Maud Vaux (d. 1569/71) and Sir John Fermor. Wenman was raised in a Catholic household by her Catholic mother, Mary Curzon Fermor. Her father, Sir George, conformed enough to remain on the Northamptonshire bench. Still, Wenman's enthusiasm for Catholic practices might have cooled during the early part of her marriage, only to be rekindled by Eliabeth Vaux's proselytizing. When Mr. Wenman returned home from service in the Low Countries to find his wife running afoul of recusancy statutes he was extremely displeased, and blamed his wife's "conversion" on Vaux. TNA SP 14/216, f. 141r; Vaux's friendship with Wenman is also discussed in Godfrey Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 247, 287, 292, 312, 318. See also TNA SP14/216/2, ff. 176, 178.

<sup>75</sup> TNA SP 14/216/1 f.154r.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> TNA SP 14/216/2 f.139r & v.

included militant recusants from Worcestershire, such as the Wintours, the Catesbys of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, the Digbys of Rutland, the Brokesbys and Beaumonts of Leicestershire, as well as Northamptonshire neighbors such as her cousins, the Treshams.

Recusant men figured more prominently in Anne Vaux's network than they did in the visible networks of other Catholic women, but she maintained friendships with women as well – some were the wives of men who sought out the Jesuits in her household while others were friendships she cultivated independently. Still, all were Catholics and most were recusant Catholics. The unusual nature of her household as a Jesuit headquarters meant that Vaux moved frequently – at least three times in the 1590s alone – and that she was by necessity more guarded with her neighbors than other women had to be.

Most women, regardless of status, had friendships with other women in their neighborhood, those with whom they shared a geographic connection.<sup>79</sup> Barbara Harris has noted that these local relationships “often drew their members into the affinities of noblemen who dominated the region.”<sup>80</sup> That was certainly true in the relationship between Muriel Tresham, her daughter Lady Monteagle and Alice, the youngest daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorp and by 1596 the Countess of Derby. The Spencers were a sheep-farming family on the rise in the late sixteenth century. They were Calvinists and increasingly prominent members of Northamptonshire's political scene, and near neighbors to the Treshams. In summer 1596, the Countess invited Lady Tresham and her daughter Elizabeth, Baroness Monteagle, to join her hunting party in Brigstock Park.<sup>81</sup> The close physical proximity (about five miles) of the

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<sup>79</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 238-239.

<sup>80</sup> Harris, “Sisterhood, Friendship and the Power of English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550,” 41.

<sup>81</sup> *HMCV*, 89-90.

Throckmorton estates at Coughton and Feckenham helped to reinforce their kin networks because the women were both near neighbors and kinswomen.

Neighborhood relationships could also inspire a great deal of anxiety, especially for Catholic women in predominantly Protestant or conformist neighborhoods. Women's talk and women's networks served similar functions in upper-status circles as what Bernard Capp has noted in the networks of women in middling and lesser status: the enforcement of moral boundaries of the neighborhood.<sup>82</sup> When Agnes Wilford Throckmorton heard local gossip in 1625, perhaps through the women in her neighborhood, that two of her adult sons, Robert (the heir) and his younger brother Tom, were racing horses and gambling she was extremely distressed. She complained to Robert that 'all the Contrye talketh of It that Papist hath so much monis that thaye run It a Waye'.<sup>83</sup>

Agnes seems to have been worried that a perception by neighbors or local authorities that Catholics had money to fritter away might induce those authorities, along with the Privy Council, to enact more severe policies against Catholics. Gambling on horse races was not a new pastime for young men in the Throckmorton clan. Agnes's son Tom and his cousin Henry had a wager for "x quarter of oates" in 1612.<sup>84</sup> The high level of anxiety that Agnes Wilford Throckmorton displayed in response to her adult sons' gambling at horse racing suggests not only a fear over potential policies, but also that her relationships with other women in her local networks was precarious – or that she feared it was – or that her status in her neighborhood had weakened.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 60.

<sup>83</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 1/f. 6. The dating of this letter is uncertain. Its location in the collection is between other letters dated 1612 and 1633 suggests that it was written during Robert's early adulthood. Other events mentioned in f. 6, namely an agreement Robert reached with Sir Robert Gorges in 1625, suggest that the document dates from that year.

<sup>84</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 61/Folder 3, f. 1r.

That anxiety was, undoubtedly, intensified by the religious issue. The gossip that so worried Throckmorton seems to have been the result of women in her local network working to enforce the moral boundaries of the neighborhood, and more related to that concern than to the Throckmorton's Catholicism specifically.

Women's networks were by necessity not exclusively female; they included male relatives and friends who could help to provide legal advice and assistance when a woman needed to navigate the legal system. In the case of kinsmen, this probably reflected both emotional and practical reasons: women had emotional, familial attachments to male kin such as their fathers, brothers, uncles and grandfathers and, in a practical sense, those men had greater access to and expertise with legal channels than did women – access that women found quite useful. Katherine Catesby Throckmorton and Anne Throckmorton Catesby relied on male relations, marital and natal, respectively, when they faced the unpleasant task of suing their sons in Chancery to recover the lands given to them as jointure.<sup>86</sup> Elizabeth, Lady St. John must have acquired a vast network of kinfolk and friends over the course of her four marriages. Unfortunately, her last marriage was an unhappy one that left her prone to humiliating taunts by her husband, Oliver St. John, Lord St. John of Bletsoe. After St. John seized the fortune his wife had skimmed from the estate of her previous husband, Edward Griffin, he scorned her at a dinner party c. 1580 by announcing that “your ladyship hath truly paid for your place. Wherefore if any can now make a penny more of you I would he had you.”<sup>87</sup> Her friend Sir Thomas Tresham

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<sup>85</sup> Bernard Capp argues that a woman's standing in her neighborhood and the support she could marshal from friends and neighbors was a crucial factor in determining her response to a particular event. Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 284.

<sup>86</sup> NRO ASL/1173 2 June 1582; NRO ASL/1178; Katherine Catesby (nee Willington) married as her second husband Anthony Throckmorton, Anne Throckmorton Catesby's uncle. Katherine was therefore both mother-in-law and aunt to Anne Catesby.

<sup>87</sup> *HMCV*, 88; Bindoff, *The Commons*, vol. iv, 258.

recalled how “the tears stood in his lady’s eyes” after her husband’s speeches. In her widowhood Lady St. John faced legal challenges from her son, Rice Griffin, regarding the diminished Griffin estates and relied on her friends Thomas and Margaret Throckmorton of Coughton, Sir Robert Dormer and Sir Thomas Tresham for advice.<sup>88</sup> In 1595 Elizabeth wrote from Baddesley Clinton to her “Good Brother” Thomas Throckmorton to solicit his help, and the involvement of Dormer and Tresham in resolving financial matters with her son, Rice Griffin.<sup>89</sup> That same year, Tresham was in communication with a now-unknown person about the history of the case.

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Two types of female networks have emerged in this study: one directed inward and one directed outward. Inward-looking, or “closed” networks, probably provided personal benefits such as friendship, emotional support, and the exchange of news whereas outward-looking, or “open” networks provided connections with individuals in a position to offer patronage and protection.

The majority of female networks in this study were closed networks or became closed networks over time. These networks were focused rather tightly on the kinship group; when external contacts were maintained they were usually other Catholic families. For instance, Lady Elizabeth Vaux of Harrowden constructed a network made up mostly of close family and extended kin: other members of the Vaux family, the Brokesbys, Wenmans, Digbys. Members of her network with whom she did not share a kin connection, such as the Earl of Northampton,

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<sup>88</sup> Rice Griffin was her son by her third husband, Edward Griffin of Dingley. Elizabeth, Lady St. John was the daughter of Geoffrey Chamber of Stanmore, Middlesex; she married Walter Stoner (d. 1550), Reginald Conyers (d. 1561), Edward Griffin (d. 1569), and Oliver St. John (d. 1582). Following St. John’s death she moved to Warwickshire, where she was still living in 1602. Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry: a study in colonial and medieval families* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 2005), 95.

<sup>89</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 7r. The Vaux sisters rented Baddesley Clinton from Henry Ferrers in the late 1580s and early 1590s, but had probably ended their lease by 1595, when they were living in London. Lady St. John might have rented the manor herself, or was the houseguest of either Ferrers or another of his tenants.

were almost exclusively Catholic.<sup>90</sup> One exception was Sir Richard Verney, a Protestant and deputy lieutenant of Warwickshire who had expressed his interest in doing her service and whose niece was in Lady Vaux's household. Verney might have been a friend, but it seems more likely that he was intent to create a bond with a household on which he hoped to keep his eye.<sup>91</sup> The networks of her sisters-in-law, Anne Vaux and Eleanor Brokesby, were even more insular, probably due to the hotbed of Jesuit activity that was their household and the consequent risk of exposure and punishment, for themselves and the priests they sheltered, if they were too open. Anne and Eleanor's network was made up entirely of Catholics, most of whom were recusants. The Throckmortons seem to have turned increasingly inward over the span of three generations. By the time Agnes Throckmorton was widowed and raising her young family she inhabited a network that was exclusively Catholic and driven almost entirely by kinship ties.

Outward-facing or "open" networks appear to have been favored by women (and families) with regular need of protective patronage, such as release from prison. Mary, Baroness Vaux is one example of a woman who maintained an open network. In her efforts to mitigate the damage to the family fortune caused by recusancy and a variety of lawsuits, Baroness Vaux kept up communication with patrons and frequently appeared before the Privy Council to petition in person. Muriel Tresham's network is the most outward-facing of any of the female networks examined here. Tresham maintained a number of relationships with women and men outside of her extended family group; hers was certainly the most ecumenical of the visible female networks in the Central Midlands. The strong outward focus of Lady Tresham's network was undoubtedly a product of her family's unique situation in the 1580s and 1590s. Although many

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<sup>90</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 290, 321, 400.

<sup>91</sup> TNA SP 14/216/2, f. 178v. Lady Vaux sought patronage from the Earl of Salisbury in the early seventeenth century, but he does not appear to have been part of her network. Rather, she sought at a time of crisis to become part of his clientele. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 326-327.

other recusant men were imprisoned during the same periods as was Sir Thomas Tresham, he was one of the most prominent and most outspoken male recusants of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period. Therefore, Lady Tresham might have taken on what Marie Rowlands has described as a typically male role of the head-of-household keeping out of the fray and safeguarding the honor of the household.<sup>92</sup>

The tendency of prominent Catholic women to maintain open networks was not unique to the Central Midlands. Prominent aristocratic Catholic women in other counties also maintained open networks, namely Magdalen Browne, Viscountess Montague of Sussex. The Catholicism of the Brownes, like the Treshams, was known to everyone around them, their displays of conformity assured the regime of the family's loyalty and allowed them to construct a vast network that included seemingly all of the south coast Catholic population but also a healthy population of Anglicans and Calvinists.<sup>93</sup> The Viscountess's network included courtiers such as her godson Sir Julius Caesar and many of the Protestant men in local office in Sussex.<sup>94</sup> The Brownes did not face anywhere near the level of prosecution endured by the Treshams or the Vauxes, probably due to a combination of the Viscount's occasional conformity and the dizzying number of connections the family maintained with their expansive entourage.<sup>95</sup> Extensive reconstructions of additional kin networks might reveal more Catholic women's networks that resemble Tresham's, but the scarcity of available sources for families such as the Brudenells, Fermors, and even the Vauxes, make full reconstructions impossible.

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<sup>92</sup> Marie B. Rowlands, "Recusant Women 1560-1640," 157.

<sup>93</sup> Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 84.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Questier's recent work on the Browne family traces their expansive network, or entourage, in detail. See Questier, *Catholicism and Community*.



The types of patronage Catholic women sought from their patrons depended on the patron's place in the woman's network. Lady Elizabeth Vaux's patrons were her kinsman Robert Brokesby, her co-religionist Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. She asked for Brokesby's help with personal and legal matters; she might have relied on Northampton for a marriage negotiation with his niece.<sup>96</sup> It was not until the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, in a time of crisis for her household, that Lady Vaux solicited the assistance of patrons outside of her network: Sir Richard Verney and the Earl of Salisbury. The requests she made to them were connected to mobility and liberty: from Verney she requested safe passage to another household for two of her servants (who were probably priests) and from Salisbury she successfully requested liberty from house arrest in London.<sup>97</sup>

An aristocratic woman's network was based on status, kinship, values and, for many Catholic women, her religion and the religion of her family. Again, this echoes the formation of female networks that Capp has traced amongst poor and middling women, whose networks were based on "factors such as occupation, kinship, status, age and values."<sup>98</sup> English Catholic women relied on both family networks and their own networks in carrying out their daily tasks, such as provisioning a household and raising members of the next generation. Recusant women also relied on the networks they created to help facilitate their careers as protectors and promoters of Jesuits and seminary priests and to map out the futures of their children and families. These networks also supported women in some of the most politically-charged of their activities: the act of petitioning.

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<sup>96</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 290.

<sup>97</sup> TNA SP 14/216/2, f. 178v; Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 327.

<sup>98</sup> Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 185.

## Petitioning and Women's Networks

The network of relations, friends and patrons that a Catholic woman cultivated and maintained over the course of her life cycle was a significant factor in the survival, protection and advancement of her family and the family's property. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries aristocratic women marshaled their female networks and their natal and marital networks for support in their petitioning activities. This was a natural extension of the support women drew from their networks. When Francis Tresham, the hot-headed eldest son and heir of Sir Thomas and Muriel Tresham, was arrested for complicity in the Essex Rebellion, the women in Tresham's family swung into action. Lady Monteagle and Lady Stourton (Francis's sisters), Anne Tresham (Francis's wife), and Lady Muriel (Francis's mother) quickly engaged their networks and appealed to friends, extended family members and patrons who were in a position to help them save Francis's life.<sup>99</sup> As a participant in a treasonous plot, Francis risked being executed as a traitor. The women's efforts were rewarded when Muriel's brother, John Throckmorton, and a patroness, Lady Katherine Howard, reported that they had been able to convince the government to levy a stiff fine rather than the death penalty.<sup>100</sup> Following the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, Dorothy Parker Habington, Lord Monteagle's sister, used her family network – namely her brother, Lord Monteagle – to secure a pardon for her husband, Thomas Habington.<sup>101</sup> Extant records do not indicate the scope of petitioning, female or otherwise, when Francis Tresham was arrested following the Gunpowder Plot. The sole surviving petition regarding Tresham and the Powder Treason was one his wife, Anne, submitted to Cecil in

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<sup>99</sup> *HMCV*, 108-110. Alison Thorne examines conventions in women's petitionary rhetoric in times of acute crisis, such as the aftermath of the Essex Rebellion and the Main Plot of 1603 in "Women's Petitionary Letters and Early Seventeenth Century Treason Trials," *Women's Writing*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2006): 23-43.

<sup>100</sup> *HMCV*, 108-110.

<sup>101</sup> Gerard, *The Condition of Catholics under James I*, 266-7.

December 1605 in which she asked for permission to nurse her sick husband while he was in prison.<sup>102</sup> He died in prison later that month.

Regardless of religious affiliation, women were active petitioners on behalf of male family members, friends, servants, and themselves. In fact, petitioning was such a prevalent role for women that, according to James Daybell, the genre commanded fully one-third of the letters written by women during the period 1540-1603.<sup>103</sup> Women of high social and economic status appear most frequently in the records but women of middling and lesser status petitioned as well. In January 1579/80, for instance, Suzan Randall petitioned the Privy Council on behalf of her husband, Anthony, whose “backwardnes in Relligion” had landed him in the custody of the bishop of Exeter. Mrs. Randall argued that her husband merited release from prison on the grounds that “he hath purged him self.”<sup>104</sup> In February 1586/7, Alice Browne petitioned the Privy Council for help in recovering monies owed to her late husband by his former employer, William Clopton of Warwickshire.<sup>105</sup> For Catholics, petitioning was a crucial component of a family’s navigation of the anti-Catholic statutes, prosecution for violations of those statutes and especially the recurrent and extended periods of imprisonment that accompanied aristocratic recusant practice. Catholic women petitioned friends, patrons, and government officials in efforts to secure release from prison for their husbands or other male relations, on behalf of their servants, and to garner favor for themselves.

The regularity with which female petitioning appears in records of state and in family papers indicates that it was something that men expected of women in the early modern period.

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<sup>102</sup> HH, CP Petitions 348 (pr. *HMCS*, XXIII, 39).

<sup>103</sup> James Daybell, *Women Letter Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 229, 234.

<sup>104</sup> *APC* vol. 11, 362.

<sup>105</sup> *APC* vol. 14, 324.

Susan Wiseman has noted that although the nature of female petitioning shifted during the Civil Wars, it had existed as a feature of women's activities for well over a century.<sup>106</sup> For women of high status it was a regular component of family and household management and of the family enterprise: it was part of a woman's career. When John Frost was arrested in Cornwall in 1584 in connection with Spanish intrigue he asked his mistress, Mrs. Englefield, to "make some suit for his liberation."<sup>107</sup> Agnes Carter petitioned Sir Francis Walsingham for the restoration of her son's household books (financial accounts) so that she could help resolve his debts. She also asked that Walsingham permit him to move from the Tower of London to the Gatehouse prison, "where he was before," presumably to give her son access to friends imprisoned there.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Lady St. John of Bletsoe petitioned the Privy Council that the belongings of her son, Rice Griffin, which had been seized in a raid on his house after he fled to the continent in 1582, be placed in her custody. Although we do not know the outcome of Carter's petition, Privy Council records reveal that Lady St. John was successful; the Council ordered that her son's goods and books would remain with her so long as she would willingly produce them should the Council wish to see them again.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: Women, Writing and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 46-48. Bernard Capp sees a surge in petitioning by middling and poor women during the Civil Wars period; for a list of women's writing in the seventeenth century, including women's petitions, see Patricia Crawford, "Appendix I: Provisional Checklist of Women's Published Writings 1600-1700," in *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior, 232-264. Caroline Bowden has also discussed women's petitioning in the larger context of female literacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see Caroline Bowden, "Women as intermediaries: an example of the use of literacy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries," *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1993): 215-223, especially 218-220.

<sup>107</sup> TNA, SP 12/172/49, fol. 49r.

<sup>108</sup> TNA SP12/206, f. 184r.

<sup>109</sup> APC vol. 13, 386.

Women employed a variety of rhetorical models, or tropes, as part of their petitioning strategy.<sup>110</sup> They invoked arguments pertaining to gender and the family; illness and infirmity (of both the prisoner and family members); and of the honor and loyalty of the petitioner, her family, and the individual for whom she petitioned. Muriel, Lady Tresham invoked these arguments in May 1583 when she asked her aunt, the Countess of Bedford, to help in modifying Sir Thomas Tresham's house arrest in a neighbor's house to confinement in Tresham's own house next door. Lady Tresham argued that her husband's imprisonment caused undue strain on her and their "many children" and asked that he might be released to confinement in his own house. Their "little children" were "continually deprived of their father's comfort and direction" and the family, she maintained, needed him at their head; she referred to him as their "special guide and principal worldly director."<sup>111</sup> Notably, she avoided any mention of his spiritual role in their household. Furthermore, she beseeched her aunt, the smoke, heat, and profane speeches emanating from the "noisome kitchen" immediately under Sir Thomas's chamber were compromising his health. Lady Muriel was perfectly capable of overseeing her household and the family estates in her husband's absence, especially since she had very competent stewards to assist her, but she implied in this petition that as a weak woman she and the family required the strength of the male head-of-household to effectively direct the business of the household. In 1605, Elizabeth Vaux invoked the purported weakness of her sex when she petitioned the Earl of Salisbury, a patron outside of her closed network, for liberty from house arrest. She insisted to Salisbury that she had no knowledge of the man who was the chief "party" to the Gunpowder

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<sup>110</sup> James Daybell, *Women Letter Writers*, 250-254.

<sup>111</sup> *HMCV*, 29.

Plot. She knew of no man, she told him, who would “putt theyr liffes & estats in the power & seacrecy of a woman.”<sup>112</sup>

In the 1580s and 1590s an especially common trope was illness, either of the prisoner himself or of the prisoner’s close female relations (namely his mother or wife). Such appeals were not a product of the Midlands but came from counties across England. Margaret Gage of Sussex petitioned for her husband’s release several times on the grounds of his poor health.<sup>113</sup> Lady Tresham used this device throughout the 1580s and 1590s: in 1583 the culprit was a hot and malodorous kitchen beneath her husband’s chamber; in 1592 she petitioned for Sir Thomas’s release from prison in Ely because the brackish air of the fens had made him sick.<sup>114</sup> In May 1589 Lady Anne Catesby petitioned Archbishop Whitgift that her husband, who was himself ill, be released to visit his mother, who was “dangerously ill.”<sup>115</sup>

The Privy Council took seriously these claims and expected prisoners who were released on such grounds would tend to their health or the health of the family members in question. In early June 1594 Thomas Throckmorton was granted permission to travel for three months to the baths at Buxton for his health.<sup>116</sup> It seems to have done the trick, since he did not request any further releases on the grounds of his health. The timing of his release is particularly significant and lends credence to his claims of illness: his license spanned the summer months, which the Privy Council usually regarded as the most dangerous months to have potential enemies of the state traversing the countryside unsupervised. In December 1588 John Talbot of Grafton and

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<sup>112</sup> HH, CP113/65 [*H.M.C.S.* vol. 17, 645]

<sup>113</sup> LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 43r.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> LPL, Fairhurst Papers 3470, f. 112.

<sup>116</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 62/f. 20.

William Tirwhitt were released for one month due to the “longe sickenes and indisposicion” of their wives.<sup>117</sup> Talbot himself became ill while tending to his wife and was granted an additional two months release “the better to recouper his health.”<sup>118</sup> By May 1589 he had still not recovered. The Privy Council agreed to modify his house arrest to allow him “libertie of six miles compasse about his house...that by exercising of his corpulent body and receaving the holesomeness of the aire he might...be the sooner restored to his former health.”<sup>119</sup> The Privy Council remained willing to grant additional releases and extensions because Talbot convinced them that he was truly ill and took visible steps, such as traveling to the baths, in his attempts to recover his health. In 1593 the Council was still working with Talbot to provide him the ample furloughs he required to mitigate his various illnesses. He struggled with his poor health until his death c. 1607.

When a prisoner employed false claims of illness the Privy Council often ordered his return to prison. William Shelley of Sutton in Herefordshire was released to care for his wife and her mother in 1581 but instead set about making “great preparation for the keeping of a solemne and extraordinary Christmas.” The Privy Council immediately grew suspicious and ordered the Herefordshire JPs to investigate whether the claims of illness were true and to ascertain the degree of preparations for Christmas celebrations and the circulation of visitors to the house.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, when after his release for serious illness in 1585 Sir John Southworth held

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<sup>117</sup> *APC* vol. 16, 389.

<sup>118</sup> *APC* vol. 17, 40-41.

<sup>119</sup> *APC* vol. 17, 198-199.

<sup>120</sup> *APC* vol. 13, 284-285.

“conventicles and meetinges with Papistes” rather than traveling to the baths to recover his health the Privy Council ordered him recommitted to Chester Castle.<sup>121</sup>

In more politically-charged circumstances women jettisoned tropes such as illness and instead crafted petitions designed to underscore the honor, right behavior, and reputation of the man in trouble and his family group. Claims of illness were effective in securing release of prisoners when political danger was not imminent, but would have been utterly ineffective in the aftermath of a plot or uprising. Illness did not appear in petitions following the Throckmorton or Babington plots, nor following the Essex Rebellion or the Gunpowder Treason. Margery Throckmorton implored her son Francis to “deale playnlye and loyally” with the queen after his plot was discovered. Francis heeded her advice; in his supplication to Elizabeth he stressed his loyalty and respect for his monarch, from which “inconsyderate rashenes of unbridled youthe hath w[i]thdrawen me....”<sup>122</sup>

Women, particularly those of upper-status, used both their networks and petitions to protect the family, whether by bringing home an imprisoned husband or by taking steps to protect land and other assets. Bernard Capp connects women’s petitioning in early modern England to their increasing political voice and an “embryonic ideology of female citizenship.”<sup>123</sup> Susan Wiseman recognizes the construction of political identity and early forms of citizenship in petitions related to land and inheritance during the Civil Wars period.<sup>124</sup> Petitioning certainly provided women a political voice and claims on nascent citizenship, but of equal significance, petitioning constituted political action that allows us to examine the political engagement of

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<sup>121</sup> APC vol. 14, 125-126.

<sup>122</sup> TNA SP12/171/1, f.1 r; TNA SP12/171/1.I, f. 2 r.

<sup>123</sup> B.S. Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 289.

<sup>124</sup> Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, 59.



women at different social levels and in sometimes fraught social or political circumstances, such as recusancy. Much of the content of women's petitions in the period 1580-1630 is connected in some way to a political objective. For Catholic women, nearly every action was a political one, since their faith in itself was a sort of political statement or objection. Here, the task has been to situate women's activities, including petitioning, in the context of the networks they inhabited. The political nature and implications of women's petitioning efforts will be explored in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Catholics and Political Engagement: Petitioning, Office-Holding and Military Participation**

Catholics in the Central Midlands remained integrated to the state in a political sense through activities such as petitioning, office holding, and military service throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Historians often use high political office as a barometer of Catholic involvement in the political life of early modern England, and when viewed through that lens Catholics indeed appear to have been herded out of positions of power and influence.<sup>1</sup> Yet when other means of political action and engagement are considered, for example petitioning and military service, the picture changes considerably.<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, after the 1560s Catholic presence in both national and local political office was much diminished from the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign; outward conformity kept some men in office, but by the 1580s (if not before) Catholics were a minority in official political roles. In Northamptonshire, two of that minority were Sir Edmund Brudenell and Sir George Fermor, both of whom served as Justices of the Peace and on various local commissions in both Elizabeth's and James's reigns. Both Brudenell and Fermor served as JPs and Fermor was a deputy lieutenant. Robert Brokesby, a client of the third Earl of Huntingdon and the Hastings family, was another of the minority. He remained on the commission of the peace for Leicestershire until his death in 1615.<sup>3</sup> Political

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<sup>1</sup> John Bossy argued that English Catholics were politically marginalized and quiescent; John Bossy, *English Catholic Community*.

<sup>2</sup> Another means of Catholic political engagement that needs further explication is literary and antiquarian work. Margaret Sena has started us in the right direction with her work on William Blundell, but further investigation into the political aspects of Catholic intellectual work would contribute significantly to situating Catholics into the larger picture of early modern English history. Margaret Sena, "William Blundell and the networks of Catholic dissent in post-Reformation England," in *Communities in Early Modern England*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 54-75.

<sup>3</sup> Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488.

engagement was part of a gentle or noble birthright, and it was a birthright that Catholics continued to exercise even in periods of intense prosecution.

Rather than discouraging Catholics from opportunities for engagement with the state the Elizabethan and Jacobean regimes encouraged that engagement and thereby kept Catholics connected to the various offices of state, from the local level to the monarch and Privy Council. Catholic gentlemen, and even some recusants, continued to wield authority in their local communities and to serve in county or local political office. Some Catholic gentlemen (both conformists and recusants) engaged politically via a military career. Upper-status women, too, were able to engage politically through their petitioning efforts. Although there are a number of additional means by which Catholics chose to engage politically during this period – for instance through literary production and antiquarian work – this chapter concentrates on three aspects of Catholic engagement with late Tudor and early Stuart political life: office holding, military service, and the role of women's petitions.

Catholics who demonstrated their loyalty to the state by attending the English Church were often able to retain a more firm hold on local political offices than were recusant Catholics, who refused to go to the state church at all. Yet this issue is not as simple as comparing the political fortunes of conformists versus that of recusants because so often, families and the office-holding men at the head of those families cannot be situated tidily into one category.<sup>4</sup> Peter Marshall has made this point with respect to Sir John Throckmorton of Feckenham, the brother of Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton. Another case in point is that of the judge Sir Francis Beaumont of Grace Dieu, Leicestershire. Beaumont was the patriarch of a steadfastly Catholic family. He was occasionally a recusant but most of the time conformed enough to

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Marshall, "Faith and Identity in a Warwickshire Family: The Throckmortons and the Reformation," *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, no. 49 (Bristol: 4word Ltd, 2010), 13.

satisfy the monarch and Privy Council. Neither Queen Elizabeth nor her Privy Council exhibited concern that the recusancy of Beaumont's family impeded his ability to do his job properly. He prosecuted Catholics according to the provisions of the law, as he was expected to do as a judge. His lack of special treatment for Catholics and his refusal to debate doctrine from his bench earned him a reputation among some Catholic polemicists (and modern historians) as an "arch-persecutor" of his coreligionists, although the evidence does not bear out those assertions.<sup>5</sup>

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### **Male Political Engagement and Office Holding**

Office-holding was not only one of the principal ways in which a gentleman remained involved and engaged with political life during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but also an effective means by which the state tethered Catholics to the center. Most of the historical scholarship on English Catholics emphasizes the degree to which Catholics were excluded from positions of influence after the accession of Elizabeth I. Yet recent research, particular the efforts of William Shiels and Michael Questier, has argued for a more nuanced

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<sup>5</sup> Roger Sell cited Beaumont's speech at the sentencing of three priests in Durham in 1594 as evidence of the "relish" with which Beaumont handed down sentences and the "hostile fervour" he "encouraged" in Protestants. Sell, "Notes on the Religious and Family Background of Francis and Sir John Beaumont," 300. Yet Beaumont was very careful in that speech to explain the treasonous nature of the priests' actions: mainly withdrawing English subjects from obedience to the monarch, preaching the pope's authority, and encouraging sedition. The sentencing of the priests, Beaumont's speech at their conviction and sentencing, and the actions of the crowd assembled to watch the execution were recorded by Christopher Robinson, a priest who had traveled to Durham for the express purpose of observing and recording the sentencing and execution of his fellow clergymen, which he then sent as a report to another priest, Fr. Dudley. At no point did Robinson detail the kind of relish Sell mentions, nor any fervent whipping-up of the Protestant crowd to a "hostile fervour" against Catholics. On the contrary, Robinson's account made evident Beaumont's intention to uphold the law. When the jury returned a guilty verdict, Beaumont, as the chief justice of the judges there assembled, addressed the defendants. He refused to debate doctrine with them and instead concentrated on the legal business at hand: "I leave unto those that are divines to dispute with you as touchinge his [the pope's] authoritie. It is for me to urge the laws and statutes of this realm against you...I have to lay before you your treasons in stirring up her subjects against our Sovereigne, whom I beseech God long to preserve." Catholic Record Society, *Miscellanea* vol. i (London: Catholic Record Society, 1905), 85-92.

interpretation. Shiels has observed that Catholic separation from mainstream English society – including political society – was not as extensive as historians have previously argued.<sup>6</sup> Michael Questier’s study of the Viscounts Montague in Sussex certainly bears that out; Questier demonstrated that the “carefully crafted gradual extinction” of Catholics in county governance is an incomplete story.<sup>7</sup> Analysis of office-holding trends in the Central Midlands agrees with what Shiels and Questier have observed in other counties. In Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, although many recusant gentlemen were excluded from parliamentary office within the first decade of Elizabeth’s reign, not to reappear in any significant numbers until after 1610, some Catholics, even recusants, remained engaged in local and county offices such as forest commissions and as JPs. Although the politicized nature of recusancy made grants of office difficult, especially under Elizabeth, maintaining trustworthy Catholics in positions of authority was in fact an effective way to reinforce bonds of obligation between Catholics and their patrons and, by extension, between Catholics and the political state.

Catholic gentlemen faced exclusion from government office from very early in Elizabeth’s reign, yet widespread purges from office did not occur until at least the mid-1560s, and possibly even later. Recusant men were more vulnerable than were those who conformed to the state church; they were more likely than conforming Catholics not to be reelected to Parliament and to face removal from the county bench, the shrievalty and the county lieutenancy. From the 1580s through c. 1610 Catholic recusants held office infrequently, and even then usually in minor positions. After 1610, however, and through the 1620s (if not into the

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<sup>6</sup> William J. Shiels, “Catholics and Recusants” in *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, ed. Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 266.

<sup>7</sup> Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 63.

early 1630s) recusant Catholics experienced a resurgence in office-holding.<sup>8</sup> Sir Thomas Brudenell, for instance, was a JP for Northamptonshire by 1624 (perhaps earlier) and was appointed a deputy lieutenant of that county in 1627.<sup>9</sup> In the 1620s the Catholic Earl of Rutland was Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, *custos rotulorum* in Northamptonshire and JP in several counties, including Northamptonshire and Yorkshire; Sir Thomas Compton, kt., the younger brother of Warwickshire's lord lieutenant, was a JP and a commissioner of Oyer and Terminer in Warwickshire despite being a known recusant.<sup>10</sup> According to a list recorded in May 1624 in the official minute book of the House of Lords, by that year there were at least seventy-one men in "places of trust" throughout the realm who were known or suspected to be popish recusants or who had immediate family who were recusants.<sup>11</sup>

In the first several years after Elizabeth's accession, county offices such as the commission of the peace and the shrievalty remained relatively stable. John Gleason has argued that the *Liber Pacis* of 1562 does not reveal anything resembling a purge of officeholders early in Elizabeth's reign and certainly does not suggest any indications of political

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of Catholic political engagement in the 1630s, see Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Wake, *Brudenells of Deene*, 112. It is not clear how long Brudenell served either as a JP or as a deputy lieutenant. He does not appear in the *Liber Pacis* for 1608 but is recorded in the Journal of the House of Lords as being a sitting JP in 1624. The list of appointees to the lieutenancy in 1638 did not include Brudenell, but it could be because he held an existing appointment. T.N.A. SP 14/33; NRO C 2541, 19 November 1638; 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

<sup>10</sup> 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

<sup>11</sup> The list recorded in the Journal of the House of Lords also includes noncommunicants; I have included in the tally of seventy-one men only those men identified in the list as Catholic recusants. Of these men, twelve were nobles and fifty-nine were gentlemen. 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

disenfranchisement throughout the realm due to religious affiliation by that time.<sup>12</sup> In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, until the mid-1560s at least, many Catholic men continued to hold the county offices they had occupied prior to the young queen's accession. In 1563 the Elizabethan Oath of Supremacy was extended to "schoolmasters, tutors, physicians, lawyers, attorneys, sheriffs and officers of the courts, and to every member of the House of Commons."<sup>13</sup> As will be explored below, increased administration or enforcement of the oath throughout the remainder of the 1560s resulted in loss of office and advancement for some Catholic men, such as Sir John Fermor in Northamptonshire and Catholic members of the Throckmorton family in Warwickshire. It did not, however, have a detrimental effect on other Catholics, such as Robert Brokesby, Sir George Shirley and Sir Francis Beaumont in Leicestershire.

The returns in 1570 indicate that the JPs in the Central Midlands were intent to carry out their instructions regarding administration of the oath carefully and to the letter, even when that meant reporting on their Catholic colleagues and kinsmen. Warwickshire's JPs, who included Sir Thomas Lucy, William Devereux, Henry Goodere and Clement Throckmorton, wrote to the Privy Council on 27 January 1569/70 to account for the delay in securing the Oath of Supremacy from the rest of the justices. The men explained that while they had no "cause of scruple" in subscribing to the oath the previous autumn, some of their colleagues had required additional time "to consider of such pointes as they are in doubt of." Meanwhile, the rebellion in the north had erupted and all of the justices, regardless of their religious conscience, turned with "diligence and care to set fourthe o[u]r country men that waie [to the defense of the realm]." With the assent of the Earl of Warwick, lord lieutenant of Warwickshire, the justices determined that further

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<sup>12</sup> John H. Gleason, "The Personnel of the Commissions of the Peace, 1554-1564" *Huntington Library Quarterly* vol. 18, no. 2 (Feb. 1955): 174-177.

<sup>13</sup> Ann M.C. Forster, "The Oath Tendered," *Recusant History* vol. 14, no. 2 (1977): 88.

administration of the oath of uniformity could wait.<sup>14</sup> From January to March, Lucy, Devereux, Goodere and Throckmorton (all of whom were sound Protestants) worked to ensure that all of their colleagues were in compliance with the oath. They wrote again on 28 March 1570 to say that all but three of them had subscribed to the oath. Those missing were three recusants, all of whom were Clement Throckmorton's kinsmen: Sir Robert Throckmorton, who had been at his house in Buckinghamshire since before the Privy Council's orders were issued the previous autumn; his son and heir Thomas Throckmorton, who had recently come home "very sick" from London and was too ill to present himself for the oath, even to his cousin and fellow JP Clement Throckmorton; and a cousin, Robert Middlemore of Edgbaston, who had failed to appear at a meeting at which he was to "give us his resolute aunswer."<sup>15</sup>

By the early 1570s some Catholic men had been removed from the commission of the peace, but others were not, and even those who were taken off the bench suffered not because of their religion but due to their own behavior in other respects. A complex set of objectives contributed to the structure of power and authority, and religion was only one consideration. As Jeff Hankins' study of Essex governance and the Catholic Petre family revealed, the selection of county magistrates was influenced by the county as well as the Crown and depended on "local acceptance and patronage."<sup>16</sup> What Hankins observed in Essex was also true in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire: even great Puritan magnates benefited from having Catholics among their followers. Successful "great men" had religiously heterogeneous entourages and clientages, and those clients were often office-holders. Furthermore, loyalty and trustworthiness were far

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<sup>14</sup> T.N.A. SP12/66, f. 88r.

<sup>15</sup> T.N.A. SP12/67, f. 47r.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey R. Hankins, "Papists, Power and Puritans: Catholic Officeholding and the Rise of the Puritan Faction in Early-Seventeenth-Century Essex," *Catholic Historical Review* vol. 95, no. 4 (Oct. 2009): 691.



more important qualities for a member of an entourage to possess than was a specific religious practice or doctrinal viewpoint. The Earls of Huntingdon required an extensive and loyal entourage to maintain their dominant position in Leicestershire, particularly during the tenure of the fifth Earl in the early seventeenth century. As Huntingdon and his Hastings relatives continually fought off challenges from the Greys and their retinue (and later, the Duke of Buckingham) they followed the practice established by the third Earl: an entourage comprised of men from across the religious spectrum, whom – like Robert Brokesby – they placed in positions of local influence whenever they could.<sup>17</sup> From the late 1570s through the 1620s there was a surprising level of continuity in local office-holding in the Central Midlands, particularly in the shrievalty and on the county bench.

There were many reasons for removing a JP from the bench, and only one of these was the man's religion.<sup>18</sup> The looming threat of the Spanish Armada in 1587-1588 inspired another round of housecleaning amongst the population of county office holders. The Privy Council hoped to identify potentially troublesome individuals and to limit their ability both to participate in governance and to exert authority over the local populace. In Leicestershire, six JPs were removed: one because he was dead, two because they were Catholics, and three because they were "cold", or apathetic justices (and who were, for good measure, also accused of having recusant family or friends).<sup>19</sup> In Buckinghamshire, two JPs were removed for not being resident in the shire, another requested his own removal, yet another was removed for "many causes," one was removed because of the recusancy of both himself and his family, and one although

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<sup>17</sup> Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488.

<sup>18</sup> Alison Wall, "'The Greatest Disgrace': The Making and Unmaking of JPs in Elizabethan and Jacobean England," *English Historical Review* vol. 119 (481) (2004): 312-332.

<sup>19</sup> BL Lansdowne MS, vol. 53, f. 190r.

“him self of good repute...his wief is verie backwarde” and his household known to receive unknown persons.<sup>20</sup> Yet George Throckmorton, the conforming son of Sir George and uncle to the recusant Thomas, was allowed to remain as JP despite his close relationship with his Catholic relatives within the county and suspicions that he “favour[ed] Papistes.”<sup>21</sup>

Officials were also removed or suspended when they endangered the public good and discredited themselves through their own dishonorable behavior. These episodes sometimes appear to be about religion when in fact they are really about local power struggles or personal enmity. In 1592, Sir George Fermor and John Wake were suspended from the Commission of the Peace in Northamptonshire for fighting. Fermor and Wake got into a heated argument during “Open Sessions helde for that countie” and followed that with “open violence at dynner tyme in the companie of all the said Justices.”<sup>22</sup> Their fellow justices bound them both to keep the peace and reported the event to the Privy Council. Although Fermor was a conformist who headed a Catholic household, the matter had nothing to do with the religious attachments of either man. Rather, their fellow justices and the Privy Councilors were concerned that such behavior, “especialie in men of their callinge and of the Comission” set a dangerous precedent for other men in the county. A justice’s job was, in part, to protect the peace and discourage faction and division in his county. Fermor and Wake had endangered the peace; their very public and unrestrained dispute not only tarnished their own honor but also had the potential to inflame division. The Council suspended both men from the county bench and called them to the

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<sup>20</sup> BL Lansdowne, vol. 53, f. 189v. This list does not include information on removals from office in Northamptonshire or Warwickshire; I have included Buckinghamshire because of its geographical proximity to these counties and because several Warwickshire Catholic families, including the Throckmortons of Coughton, held land in Buckinghamshire.

<sup>21</sup> BL Lansdowne vol. 53, f. 186r.

<sup>22</sup> *APC* vol. 23, 286.

“Counsell Borde” for a hearing.<sup>23</sup> By the end of March 1592/1593 the Privy Council reinstated both men on the condition that they “remitt all unkyndnes fallen out aboute this occasion and to be good freinds hereafter and to forbear to give any cause of offence eche to other.”<sup>24</sup>

Much as the Privy Council and some of the local justices might have preferred not to have Catholics or their close family members on the county benches, it was more important that the justices behave in accordance with social and cultural norms, including the display of virtue through aristocratic restraint. Above all, they had to demonstrate that they were responsible stewards of the peace and the law in their county. The social prominence and authority of some men, such as George Throckmorton or Sir George Fermor, meant that a position in local and county government was almost imperative. A conscientious Catholic justice was certainly better than one who was senile, argumentative, or apathetic.

Even after most outright recusants were removed from office in the 1560s and 1570s, other Catholics and religious conservatives, particularly those with strong ties to powerful patrons, retained their positions and saw further opportunities develop. Robert Brokesby, a Hastings client and recusant, was a JP from 1559 until his death in 1615.<sup>25</sup> Francis Beaumont went to Parliament for Aldeburgh, Leicestershire in 1572 and served on a committee for legal reforms in 1588. By 1593 he was made a justice of the court of Common Pleas; the recusancy of his family, his own occasional recusancy and rumors of priests lodging in his house at Grace Dieu notwithstanding. He served in Leicestershire and Rutland and as legal counsel (and as

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<sup>23</sup> *APC* vol. 24, 85-86.

<sup>24</sup> *APC* vol. 24, 137-138.

<sup>25</sup> Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488.

advocate for the Catholic noblewoman Anne Vaux) until his death in 1598.<sup>26</sup> Sir George Shirley of Staunton Harold (Leicestershire) and Astwell (Northamptonshire) was a JP for Leicestershire in the early seventeenth century and served as sheriff of Berkshire in 1603 despite some suspicions two decades previously about his involvement in the Throckmorton Plot.<sup>27</sup> His duties on the county bench kept him in close contact with Sir Robert Cecil; Cecil sent requests to Shirley that he wanted carried out in the county and in return, offered Shirley his patronage.<sup>28</sup> His heir Sir Henry, second Baronet served in various offices for Leicestershire, including a turn as sheriff in 1624-5.<sup>29</sup> In Robin Jenkins's estimation, the social prominence of Shirley's family overcame their Catholicism, and Sir Henry's friendship with Buckingham protected him in his feuds with the chief patron of the county, the Earl of Huntingdon.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, in the mid-1620s, Buckingham, intent on curtailing Huntingdon's power in the county, ensured that his client, the Catholic Sir Henry Shirley, was in a position that commanded deference from the other magistrates in his county "below the rank of baron."<sup>31</sup>

In Northamptonshire, Sir Edmund Brudenell served as JP and on various local commissions, including one to investigate the reported theft of Mary Stuart's jewels from Rockingham Castle in 1576. His coreligionist Sir Thomas Tresham was Ranger of Rockingham Forest in 1578 under the direction of his patron and friend (and his wife's uncle), the Earl of

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<sup>26</sup> *HMCV*, 79, 82, 85-86, 100, 102; "Beaumont, Francis (c. 1540-98), of Gracedieu, Leics.," *History of Parliament Online*, available at <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/beaumont-francis-1540-98> [accessed 4 January 2012].

<sup>27</sup> Roger D. Sell, "Sir John Beaumont and His Three Audiences," in *Writing and Religion in England 1558 - 1689*, 196.

<sup>28</sup> *HH*, CP 89/109 (pr. *HMCS* vol. 11, 495)

<sup>29</sup> *TNA SP* 16/10, f. 98r.

<sup>30</sup> Robin P. Jenkins, 'Shirley, Sir Henry, second baronet (1589-1633)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70620>, accessed 24 Sept 2011]

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Cogswell, *Home Divisions: aristocracy, the state, and provincial conflict*, 99.

Bedford, who was Guardian of the Forest at the same time.<sup>32</sup> Brudenell's brother, Thomas, held at least minor posts in Northamptonshire into the 1580s; Thomas and his kinsman, William Fitzwilliam, were the commissioners charged with sequestering the profits (or more accurately, the produce) of Lord Vaux's rectory at Irtlingborough in 1586, although they quickly handed the responsibility to a different set of commissioners.<sup>33</sup> Another brother, Sir Robert Brudenell, was sheriff of Huntingdonshire in 1596.<sup>34</sup> At least two of the brothers – Sir Edmund and Sir Robert – were Catholics at the head of Catholic households, as was Sir George Fermor of Easton Neston. Fermor, whose father had been displaced in the 1560s, was a JP, sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1590, and a commissioner to search out Jesuits and seminary priests in 1591, despite the known Catholicism of his wife and household and his own religious conservatism.<sup>35</sup> Fermor also served as a commissioner for musters under both Elizabeth and James and on various local commissions, including one to search the house of a prominent Puritan, Peter Wentworth, for evidence of any “matter that hath bene or may be intended to be moved in Parliament,” particularly anything related to the succession.<sup>36</sup> Fermor's standing in the county and his authority among the local populace was sufficient for him to act as an arbitrator in disputes, as he

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<sup>32</sup> *APC* vol. 4, 157. Tresham's arrest three years later on suspicion of harboring the Jesuit Edmund Campion and his subsequent emergence as a vocal advocate of Catholic toleration essentially ended further opportunities for his own office-holding, but for a brief stint as forest warden in the last two years of his life.

<sup>33</sup> In July 1586 Brudenell and Fitzwilliam asked that the commission be taken over by John and Gilbert Pickering, Thomas Mulsho and John Fosbrooke. *SP* 46/34, f. 75r.

<sup>34</sup> *APC* vol. 26, 250.

<sup>35</sup> W.J. Shiels, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 113, 143; *HMCV*, 61. It is probable that Sir George was a conforming Catholic; through his mother, Maud Vaux, he was connected with the Vauxes of Harrowden, and his father, at least, was fairly close with William, Lord Vaux. One of his daughters, Agnes, remained Catholic throughout her life and in 1605 was suspected of involvement with the Gunpowder Plot. King James visited Fermor at Easton Neston while on progress in summer 1603. John Nichols, *The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities of King James the First, his Royal Consort, Family, and Court* vol. i (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1828), 167.

<sup>36</sup> *APC* vol. 32, 249; *APC* vol. 21, 392-393.

did in 1608 between John Cocke and Francis Morgan.<sup>37</sup> Neither his religion (nor that of his household) nor his friendships with recusant families such as the Vauxes of Harrowden were an impediment to his office-holding career.

In Warwickshire, too, there were Catholic men who retained office and successfully pursued political advancement. Sir John Throckmorton, a conformist head of a Catholic recusant household and client of the Dudleys, was a justice of the peace until his death in the early 1580s.<sup>38</sup> His kinsman Robert Middlemore of Edgbaston served as sheriff of Warwickshire in 1568-69 and as a JP until his death in 1576 despite repeatedly dodging the Oath of Supremacy; his son Richard was a JP from 1582 until 1591, when he was removed due to the recusancy of his wife and heir.<sup>39</sup> Edward Arden of Park Hall, who harbored the gardener-priest Hugh Hall, S.J., was a JP from 1577 until his son-in-law's plot against the queen landed Arden and most of his family in prison in 1583.<sup>40</sup> Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton was sheriff of Rutland in 1598.<sup>41</sup> Sir Thomas Compton was a JP in the 1620s despite his recusancy. The status of Compton's family clearly overrode his religion – his brother was Warwickshire's lord lieutenant in the early seventeenth century and his wife was Mary Beaumont Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham's mother.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> George French, ed., *The Equity Reports 1854-1855: Reports of Cases argued and determined in the Court of Chancery....* (London: Spottiswoode, 1855), 69-70.

<sup>38</sup> T.N.A. SP 12/93, f. 29v; SP 12/121, f. 33v; SP 12/145, f. 44r; BL Lansdowne MS vol. 35, f. 137v.

<sup>39</sup> T.N.A. SP 12/93, f. 29v; SP 12/206, f. 177r; BL Lansdowne MS, vol. 35, f. 137v. The extent to which the career of the courtier Henry Middlemore resulted in patronage for his Warwickshire cousins is unclear.

<sup>40</sup> T.N.A. SP 12/121, f. 33v.

<sup>41</sup> Fuller, *Worthies* vol. iii, 46. Jan Broadway speculates that Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton might have been the Henry Ferrers who was Cirencester's MP in 1593; it could have been a namesake.

<sup>42</sup> 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

The continuities described above were not unique to the Midlands, but existed in other counties and regions as well. William Shiels has demonstrated that in both Yorkshire and Sussex there was a great deal of continuity of Catholics in local office. These men were not a minority, but included upwards of one hundred officeholders with recusant relations.<sup>43</sup> In Yorkshire, the high density of Catholics meant that it would have been difficult to find a candidate for office-holding who did not have Catholic relations. Although the Midlands region was not as heavily peppered with Catholics as was Yorkshire, even there men were accustomed to Catholics among their kin networks and as fellow aristocrats and office-holders.

#### Analysis of Trends in the Commission of the Peace

Despite the removal of many recusant Catholics from positions of authority, there was a surprising level of continuity in office-holding throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; fluctuations in membership of the commission of the peace and the shrievalty appear as a natural function of the office and a reflection of the social structure of a given county. In Leicestershire, for example, there was a great deal of stability in the family names that appeared in the *Libri Pacis* from 1573-1608 and in the county factions or alliances those families represented. The county bench was dominated throughout the period by the Hastings family, their servants and other members of their network, or affinity, but the balance of power was maintained by the inclusion of the Hastings's rivals, the Greys, and members of their affinity.<sup>44</sup> In 1608, there were twice as many JPs from the Hastings entourage as there were from the Grey

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<sup>43</sup> Shiels, "Catholics and Recusants," 264-265.

<sup>44</sup> HEH, HA 4331, 22 Dec 1611.

entourage, a clear indicator of who commanded the most authority in the county.<sup>45</sup> From 1573-82 the bench was occupied by Hastings, Turpin, Skipwith, Berkeley, Harrington, Beaumont of Coleorton, three members of the Cave family, Dannett, Skevington, Purvey, Stokes, Browne, Ashby, Smith and Poole. By 1608 Hastings, Turpin, Skipwith, Harrington, Beaumont, Cave, Turville and Smith remained; the others were replaced by Humfrey, Dixie, Fleming, Layton, Chippingdale, Saunders, Rowell, and Lord Grey's son. By 1632 Harrington and the Caves had disappeared, and another crop of new names appeared: Merry, Roberte, Bale, Hartopp, Gerard, Sheldon, Halford and Lacy. The Skevingtons and Ashbys appear on every list but one (1608) during the entire period; the Skipwiths and Smiths appeared on every list between 1573-1632.<sup>46</sup>

Northamptonshire, by contrast, exhibits a pattern in keeping with the enduring oligarchical structure of its government. Here, the JP lists reveal greater consistency in office-holding families. To be sure, a number of new families were in the ascendancy, such as Spencer, Watson, Montagu, Isham, Hatton, Olney, Lane, Knightley, and from 1608 the Treshams of Newton. Men from those families appear consistently in the *Libri Pacis* for the period 1573-1632 while ancient families such as Tresham of Rushton disappear after Mary's reign and established families such as Wyndham, Harecourt, and Bray trail off after 1582.<sup>47</sup> In the main, however, the degree of turnover over the entire period 1573-1632 is less pronounced than in Leicestershire. This kind of consistency in Northamptonshire's commission of the peace and, furthermore, the domination of the offices by Puritan-inclined family groups such as Spencer, Montagu and Isham helped to foster an atmosphere of tacit toleration of Catholics. So long as the Puritans and their

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<sup>45</sup> The Hastings' entourage included the Earl of Huntingdon, Walter Hastings, Henry Hastings, William Faunt, Thomas Humphrey, Thomas Compton, Robert Brookesby, Samuel Fleming, Bartholomew Laxton, William Smyth, and Henry Smyth. The Grey entourage included Lord Grey, John Grey, Thomas Beaumont, William Cave, Wolstan Dixie, and Matthew Sanders. T.N.A. SP 14/33, ff. 36r&v.

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix II.



friends maintained hegemony in county offices, and that hegemony was not challenged by Catholics with greater social status, such as a Tresham, most of the JPs were willing to tolerate their Catholic neighbors.

Like Northamptonshire, the Warwickshire commission of the peace was very stable from 1573-82; of the twenty-five family groups who appeared in the *Libri Pacis* during that period, seventeen of those appear on every list for that nine-year span. By 1608, eleven had dropped off: Anderson, Hubaud, Knowles, Willoughby, Eagleamby, Shuckburge (2), Petoe, Dannett, Dabridgecourt, and Higford. These men were replaced by fourteen new JPs; by 1632 Newdigate, Beaufou, Verney and Burgoyne remained on the bench. They were joined by nine new men: Archer, Overbury, Lisle, Puckering, Browne, Lee, Ward, Dilke, and Stapleton. Despite these shifts, however, a number of families remained constant, including some ancient houses: Lucy, Arden, Boughton, Fielding, Fisher, Devereux, Ferrers, Lee, and Throckmorton (the Protestant branch).<sup>48</sup> Ann Hughes has demonstrated that Warwickshire offices often went to families long-established in the county and less frequently to newcomers. Of the forty-five men on the commission of the peace between 1620-1640, for example, nearly half – twenty one – descended from families who had been resident in the county prior to 1500; a mere eight were newcomers.<sup>49</sup> This trend is evident in the decades prior to 1620 as well.

Since most of the gentlemen who served as JPs throughout this period had Catholic relations or friends, the potential of these relationships to enhance personal ties to the state was unavoidable. The Protestant Throckmortons had ties of sociability to their Catholic kinsmen in spite of their ideological disagreement; other families did as well, such as the Digbys, Ferrerses,

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<sup>48</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>49</sup> Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 52-55.

Ardens, and Dymocks.<sup>50</sup> The activities in which some of these officials were engaged, such as antiquarian work, provided additional connections. Sir Simon Archer, for instance, was part of an antiquarian group that connected him by intellectual affinity and friendship with Catholics in his county.

Admittedly, the *Libri Pacis* are difficult to rely upon for a full accounting of justices. Some lists were far more complete than others; the 1608 and 1632 rolls were meticulous and lengthy, for example, while the 1582 list reads like an addendum to a list already in place since the usual ordering of Court officials, nobility and bishops is absent.<sup>51</sup> In some cases, individuals do not appear on the lists at all, yet other sources, such as Privy Council missives, clearly identify them as JPs. Sir Thomas Brudenell was absent from the 1608 and 1632 lists, yet was identified as a JP by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.<sup>52</sup> As Alison Wall's study of JPs has demonstrated, the lists make the office of JP look like a very capricious and constantly changing organism.<sup>53</sup> Despite these difficulties, the lists are complete enough to offer an indication of the shifts in governing families that took place in the early seventeenth century and again early in Charles I's reign.

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<sup>50</sup> HH, CP 101/89 (*HMCS*, vol. 15, 207).

<sup>51</sup> For the 1608 and 1632 lists, see T.N.A. SP 14/33 and SP 16/212, respectively; for 1582 see BL Lansdowne MS vol. 35.

<sup>52</sup> 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Alison Wall, "'The Greatest Disgrace': The Making and Unmaking of JPs in Elizabethan and Jacobean England," *English Historical Review* vol. 119 (481) (2004): 312-332.

### Analysis of Trends in the Sheriff's Lists

The trend observed for the Commission of the Peace is even more pronounced in the sheriff's lists, which are a more reliable source. The sheriff lists indicate that turnover of families was a regular and natural occurrence unconnected to religious motivations. The dominance of certain families in certain periods gave way to the dominance of other families, sometimes in the space of just a few decades. This was not restricted to Catholics or even to hot Protestants. From the 1540s to the 1560s in Leicestershire the Digbys, Catesbys, Caves, Grevilles, Hastings, Nevilles, Throckmortons and Wigstons appear on the sheriff lists at least twice. From 8 Elizabeth (1565-1566) through the end of the queen's reign the dominant families in the office of sheriff were the Cave brothers (7 terms), the Turpins (4), the Hastings brothers (3), Thomas Skeffington (Skevington) (3), the Beaumonts (2), Villiers (2), Ashbys (2), and Purefeys (2). During the early Stuart period, the Caves, Hastings, Nevilles and Beaumonts still appear, but new names appear too: Basil Brooke (a Catholic), John Plummer, Thomas Haselrig, Thomas Staveley, Wolstan Dixie, Edward Hartopp, George Bennet and John Bale.<sup>54</sup>

In Northamptonshire the dominance of the Catesbys, Sir Thomas Tresham, John Spencer, and Thomas Andrews from 30 Henry VIII through 6 Mary I gave way to William Tate, John Freeman, William Fitz-William, John Isham, Thomas Brooke, Simon Norwich and Erasmus Dryden, under Elizabeth. Protestant members of the Throckmorton and Tresham clans served once (in 3 James I and 8 James I, respectively); the only family who appeared on lists from the Marian years through the reign of Charles I were the Fermors of Easton Neston, most of whom, interestingly enough, were Catholics with extensive Catholic connections.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Fuller, *Worthies* vol. ii, 527-531.

<sup>55</sup> Fuller, *Worthies* vol. iii, 292-296.

In Warwickshire the same trend appears. Warwickshire and Leicestershire had one sheriff between them prior to 1567, and thus the dominant figures on the sheriff's lists in Warwickshire mirror those of Leicestershire until 1567. For the remainder of Elizabeth's reign, the Digbys and Catesbys held the office once more, in 19 Elizabeth and 22 Elizabeth, respectively. The Grevilles occupied the office three further times, culminating in 36 Elizabeth. The Shuckburghs, Fieldings and Leighs served under Elizabeth and into the mid-Jacobean period, at which point new families began to emerge such as the Underhills, Archers, Newdigates, Lees, and Combes. Despite this seemingly organic turnover of families, however, is also a strong pattern of consistency, wherein families served from the Elizabethan years through the outbreak of the civil Wars: the Boughtons (5 terms); Lucys (5); Ferrerses (4); Verneys (3); Devereux (3); Burgoynes (2) and Fisher (2). And a Throckmorton appears again: Clement, the son of the suspected Martin Marprelate author, was sheriff in 1619.<sup>56</sup> In each county analyzed the same pattern emerges, that of an enduring core of office-holding families and a natural cycle of turnover among other families whom, although dominant for a time, ultimately lose precedence to other family groups. However, in Warwickshire, in contrast to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, none of the sheriffs after James's accession were Catholics, which might be a product of the developing oligarchical nature of the county in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean years.

#### Analysis of the County Lieutenancies

As was the case with the commission of the peace and shrievalty, the offices of the county lieutenancies also display continuity in personnel throughout the period examined here. The lieutenancy and deputy lieutenancies were significant elements of county governance and were usually filled by the chief men of the county. By the 1590s, the lieutenancy was an agency

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 293-295, 381-382.

of the central government so embedded in county administration that, in John S. Nolan's estimation, "military affairs were injected into national life at the lowest levels, where they touched the life of almost every citizen."<sup>57</sup> The office of lord lieutenant was filled only on an *ad hoc* basis until the mid-1580s, as the threat of war with Spain increased.<sup>58</sup> At that point the lord lieutenant and his deputies became, in the words of Roger Manning, "the eyes of the Privy Council in the county."<sup>59</sup> From the 1580s through the 1640s, the lieutenancy, when it was filled, tended to be a fairly stable office. During this period lords lieutenant served for years – often decades – at a time. Lord Burghley occupied his post for Lincolnshire from 1587 until his death in 1598. Sir Christopher Hatton had been Northamptonshire's lord lieutenant for five years when he died in 1591. His successor in the post, Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter, held the post for twenty years, from 1603-1623; at his death in 1623 the office went to his son and heir, William, second Earl of Exeter, who served until 1640. Similarly, in Warwickshire Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick was lord lieutenant in 1569-70 and again from 1585 until his death in 1590. His successor, William Compton, Earl of Northampton, was lord lieutenant for nearly three decades, from 1603-1630. Compton's successor held the post until 1642, when the Civil Wars disrupted assignments to the lieutenancy throughout the realm.

Men were typically removed from their position as lord lieutenant by their own death or advancing age and infirmity, but not as a result of their religion. The dismissal of Lord Montague from the Sussex lieutenancy is frequently proffered as evidence that even the most loyal Catholics could no longer be trusted as tensions with Spain increased in the mid-1580s.

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<sup>57</sup> John S. Nolan, "The Militarization of the Elizabethan State," *Journal of Military History* vol. 58, no. 3 (Jul. 1994): 412.

<sup>58</sup> Paul E.J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government, and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 141.

<sup>59</sup> Roger Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex*, 9.

Montague was one of three lords lieutenant of Sussex from 1569 to 1585 along with William West, Baron de la Warr and Thomas Sackville, first Baron Buckhurst. Montague was removed from the lieutenancy in 1585, but so was the Protestant de la Warr. The dismissal of both men from the lieutenancy that year was most likely due to age (Montague was 57 that year, de la Warr was 65) and, in Montague's case at least, infirmity.<sup>60</sup> From 1559- c. 1640 almost no Catholics (and few religious conservatives) were lord lieutenant in any of the Central Midlands counties. The notable exception was George Hastings, who was Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire and of Rutland during his tenure as fourth Earl of Huntingdon (1596-1604).

Privy Councilors were sensitive to the effect the removal of a lord lieutenant had on reputation, not only for the man concerned but for an entire family group. The fifth Earl of Huntingdon succeeded in 1604 while still a minor; since as a minor he could not fulfill the lieutenancy, Lord Grey petitioned Sir Robert Cecil for the county's top office. The lieutenancy would have been a tremendous coup for Grey, whose family was just beginning to regain a foothold in Leicestershire after nearly half a century domiciled in Essex following the Jane Grey fiasco. A Grey lieutenancy would have been a humiliating defeat for the Hastings family and even their young lord knew it. He fired off his own petition to Cecil, wherein he pointed out the harm that a Grey lieutenancy would cause to the Hastings reputation.<sup>61</sup> The king was content that the lieutenancy remained with the Hastingses and left the office vacant until the young lord came of age a few years later. The Hastings family – more accurately the Earls of Huntingdon in

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<sup>60</sup> Montague died in 1592, de la Warr in 1595. Smith, *An Elizabethan Recusant House*, 20; J. G. Elzinga, 'Browne, Anthony, first Viscount Montagu (1528–1592)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3667>, accessed 08 Sept 2011]; Michael Riordan, 'West, Thomas, eighth Baron West and ninth Baron de la Warr (1472–1554)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29099>, accessed 08 Sept 2011]

<sup>61</sup> Richard Cust, "Purveyance and Politics in Jacobean Leicestershire," in *Regionalism and Revision: the Crown and its Provinces in England, 1250-1650*, eds. Peter Fleming, Anthony Gross, J.R. Lander (London: Hambledon Press, 1998), 151.

succession – dominated the Leicestershire lieutenancy from 1551-1642, with only a brief appearance by their county rivals, the Greys, from 1552-54.

Outside of the Midlands, there were few Catholic or religiously conservative lords lieutenant anywhere in the realm, even to the end of King James's reign. During the Jacobean period, Francis Manners, Earl of Rutland, was lord lieutenant of Lincolnshire from 1612 through 1629 and Lord Scrope was lord lieutenant of Yorkshire from 1619-1628. By the 1620s, there were eleven deputy lieutenants throughout the realm who were either Catholics or conforming heads of otherwise recusant households.<sup>62</sup> Eleven among all of the deputy lieutenants of the realm is not many, but their appointments indicate that Catholics were not eradicated from positions of influence. Rather, their influence was strong enough that they commanded authority regardless of their religious disposition. The men who served in the lieutenancies, like many of the JPs and sheriffs, had a great deal of local influence and the support of powerful figures in the central government.

Continuities in office-holding were at times the result of a conscious effort to protect and maintain the balance of power – both social and political power – in a specific locality, region or faction. Paul Hammer has noted that in the 1590s Queen Elizabeth was less likely to appoint Privy Councilors to the lieutenancy, in part because the council was so small and so busy with the war. That shift, along with the queen's practice of allowing a number of vacancies in the lieutenancies, helped to protect the balance of power on her Privy Council and also allowed it greater authority over the deputy lieutenants (in their capacities as muster commissioners) than it

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<sup>62</sup> The list includes the Earl of Rutland as lord lieutenant for Lincolnshire; Lord Scrope as lord lieutenant for Yorkshire; and the deputy lieutenants Sir William Courtney (Devonshire); Sir Thomas Brudenell (Northamptonshire); Sir Francis Stonor (Oxfordshire); Sir Thomas Russell (Worcestershire); and Sir Henry Bedingfield (Norfolk); Sir William Wrey (Cornwall); John Conway (Flintshire); Sir Charles Jones and William Jones (Monmouthshire); Ralph Conyers (bishopric of Durham); Thomas Savage (Cheshire). 'House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 20 May 1624', *Journal of the House of Lords: volume 3: 1620-1628* (1767-1830), pp. 392-396. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=30423> Date accessed: 25 September 2011.

would have had over a lord lieutenant.<sup>63</sup> In Leicestershire, the third Earl of Huntingdon remained in place as lord lieutenant despite being resident in York most of the time in connection with his duties as President of the Council in the North. His lieutenancy duties in his home county were carried out by his deputy lieutenants, his brothers Francis and Sir George (who in 1595 became the fourth Earl of Huntingdon).<sup>64</sup> The fifth Earl, too, appointed as deputy lieutenants Hastings men (his uncle Walter and Henry) and a long-time family friend and retainer, William Turpin.<sup>65</sup> William Compton, Earl of Northampton, was absent from the county throughout much of his lieutenancy in Warwickshire, leaving the administration of duties to the same men who had managed the lieutenancy during its thirteen-year abeyance: Thomas Spencer, Sir Thomas Lucy, Sir Richard Verney and Sir Thomas Puckering, who now served as his deputies.<sup>66</sup> All of the Warwickshire deputy lieutenants were good friends and two, Spencer and Lucy, were connected by marriage. Deputy lieutenants, especially those in counties without a resident lord lieutenant (which was often the case when Privy Councilors or courtiers filled that office) or no lord lieutenant at all, wielded a great deal of authority over their jurisdictions, since they carried out most of the duties of the lieutenancy in the stead of the lord lieutenant.

The men on the lieutenancy reflect the political structure of the county – in Leicestershire the hegemony of the Hastings family and in Northamptonshire the oligarchical nature of county governance. Even during Sir Christopher Hatton's tenure as lord lieutenant (from 1585-1591), the duties of the lieutenancy in Northamptonshire were carried out by the deputy lieutenants. After Hatton's death in 1591 Elizabeth left the lieutenancy vacant; from the early 1590s until

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<sup>63</sup> Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, 251.

<sup>64</sup> *VCH Leicestershire*, vol. 4, 57; HPTD sub Leicestershire, 1558-1603.

<sup>65</sup> HEH HA 5428, HEH HA 8531

<sup>66</sup> Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire*, 59.



1603 the county's military affairs were left to the supervision of Sir Thomas Cecil (who from 1598 was second Lord Burghley), Sir John Spencer, Sir Richard Knightley, Sir Edward Montagu and (from 1590) Sir George Fermor, the only religious conservative (and suspected Catholic) in a cohort of rather Puritan-inclined colleagues.<sup>67</sup> In 1603 James I appointed Thomas Cecil, second Lord Burghley as the new lord lieutenant, perhaps in recognition of his family's continued status as Northamptonshire's most powerful – or at least most powerfully-connected – family group. He retained as his deputies the same men with whom he had served during the waning years of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>68</sup>

Warwickshire saw the same strong tendency towards continuity in the lord lieutenantcy as in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. A similar dynamic to both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire existed in Warwickshire. During the lieutenantcy of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, between 1585 and 1590, the county was overseen by a "great man" and his chosen deputies.<sup>69</sup> Following Warwick's death in 1590 Elizabeth did not appoint another lieutenant for Warwickshire, but allowed the former deputy lieutenants to manage affairs, under the title of muster commissioners. King James appointed William, second Baron Compton to the lieutenantcy in 1603.<sup>70</sup> But neither Compton nor his son, who followed him in the lieutenantcy, were often resident in Warwickshire. So in a situation similar to that in Northamptonshire, Warwickshire's deputy lieutenants continued in their accustomed role

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<sup>67</sup> Sheils, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 107. Spencer served only one year before his death in 1586, after which Sir Thomas Cecil replaced him as deputy lieutenant.

<sup>68</sup> Two years later, in 1605, Cecil became the Earl of Exeter. From 1623-1640 Thomas's son William, second Earl of Exeter, was Northamptonshire's Lord Lieutenant.

<sup>69</sup> The Earl of Warwick held the lieutenantcy from 1569-70 and again from the mid-1580s-1590.

<sup>70</sup> Compton was made first Earl of Northampton in 1618.

throughout Compton's tenure (1603-30) and that of his son, Spencer Compton, second Earl of Northampton (1630-42).<sup>71</sup>

Catholics who held office provided a crucial connection between their coreligionists and the state. As the examples of Sir George Fermor, Sir George Hastings, Walter Hastings, and Sir Thomas Brudenell demonstrate, some Catholic men held positions of significant authority which required direct communication and cooperation with central authorities. Just like their fellow office-holders did, these men had a role in shaping the policies and practices of the Elizabethan and Jacobean state. In so doing, they were not behaving as Catholics, but as gentle and noble men exercising the authority that was their birthright. Furthermore, as Francis Beaumont, justice of the Court of Common Pleas demonstrated, a Catholic in office was not automatically inclined to be lenient with his coreligionists. In fact, the need to maintain and protect his own honor meant that, when necessary, Catholic officeholders moved against their fellow Catholics.

Of course, there were Catholic gentlemen who were denied the political office they so craved, but they remained politically engaged throughout their life-cycle. Although his career as a petitioner and advocate for the Catholic cause provided him regular doses of political engagement, the obstinate recusant Sir Thomas Tresham would have preferred a more traditional political career. Writing to his daughter in the late 1590s, Tresham lamented his loss of office and opportunity "in the flourishing time of my years...and in the prime time of my credit both in city, county and court."<sup>72</sup> Still, Tresham had ample opportunities to engage with the political state. While resident in London in the early 1590s Tresham remained politically active; he either observed the 1593 parliament in session from the visitors' gallery or had an agent who kept him

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<sup>71</sup> Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire*, 60; Martyn Bennett, 'Compton, Spencer, second earl of Northampton (1601-1643)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6035>, accessed 29 March 2011]

<sup>72</sup> BL Add. MSS 39829, f. 16r.

informed of proceedings there on a regular, and perhaps daily, basis. In February 1592/3 he relayed to his sister, Lady Vaux, that “Mr. Cooke was this day presented Speaker of the Nether House. Her Majesty this day was at the Parliament; it is adjourned till Saturday.”<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the numerous petitions he drafted on behalf of his coreligionists engaged him in political arguments on a regular basis.

Even when banned from London during periods of heightened political tension, Catholics made certain to keep abreast of developments in parliament through agents and friends. This was not a practice unique to Catholics, but a reflection of the larger development of a news culture in the 1620s and 1630s, one in which personal communication and oral transmission remained rich sources in addition to the news sheets in circulation.<sup>74</sup> In the late 1630s and early 1640s, as England drew close to Civil War, Sir Robert Throckmorton, restricted to his estate at Weston Underwood in Worcestershire, remained informed and engaged with political news and developments at the capitol via three of his agents. Francis Waters, Charles Welford and Richard Betham sent news to Throckmorton at Weston Underwood in 1639 and 1640 as frequently as twice a week. His agents supplied news on important political matters, such as the proceedings against the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop Laud, information on the subsidies and the Triennial Act, rumors about the Scots and the Bishops’ Wars, rumors about Catholics in London, news on the religious wars on the continent, and updates on legislation that personally affected Throckmorton, such as compositions.<sup>75</sup> In December 1640 Richard Betham sent copies of speeches, information on the meeting schedule and activities of the Committee for Religion and news of an imminent parliamentary election in Warwickshire. Throckmorton must have been

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<sup>73</sup> *HMCV*, 69.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Cust, “News and Politics in Early Seventeenth Century England,” *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 60-90.

<sup>75</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 2, ff. 20-22, 34, 37.

particularly interested in Betham's report that Secretary Windebank had ordered sheriffs of various counties to "restore the goode[s] backs unto the Recusants."<sup>76</sup> No record of Throckmorton's reaction survives, but he was clearly eager to be kept informed of developments and to remain politically engaged despite his failure to hold office himself.<sup>77</sup>

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### **Catholics and Military Participation**

It might seem counterintuitive that the Elizabeth and Jacobean state permitted Catholics to serve militarily, especially given their portrayal by polemicists as enemies of the realm. Yet a substantial number of English Catholics – including some from the Central Midlands – volunteered in Elizabethan and early Stuart armies. Some Catholic men pursued military careers as a substitute for a career in political office, or in hope that a military career would help to advance a later political career. Other Catholic men found military participation attractive because of the potential for underscoring their aristocratic honor and also, perhaps, in hopes that it would bring them additional sources of revenue beyond their land holdings. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the involvement of Catholics from the Central Midlands in the military endeavors of the Elizabethan and early Stuart state.

Military service was one of the ways in which a man could express his honor, his loyalty and his engagement in political affairs. Although the English did not see war on their own soil during the period under examination here, they were heavily invested in European wars and

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<sup>76</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 2, f. 40.

<sup>77</sup> Malcolm Wanklyn discusses these letters in the context of the advent of the Civil Wars in his essay, "Stratagems for Survival: Sir Robert and Sir Francis Throckmorton, 1640-1660" in *Catholic Gentry in English Society*, eds. Peter Marshall and Geoffrey Scott, 143-146.

affairs in Ireland.<sup>78</sup> Benjamin Schmidt argues that by the late sixteenth century, military service on the continent had become a “fashionable finishing school for young Protestant Englishmen.”<sup>79</sup> Service in continental armies provided upper-status soldiers with an education in military skills, foreign language training beyond what they acquired during childhood, patronage connections and honor.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps most importantly, service in the Low Countries amounted to a school of war in this period, first in the Spanish army and later also in Dutch service.

In the 1560s, English gentlemen were permitted to serve in the Spanish army or to fight as volunteers for the Huguenots in France. After the Dutch Revolt broke out in 1568, however, fighting for Spain became problematic. In the 1570s and 1580s service as volunteers with the Dutch army became more common; some gentlemen went to Hungary to fight against the Ottomans. After 1585, English soldiers were expected to fight for the queen. Men who fought for Spain, such as Sir William Stanley and his regiment, were considered traitors. The Treaty of London in 1604 brokered peace between England and Spain and provided that both the Spanish and the Dutch would be able to recruit troops for the war that continued in the Low Countries until 1609. Thereafter, there was a fixed force of English soldiers under Dutch pay. When the Thirty Years’ War commenced in 1618, English volunteers began to go to Germany for the wars there; war against Spain returned from 1625-1630 and war with France revived briefly from 1628-1630.

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<sup>78</sup> Roger Manning, *Swordsmen*, 17-19. Barbara Donagan, “The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians, and Gentlemen in the English Civil War,” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 44, no. 2 (Jun. 2001): 365-389. For a discussion on the opportunities Englishmen had to serve in county militias during this period see Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, 172.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin Schmidt, “Reading Raleigh’s America: Texts, Books and Readers in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute, 2007), 458.

<sup>80</sup> Schmidt, “Reading Raleigh’s America,” 458. Schmidt argues that Sir Walter Raleigh became fluent in French (both spoken and written fluency) while fighting in continental armies.

As the political life of Catholics became more restricted in the 1580s and 1590s military service was for some Catholic men an ideal means by which to remain engaged with the state.<sup>81</sup> Sir Christopher Blount of Kidderminster, Worcestershire served in the Netherlands from 1585 to 1589, first under the Earl of Leicester and then under Lord Willoughby.<sup>82</sup> Sir Griffin Markham, the son of Mary Griffin and grandson of Ryce Griffin of Braybrooke and Dingley, Northamptonshire, volunteered for service in English forces in the Low Countries and France in the 1580s and went to Ireland with the Earl of Essex in 1599.<sup>83</sup> William Parker, Lord Monteagle, also served under Essex in Ireland, along with Sir Christopher Blount, who by that time was Essex's stepfather.<sup>84</sup> William Tresham, a younger son of Sir Thomas Tresham and Monteagle's brother-in-law, fought in the Low Countries in the last several years of Elizabeth's reign, in the regiment of John Blunt.<sup>85</sup>

For most of Elizabeth's reign, military service in Spanish armies was out of the question unless an individual was working as an informant to the English government. Still, some Catholics joined Spanish forces throughout queen's reign.<sup>86</sup> Those who did, especially during the years between 1585-1603, could be assured of a grim reception in England, but most might not

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<sup>81</sup> Young men usually went into service as gentlemen volunteers attached to a senior officer, while gentlemen with military experience often sought a captaincy. Volunteers fought at their own expense; officers were paid, although payments from the crown were often in arrears.

<sup>82</sup> Blount conformed in the 1580s and most of the 1590s; when he moved toward recusancy in 1599 he did so cautiously and was not overtly recusant. Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Blount, Sir Christopher (1555/6–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2685>, accessed 14 May 2009]

<sup>83</sup> Mark Nicholls, "Treason's Reward: The Punishment of Conspirators in the Bye Plot of 1603," *Historical Journal* vol. 38, no. 4 (Dec. 1995): 828; Mark Nicholls, "Markham, Sir Griffin (b. c.1565, d. in or after 1644)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*.

<sup>84</sup> Mark Nicholls, 'Parker, William, thirteenth Baron Morley and fifth or first Baron Monteagle (1574/5–1622)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*.

<sup>85</sup> *CSPD* vol. 17, 269.

<sup>86</sup> This is a rich avenue for further inquiry. A full study of English Catholic participation in Spanish military forces needs to be done before we can quantify how many Englishmen fought for the Spanish during this period.

have intended to return. Among other Catholics in England, however, the service of these men might have garnered some esteem since they proved their honor and courage on the battlefields of Europe and fought for the cause and on the side where their consciences led them. Indeed, service to the Spanish king did not equate to support of the Jesuit cause: Charles Brown, a kinsman of the Viscount Montague, served honorably enough to draw a pension from Philip III but also refused to sign a petition in support of the Jesuits when one was “hawked around Flanders” in 1596.<sup>87</sup> In the early seventeenth century, at least twenty-three Englishmen received a pension from the Spanish treasury in recognition of their military service, which might suggest they intended to remain in exile abroad rather than return to an England they found oppressive, at least until the pension reforms in 1609 forced them to find new sources of support.<sup>88</sup>

Although it seems counterintuitive that English soldiers would be permitted to fight in the Spanish (and therefore Catholic) army, after the Treaty of London (1604) both the Dutch and the Spanish were permitted to recruit volunteers in England.<sup>89</sup> English soldiers received a license to enter foreign forces after swearing an oath of loyalty to King James. Ambrose Vaux fought for the Spanish in 1605 and was among those who attempted (unsuccessfully) to reclaim Bergen-op-Zoom from Dutch Protestants.<sup>90</sup> His nephew Edward, fourth Lord Vaux had a brief career as a soldier, perhaps in an attempt to revivify his decimated noble house. In the early 1620s he was colonel of a regiment serving the Spanish Infanta in Brussels; among his subordinates were members of his family network, such as his kinsman Sir William Tresham, and other Catholics

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<sup>87</sup> Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, 259. Despite his refusal to support the Jesuits, Brown remained on the Spanish king’s pension rolls after the 1609 reforms. See *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics vol. I: 1603-1612*, ed. Albert J. Loomie, S.J. (Catholic Record Society, 1973), 140.

<sup>88</sup> *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics vol. I*, 129-141.

<sup>89</sup> Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars*, 234-235; A.J. Loomie, “Toleration and Diplomacy: the Religious Issue in Anglo-Spanish Relations, 1603-1605,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 53, part vi (1963): 5-51.

<sup>90</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 433.

such as Tresham's brother-in-law Sir Edward Parham, Sir Robert Huddleston (the son of the recusant Henry Huddleston) and the Sussex recusant Henry Gage.<sup>91</sup> When Vaux retired from his brief military life in 1625, Parham inherited the regiment. In 1631 Parham was still active and in command of a regiment of "Voluntary Soldiers lycenced by His Majestie to goe into the parts beyond the Seas."<sup>92</sup> Among the chief officers in Parham's command were his brother-in-law Sir William Tresham, Tresham's kinsman William Webb, and Lord Vaux's younger brother Henry.<sup>93</sup> By 1625 a Brudenell kinsman was also in the regiment.<sup>94</sup>

While greater numbers of Englishmen served in the Dutch army, King James considered the Spanish army another useful training ground for English soldiers now that his realm was no longer at war. By the second decade of the seventeenth century Spain had been engaged in what amounted to "perpetual warfare" in Flanders for nearly half a century.<sup>95</sup> Still, royal permission to fight for Spain was conditional and depended on the current relationship between the English and Spanish monarchs. As David Lawrence has pointed out, the numbers of English soldiers in Spanish armies were highly variable since licenses were directly related to the health of the Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relationship, especially during the early Stuart period.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>91</sup> APC 1621-1623, 191, 213; C.S.P. *Venetian, 1623-1625*, 354; Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 431-436; Michael Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics, 1621-1625* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>92</sup> APC 1630-1631, 501; Nicholls, "Treason's Reward": 838; Questier, *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics*, 52.

<sup>93</sup> TNA SP 16/183, f. 70r. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 436. The rest of the principal officers of Parham's regiment were Henry Lucy (a descendant of the hot Protestant Lucys of Charlecote, Warwickshire); Herculie Meade; Thomas Windsor; William Ireland; Lewis Lewkner; John Welford; Richard Scrope; Jeffrey Redroch; George Owyne; James Morgan; and George Lawe. Henry Vaux had been a soldier since 1618, when he entered the English regiment under the Archduke. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 378.

<sup>94</sup> TNA SP 77/18, f. 259r.

<sup>95</sup> Roger Manning, "Styles of Command in Seventeenth Century English Armies," *Journal of Military History* vol. 71, no. 3 (July 2007): 676.



James was not averse to sending Englishmen into direct combat with one another, as the terms of the 1604 Treaty of London allowed. When in 1621 war broke out again between Spain and the Low Countries James gave licenses to the leaders of regiments to fight on both the Spanish (Catholic) and Flemish (Protestant) sides.<sup>97</sup> The negotiations for Prince Charles's marriage to a French princess, however, resulted in a shift in policy. In June 1625 Vaux's license was revoked as part of the crown's effort to assure France that England would restrict their favor towards Spain, although shortly thereafter the commission was granted to Parham, under whom the regiment continued.<sup>98</sup>

Through military service, or at least a willingness to serve, Catholic men demonstrated not only their fidelity to the state, but also advertised their masculine virtue and honor.<sup>99</sup> When Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague of Sussex learned in July 1588 that the beacon had been fired on Portsdown, signaling the approach of the Spanish Armada, he immediately sent word to the Privy Council of the number of servants he had ready to serve queen and country, but declined to assemble them without permission from the Council. Montague's caution was well considered, for it allowed him to emphasize both his eagerness and his preparedness to join in the effort to repel the coming Armada but not have his actions misunderstood as rebellion or support of Spanish efforts to invade England.<sup>100</sup> He would have been well-equipped to do so: his own inventory of the materials he had in readiness included "20 demilances, 60 light horses, 30

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<sup>96</sup> David R. Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603-1645* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 213-214.

<sup>97</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 432.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 434-436.

<sup>99</sup> Notably, William Cecil, Lord Burghley did not put much stock in military careers. He would not permit his son Robert to enter into military service, in part because of his skepticism and low regard for the honesty and virtue of soldiers. David Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603-1645*, History of Warfare vol. 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 68.

<sup>100</sup> TNA SP12/213/11, f. 25r

bows and ‘shafes’ of arrows, 24 halberdes, and 12 partisans.”<sup>101</sup> Montague’s cache was an impressive one considering the recent disarming of Catholics throughout the realm and suggests that in practice, the extent to which a recusant was disarmed depended on local considerations including the sway a recusant held in his area, who was responsible for collecting his weapons, and the current state of national security.

For some Catholic men, however, this attempt at underscoring loyalty or patriotism backfired. As Montague must have done, Sir Thomas Tresham “required service of horse and foot of his tenants, in the old style,” but Tresham’s requirement of tenant service clearly made the Privy Council more anxious than they were about Montague.<sup>102</sup> As late as 1594 Tresham had approximately one hundred tenants whose leases stipulated that they provide “a man fytt for service” if either Tresham or his son “shalbe ymployed in her ma[jes]te[s] warres beyonde the seas.”<sup>103</sup> Although Tresham insisted that his intentions were to support the queen, his reputation as a leading figure amongst English Catholics and his relationships with Catholic prisoners at Ely only served to amplify the government’s concerns about his trustworthiness. Ultimately, despite his attempts to demonstrate his fidelity, he lacked the kind of credit with the monarch and Privy Council that allowed the Viscount Montague to remain part of military life.

In addition to the esteem garnered through military service, that service could cultivate patronage ties and help to cement the mutual loyalty of patron and client. Sir Griffin Markham’s service earned him a knighthood from the Earl of Essex in 1591; he remained part of Essex’s regiment and accompanied him to Ireland in 1599. Sir Christopher Blount’s service under the Earl of Leicester earned him a knighthood, marriage to Leicester’s widow, and access to the

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<sup>101</sup> TNA SP12/213/11.I, 27r.

<sup>102</sup> *CSPD* vol. 3, 470.

<sup>103</sup> TNA 12/248/45, f. 89r.

circle of the second Earl of Essex. He continued to serve in a military capacity almost until his death in 1601.<sup>104</sup>

At times, however, the behavior of Catholic soldiers worked against the masculine honor they hoped to cultivate through their military service. The behavior of some of the men in Lord Vaux's regiment was a case in point. In the mid-1620s, some of Lord Vaux's veteran soldiers returned to England from Flanders and established a secret society that was not really secret at all. As Roger Manning has explained, the society, which boasted as many as 160 members, held their meetings in taverns, wore distinctive clothing or symbols and mocked the failures of Protestant soldiers such as those who had been part of the Cadiz expedition in 1625. The behavior of these men propelled fears among the populace and government that a militant Catholic conspiracy was imminent, so much so that each of the gentlemen pensioners who surrounded the king were "armed with a brace of pistols."<sup>105</sup>

Military service and the patronage that could accrue from it did not guarantee a man's upward mobility or success in securing office or position, however. For example, Sir Griffin Markham's attachment to Essex, his involvement in the Bye Plot in 1603 and his disagreeable personality seem to have thwarted any attempts he might have made to secure a patron after Essex's demise. Markham was not only difficult, he was also untrustworthy.<sup>106</sup> He was banished from the realm following the Bye Plot, after which he served in continental armies (without the English monarch's permission). He was essentially a soldier-for-hire for England's enemies

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<sup>104</sup> Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Blount, Sir Christopher (1555/6–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2685>, accessed 14 May 2009]

<sup>105</sup> Roger Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms*, 74-75.

<sup>106</sup> Mark Nicholls has argued that by the last few years of Elizabeth's reign Markham had "alienated" the chief magnates in his county and his most likely patrons, the Earls of Rutland and Shrewsbury. Mark Nicholls, "Markham, Sir Griffin (b. c. 1565, d. in or after 1644)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*; Mark Nicholls, "Treason's Reward": 822, 828-829.

while simultaneously he lobbied would-be patrons with appeals for permission to return to England.

The military life of English Catholics is a significant topic that merits a discrete study of its own. Still, some conclusions can be drawn from the brief outline offered here. Under Elizabeth, military service was a means by which a Catholic, even one from a prominent recusant family, could simultaneously make a career for himself, display his honor and form relationships with potential patrons. If a Catholic fought in foreign forces with his monarch's permission it was also a way to demonstrate his loyalty, a culturally-valued trait that helped to amplify his honor and could result in social and economic reward, as it did for Sir Christopher Blount in the 1580s and Griffin Markham in the late 1590s. Under James I Catholic military service grew exponentially, especially during periods when James licensed his military leaders and noblemen to lead regiments on both sides of a conflict. In the case of Lord Vaux's regiment, military service provided Catholics, many of whom came from recusant families, to accrue honor through the fulfillment of military service, to engage in political life more actively than they were able to in their home counties, and to do so amongst a network of other, similarly-minded men, many of whom shared their religious affinity. Lord Vaux's regiment was a reflection of the Central Midlands family networks, especially the Tresham and Vaux networks. A more complete study of Catholic military life might include an analysis of how family networks helped to facilitate recruitment, promotion and patronage within military regiments.

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## Women's Petitions and Political Engagement

The petitioning activities of women introduced in the previous chapter provided Catholic gentlewomen a potent voice in the political realm, especially since most of their petitions were related in some way to political matters.<sup>107</sup> Petitions relating to judicial matters such as incarceration or economic concerns such as estate business, for example, were undeniably political in nature since both were essentially a commentary or criticism of crown or state policy. Lady Tresham's efforts to change the locale of her husband's incarceration, introduced in the previous chapter, were also an attempt to exert some of her own influence over the judicial and administrative authorities that determined where her husband would live. In 1590 both Margaret Throckmorton of Coughton and Lady Anne Catesby successfully petitioned the Privy Council regarding economic matters that affected their families. Throckmorton hoped her husband would be released from confinement at Banbury so that he could attend to law suits in London related to the family's estates.<sup>108</sup> Lady Catesby wanted access to her imprisoned husband so that they could discuss legal matters.<sup>109</sup> Apparently her voice was too potent; only one month later, the Privy Council revoked her access to her husband.<sup>110</sup> This behavior continued among Catholic women into the early seventeenth century. In August 1612, Lord Vaux's sister, Catherine, petitioned the Earl of Northampton, a member of the family's extended network and former

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<sup>107</sup> James Daybell, *Women Letter Writers*, 234-236. For the early Tudor period, see Harris, "Women and Politics," 272.

<sup>108</sup> *APC* vol.19, 102-103.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

patron, for the release from prison of her brother, Lord Vaux and her mother, who had just begun serving a life sentence for their refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance to King James I.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, aristocratic women in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods exhibited the same kinds of political engagement as Barbara Harris has observed in the early Tudor period and that Susan Wiseman has noted in the late Stuart years.<sup>112</sup> During the intervening decades, which spanned the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, aristocratic women engaged with the political realm as wives, mothers and widows through their roles as petitioners and land claimants. Although female political roles differed from male ones, women were nonetheless an integral part of early Tudor politics, in part because an aristocratic woman's social status allowed her to wield a great deal of power and authority.<sup>113</sup>

Petitions allowed Catholic women to present themselves as both critical of the state and obedient to it, both of which were political actions. In a letter to her cousin Horseman, a server in Queen Elizabeth's household and part of the Tresham family's network, Lady Tresham made clear her frustration at the government's inconsistent application of punishments of Catholics. Despite a recent announcement that all Catholics would be required to post a bond and depart from London, Tresham said she was certain the penalty would apply only to her husband and brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Tresham and Lord Vaux. She lamented,

It is said that all Catholics are to be bound from London, and give such condition of good behaviour as is intended to Mr. Tresame, but I am persuaded that it shall be never offered

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<sup>111</sup> TNA SP 14/70, ff. 54r & v. The sister, who is referred to as "Mistresse Vaux" in the document, must be Catherine, who did not wed until 1614. Lord Vaux's elder sister, Mary, was married in 1604 to Sir George Simeon of Baldwin Brightwell, Oxfordshire. See Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 491.

<sup>112</sup> Barbara J. Harris, "Women and Politics in Early Tudor England," *The Historical Journal* vol. 33, no. 2 (June 1990): 260; Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: Women, Writing and Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 49, 80.

<sup>113</sup> As Lynne Magnusson has pointed out, aristocratic women in particular were not hesitant to criticize, counsel and direct the actions of others in their letters. See Lynne Magnusson, "Widowhood and Linguistic Capital: The Rhetoric and Reception of Anne Bacon's Epistolary Advice," *English Literary Renaissance* vol. 31, no. 1 (2008): 5.

any else by my Lord Vaux and my husband, for I see many allowed to go into the country and other bound to London and some circuit about it, and not from London.”<sup>114</sup>

She was certain that a request for her husband’s full liberty would be futile, but she remained hopeful to secure an “exchange of imprisonment” whereby Sir Thomas would serve house arrest in their house at Hogsden near London. Lady Tresham’s efforts were successful: within two weeks her husband was allowed liberty of his own house at Hogsden and permission to go anywhere within the parishes of Hogsden and Shoreditch.<sup>115</sup> Susan Wiseman has argued that in the Civil Wars period, women’s petitioning constituted a nascent form of citizenship precisely because it provided women an avenue of influence in formal political structures.<sup>116</sup> As the Tresham example illustrates, women had a role in shaping formal political structures long before the mid-seventeenth century.

Officials were accustomed to aristocratic women acting in political capacities, whether as petitioners or as messengers of a husband’s petition.<sup>117</sup> As Daybell has argued, women’s letters and petitions indicate that they were familiar with the language of patronage and “political friendship” and that they were confident in the authority they wielded.<sup>118</sup> When Sir William Fitzwilliam’s declining health and family circumstances forced him to give up his position as Lord Deputy in Ireland in 1575, Lady Fitzwilliam petitioned the queen in person to allow his

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<sup>114</sup> *HMCV*, 30. The meaning of “bound” here is in the context of “banned”; in other words, that Catholics would be required to post a bond designed to ensure that they would not return to London until the Privy Council gave them permission to do on, on penalty of forfeiture of the bond.

<sup>115</sup> *HMCV*, 32.

<sup>116</sup> Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, 49.

<sup>117</sup> Caroline Bowden, “Women as Intermediaries: An Example of the Use of Literacy in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1993): 215-223, and especially 220-221.

<sup>118</sup> James Daybell, “Scripting a Female Voice: Women’s Epistolary Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Letters of Petition,” *Women’s Writing* vol. 13, no. 1 (2006): 3-4.

recall to England.<sup>119</sup> They resided at their Milton estate in Northamptonshire until he was reappointed Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1592. Lady Tresham, too, acted as an agent for her husband and family. On Lady Day, 1590, Lady Tresham delivered a lengthy petition of her husband's to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lords of the Privy Council.<sup>120</sup> She was also comfortable with (or at the least practiced at) speaking directly to Privy Councilors and high officers of the realm on behalf of her husband.<sup>121</sup>

The claims that aristocratic women, including Catholic women, made on land and property further engaged them with the political sphere. As outlined in the previous chapter, even single aristocratic women made claims related to real property, as did Mary Throckmorton when she acted as her father's deputy in a horse-stealing dispute with the Throckmorton's neighbors and kinsmen, the Terringhams.<sup>122</sup> Married and widowed Catholic women were as invested as their husbands were in protecting the family's material interests and property. After all, the family lands were her children's inheritance, and some of those lands were probably part of her jointure, which gave her a vested interest in the use and disposal of the land.<sup>123</sup> In 1584, when Sir Thomas Tresham was battling the state's accusations of harboring the Jesuit Edmund Campion, he conveyed his Lyveden estate to his wife Muriel and their son Francis.<sup>124</sup> This was clearly a legal maneuver designed to protect the Lyveden property from confiscation by the Crown, but it was also a means to safeguard Lady Tresham's jointure property. It was more than a device by

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<sup>119</sup> Mary Ann Lyons, 'Fitzwilliam, Sir William (1526–1599)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9664>, accessed 25 Sept 2011]

<sup>120</sup> *HMCV*, 58.

<sup>121</sup> *HMCV*, 105.

<sup>122</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 11r.

<sup>123</sup> Karen Robertson, "Tracing Women's Connections from a letter by Elizabeth Raleigh," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 150.

<sup>124</sup> *VCH Northamptonshire*, vol. 3, 170.



which Sir Thomas exploited his wife's legal status in order to protect patriarchal lands; throughout her husband's periods of imprisonment Lady Tresham was an active participant in the protection and management of the family's estates.

Couples such as the Treshams and the Vauxes maintained vigorous communication with one another regarding estate and legal matters, and in some cases ensured that other women in their families, such as sisters or daughters, were informed about and participants in the family's business matters. Sir Thomas Tresham was in frequent contact with his wife about estate business and also with his stewards and his sister, Lady Vaux. As a result, he was able to keep his hand in estate business from his prison cell. His eagerness to keep his wife informed of estate and legal details indicates that she had a great deal to do with the day-to-day management of the estate and the various business matters of the family. During Sir Thomas's two decades of imprisonment and confinement in the 1580s and 1590s, Lady Muriel stood as his deputy in the administration of their estates at Rushton and Lyveden in Northamptonshire and sought buyers for some of the Tresham land that had to be liquidated to resolve recusancy fines.<sup>125</sup> Mary, Baroness Vaux played a similarly significant role in her family's estate business. The recurrent incarcerations of William, third Baron Vaux, left Lady Vaux to manage the family's business affairs and to oversee a family that was in constant turmoil. Although the Vauxes lost some lands, Lady Vaux's efforts at securing her husband's legal advisor certainly mitigated the damage to Vaux estates that could have occurred.<sup>126</sup>

Both Lady Tresham and Lady Vaux used their networks to protect their family's land and financial interests. In 1588, the Crown began to collect recusancy penalties that it had previously

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<sup>125</sup> *HMCV*, 28; BL Add MS 39830, f. 80b. Tresham did not, as most scholars assert, spend twenty years in prison, but actually had a surprising amount of flexibility in his liberty. See Appendix I for the dates and nature of his incarcerations, releases, and the time he spent in the country at Rushton and Lyveden.

<sup>126</sup> A full discussion of these suits is in Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 390-407.

allowed to lapse. The Treshams, along with many other families, suddenly had massive arrearages to pay. Lady Tresham arranged with one of her own patronesses, the Countess of Lincoln, for the sale of some of the Tresham lands, while Sir Thomas offered other parcels to his friend and patron, Sir Christopher Hatton.<sup>127</sup> As a result, Lady Muriel and her husband avoided seizure of their property and protected their estates relatively intact. By the early 1590s, their eldest son, Francis, took an active role in land transactions along with his father, but Lady Muriel remained an important agent for her husband and family.<sup>128</sup> When the children of Lord Vaux's first marriage tried to take advantage of their father's recurrent incarcerations by mounting suits against him and the trustee of their marriage portions and inheritances, Vaux's brother-in-law Sir Thomas Tresham, Lady Vaux sought help from members of her network. She petitioned the Privy Council for the release of Vaux's legal advisor, her brother Tresham, so that he could advocate for her husband. Through the 1590s especially, Lady Vaux's efforts released Tresham from his "fennish prison" at Ely on at least three occasions.<sup>129</sup> She received emotional support from both her brother Tresham and her sister-in-law Muriel Throckmorton Tresham.<sup>130</sup>

An extension of this aristocratic interest in protecting property was a concern to promote younger sons and daughters, thereby elevating – or at least sustaining – the status of one's family. A rise in status was a combination of social, economic and political action, since in the early modern period a rise in social and economic status was often accompanied by the strengthening of a family's authority or influence, at least in their local area and perhaps on the national stage. The Treshams worked to increase and maintain the social cachet of their family

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<sup>127</sup> BL Add. MS 39832, f. 17r; *HMCV*, 60.

<sup>128</sup> *HMCV*, 132; records of Tresham land transactions are also held in the Derbyshire Record Office; see especially DRO D3155/WH 582 (1593); D3155/WH 716 (1593); D3155 WH 442; D3155 WH 130.

<sup>129</sup> *APC* vol. 19, 365, 400, 428.

<sup>130</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 226-231.

by marrying two of their daughters into noble families and the remainder into successful gentle families. The Treshams' friend, the Catholic Penelope, Lady Hervey left extensive lands in Suffolk to her third son, Edward Gage, a reflection of her "earnest desire to raise another branch of my family."<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth Vaux was anxious to arrange a match for her son with Elizabeth Howard, the daughter of the Earl of Suffolk.<sup>132</sup> Such a match would have expanded the Vaux networks considerably and would have demonstrated that the family, despite their economic devastation in the 1580s and 1590s, was still a significant social and political entity.

Women made political statements not only through legal action and land transactions, but also in the ways they used the land under their stewardship. When Queen Elizabeth granted the reversion of the manor of Feckenham to Thomas Leighton in 1587, which Margery Throckmorton held only for the term of her life, Throckmorton embarked on a campaign of deforestation designed to extract as much revenue from the manor as possible, intending to build up the finances of her ruined family and also to diminish the value of the manor for the next landholder.<sup>133</sup> Throckmorton's wood harvesting constituted direct political action. When she persisted in the deforestation even after the queen's command to desist she made even bolder her disobedience and her political voice.

Aristocratic Catholic women in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries engaged politically both through their petitions and their use and stewardship of land. In their activities, these women behaved in ways very similar to how women behaved in the late medieval period and in the era of the English Civil Wars. Through petitioning and successful employment of their

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<sup>131</sup> J. Gage, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave in Suffolk* (1822), 241, quoted in Joy Rowe, 'Kitson family (per. c.1520–c.1660)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73910>, accessed 8 Oct 2011].

<sup>132</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 288-290, 340.

<sup>133</sup> *APC* vol. 15, 417-418. Leighton was the husband of Elizabeth Leighton, one of Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour.

networks, Catholic women in the Central Midlands influenced government officials and helped to shape the practice and policy of the late-Tudor and early-Stuart state.

### **Conclusion**

Aristocratic Catholic men and women remained engaged with political concerns in a variety of ways. This chapter has examined a few of those ways, namely the nature of political engagement through men's administrative duties and office-holding, via military service and through female petitioning efforts. The chapter has demonstrated that the Elizabethan and early Stuart state encouraged Catholics to remain engaged with the state and its officials through a variety of avenues, including official positions of authority within county administration, through military activities and the hearing and negotiating of petitions. These are by no means exhaustive examples. For instance, Catholics also maintained a presence in intellectual and cultural pursuits with the potential to be quite politically charged, such as literary and antiquarian work; considerations of space have unfortunately not allowed discussion of these aspects but they provide a rich avenue for further research. Taken together, the three categories of analysis presented here demonstrate that the Elizabethan and early Stuart state understood the peril of adopting a policy of full exclusion of Catholics from positions of authority, if, indeed, such exclusion was even possible given the social standing of the families involved. The efforts of Catholics in the Central Midlands to remain integrated in a social and cultural sense is explored in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Constructing House, Garden and Status

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, gentle and noble families displayed their wealth, status and power through renovations to their houses, construction of entirely new buildings such as garden lodges and banqueting houses, and the installation of elaborate landscape gardens. Domestic and landscape architecture functioned as avenues by which the wealthy fashioned their religious and political identities and demonstrated that they possessed aristocratic virtues and honor.<sup>1</sup> For new families such as the Cecils, Fitzwilliams, Hattons and Spencers, such displays were useful tools by which to accentuate their legitimacy. For gentlemen, particularly Catholic gentlemen, who faced exclusion from the political office to which they were entitled by their high birth, building projects were a crucial means to showcase their virtue and, by extension, demonstrate their honor and their continued membership in the elite social structure of their county.

Builders and gardeners of different denominations shared common interests that emphasized their status rather than their religion. Catholics who participated in cultural activities such as architectural pursuits remained visible and active members in the elite culture of their respective counties. They behaved as gentle and noble men were expected to do, by constructing buildings and landscapes that resonated with meaning and that, sometimes, offered political commentary. Within networks of gentleman-builders Catholics worked and formed friendships with men whose religious sympathies occupied widely varying points on the doctrinal continuum. The men who populated the architectural networks discussed here were, first and

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<sup>1</sup> I treat gardens and landscape as part of architecture because of the similarities in methodologies of design, planning and construction and the architectural elements inherent in landscape features such as terraces, garden lodges, steps and stairways and water features, as a few examples. For further discussion of this see J.A. Gotch, *Early Renaissance Architecture in England* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1901), 133.

foremost, gentlemen. They shared similar concerns to those of other gentlemen, regardless of their religion – the need to demonstrate virtue and honor, to secure the descent of their family line through the begetting and raising of a male heir, to make good marriages for their children and to ensure the survival of their House through sound management of their lands and offices. For Catholics, especially those who were excluded from political office, cultural activities such as those described here provided an important pathway to the demonstration of virtue and to the accumulation of honor. Their continued membership in the corpus of the elite and the relationships they formed within their cultural networks helped Catholics to strengthen relationships with patrons and to remain vigorous participants in the patron-client system.

While most aspects of the imagery Catholics used in their building projects were similar, if not identical to those used by non-Catholics, some Catholic builders embedded religious or political messages in their architectural projects, through which they defended their faith or criticized the state's religious policies. Yet those images were so carefully crafted, so infused with multiple layers of meaning that even an educated observer would have a difficult time proving that a Catholic intended to include a subversive message in his designs. Observers would usually have been drawn from the builder's network of family, friends and neighbors. Thus, a Catholic builder's audience most likely would have been populated primarily of social and intellectual equals who would have recognized and appreciated the culturally-valued traits of wit and individualism that they had been invited to view.

Renovating a house or constructing an entirely new one was an effective way to broadcast individual and family honor. Construction highlighted the wealth, status and education of the builder in a far more overt way than did strictly intellectual pursuits.<sup>2</sup> Done properly, a

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<sup>2</sup> Linda Levy Peck discusses this with respect to the seventeenth century in *Consuming Splendor: society and culture in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 188.

building project demonstrated that one was a member of the highest echelon of the social, economic, and cultural elite. Building communicated to those in one's circle (or in the circle one hoped to enter) one's legitimacy in the social hierarchy of early modern England. Architectural projects identified one as culturally aware and engaged with the latest trends and also underscored an individual's membership in elite circles, since to build or to install extensive gardens one had to have both sufficient money and land to remove a portion from production and convert it to an economically unproductive parcel. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, exterior architectural elements such as banqueting lodges and landscape gardens and the devices or *imprese* encoded on them became powerful status symbols.<sup>3</sup> Hence, design and construction of both buildings and landscapes could be fiercely competitive; the more elaborate and grand one could make a banqueting house, a lodge, or a garden, the more effectively one could emphasize his or her status and membership in the cultural elite.

Perhaps ironically, this competitive atmosphere allowed for a certain amount of imitation. Replication of a particular architectural form or landscape feature acknowledged the clever mind, and therefore the virtue, of the designer or builder of the original form. After dining with Sir William Sharington at Lacock Abbey sometime in the 1560s, Sir John Thynne was so impressed with the rooftop banqueting rooms Sir William had installed that Thynne erected at least four of the same at Longleat.<sup>4</sup> Around 1580, Sir Christopher Hatton wrote to Lord Burghley to say that the arrangement of his own gardens at Holdenby were laid out "in direct observation of your house and plot at Tyballs."<sup>5</sup> Sir Thomas Tresham also incorporated elements of Theobalds in his

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<sup>3</sup> For the development of the long gallery, see Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), 102.

<sup>4</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 106.

new gardens at Lyveden in the 1590s, particularly the water course, labyrinth, and mounts.<sup>6</sup> For both Hatton and Tresham this mimicry was a calculated attempt to compliment a patron. Hatton, already a favorite at Court and a powerful political figure in his own right, was probably intent to remain in the good graces of the queen's most powerful councilor, with whom he had recently had a falling-out.<sup>7</sup> The Treshams, virtually barred from political service in the 1580s and 1590s, worked hard to demonstrate their gentle virtues; through his building and gardening activities and tasteful imitation of Cecil's designs, Tresham demonstrated that he was still an active member both of gentry society and the aristocratic patronage network.

Construction of landscape gardens such as those at Theobalds, Holdenby and Lyveden emphasized the virtue of the patron by demonstrating his power over nature and the natural world. In 1595 John Norden wrote that above all one should note

with what industrie and toyle of man, the garden have been raised, leveled, and formed out of a most craggie and unfitable lande now framed a most pleasante, sweete, and princely place, with divers walks, many ascending and descending, replenished also with manie delightful Trees of Fruite, artificially composed Arbours, and a Destilling House on the west end of the same garden, over which is a Ponde of Water, brought by conduit pypes, out of the feylde adjoyninge on the west....<sup>8</sup>

Norden was in this instance referring to Sir Christopher Hatton's Holdenby, but the imagery of man's conquest over nature applies to other major gardens as well, such as at Lyveden and Theobalds. Norden's praise of Hatton's work (or more accurately the work of the men he employed) was that they transformed a "most craggie and unfitable lande" into a civilized space

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<sup>5</sup> David Jacques, "The Compartment System in Tudor England", *Garden History* vol. 27, no. 1 (Summer 1999), 39; Eric St. John Brooks, *Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen's Favorite* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 158. Theobalds ("Tyballs") was located in Hertfordshire and frequently housed the royal court.

<sup>6</sup> John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove: the Italian Renaissance garden in the English imagination* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 105.

<sup>7</sup> *HMCS*, vol. 2, 280.

<sup>8</sup> Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden: Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 89.



that delighted the senses. Gardens were in place at Kirby, too, in the Elizabethan period, including a rectangular-shaped prospect mount.<sup>9</sup> It was not until c. 1610 that the Great Garden at Kirby was installed by Hatton's descendant, another Christopher Hatton, in anticipation of a visit from James I.<sup>10</sup>

The popularity and prominence of landscape gardens in the Tudor and early-Stuart periods is a topic that has only recently enjoyed adequate scholarly exploration. Aerial surveys and the interdisciplinary efforts of historians with archaeologists, botanists and soil scientists have revealed that large-scale gardens were a common feature in the landscape in the last half of the sixteenth century. Christopher Taylor's survey of Northamptonshire (1979) established that there were at least fifty significant gardens in that county prior to 1650, including Sir Christopher Hatton's at Holdenby and Kirby and Sir Thomas Tresham's at Lyveden and Rushton.<sup>11</sup> The presence of orchards and garden-related earthworks suggest that there were probably gardens at Sir Edward Griffin's house at Dingley, Sir Edward Montagu's Barnwell estate, and Sir William Fitzwilliam's Dogsthorpe estate.<sup>12</sup> Gardens in this period functioned as much more than

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<sup>9</sup> Brian Dix, Iain Soden and Tora Hylton, "Kirby Hall and its gardens: excavation in 1987-94," *Archaeological Journal* vol. 152 (1995): 331. One of Hatton's descendants, another Christopher Hatton, installed the Great Garden at Kirby c. 1610 in anticipation of a visit from James I. At the time it was regarded as among the finest gardens in England.

<sup>10</sup> Dix, Soden and Hylton, "Kirby Hall and its gardens: 324. This Christopher Hatton (to whom the History of Parliament Online refers as Christopher Hatton II to reduce confusion) was the son of John Hatton, a cousin of Sir Christopher Hatton (d. 1591). Hatton II's son, another Christopher, was the antiquary and later became Baron Hatton of Kirby.

<sup>11</sup> Roy Strong, "Foreward: The Renaissance Garden in England Reconsidered: A Survey of Two Decades of Research on the Period," *Garden History* 27, no. 1, Tudor Gardens (1999): 3; Christopher Taylor, *Archaeological Sites in North east Northamptonshire*, *Archaeological Sites in North west Northamptonshire* and *Archaeological Sites in Central Northamptonshire* (R.C.H.M.: 1979-81); Marcus Binney, "Northamptonshire's Lost Gardens" *Country Life* (December 1979): 2142-44; A. E. Brown, *Garden Archaeology*. Council for British Archaeology Research Report (Dorchester: Dorset Press, 1991); Brian Dix, Iain Soden and Tora Hylton, "Kirby Hall and its gardens: 331. See also Lorna McRobie, "Garden Archaeology," *English Heritage Conservation Bulletin* 28 (March 1996): 14-16, available in print and online at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/conservation-bulletin-28>, accessed 18 October 2010.

aesthetically-pleasing spaces. They served as an extension of interior domestic space, as a sequence of outdoor rooms. People used gardens for hospitality, as spaces for meditation and study, and, particularly in urban areas, as a respite from noise and odor.<sup>13</sup>

The architectural endeavors of Catholic families have gone largely unnoticed, yet Catholic gentry were as much a part of the Renaissance building culture as were Protestant gentry, especially in Northamptonshire.<sup>14</sup> Many Catholics had building and gardening projects underway in the years between 1560-1640, at the same time and often in close proximity to the projects of their non-Catholic neighbors. In Northamptonshire alone, Sir Edward Griffin built Dingley Hall in the 1560s and 1570s; Sir Edmund Brudenell carried out intensive renovations at Deene in the 1570s and 1580s; at the same time, Edward Watson renovated Rockingham Castle; Sir Christopher Hatton built and installed gardens at Holdenby; Sir Humphrey Stafford, and later, Hatton, was at work on Kirby Hall; Sir William Fitzwilliam built at Dogsthorpe and perhaps also at Milton, and Tresham was busy renovating his seat at Rushton and erecting the Market Cross at Rothwell.<sup>15</sup> Not far from the county's northern border, and in close proximity to Kirby Hall, Deene Park and Rockingham Castle, Sir Thomas Tresham's friend William Wickam, bishop of Lincoln built an octagonal garden house and raised garden walks at Lyddington Bede House, Rutland. Lord Burghley and his son Sir Thomas Cecil had projects underway at their

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<sup>12</sup> The earthworks at Barnwell, for instance, were mounts and water courses, which would indicate a garden rather than earthworks connected to an earlier defensive purpose. Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 231-232. Montagu's Barnwell was two miles south of Oundle and a near neighbor to Tresham's estate at Lyveden. For Sir William Fitzwilliam's Dogsthorpe estate, see H.M.C. *Montagu of Beaulieu*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Keith Thomas discusses the growing desire to escape to nature and the countryside in *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 247-248.

<sup>14</sup> I refer throughout to both house building and garden installation as architecture. Contemporary architects such as John Thorpe, Sebastiano Serlio and the brothers Solomon and Isaac de Caus, for instance, designed both domestic dwellings and landscapes, both of which were understood as components of a larger practice of architectural design.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Wise, *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons*, 28; NRO F(M) Miscellaneous Volumes/432; J.A. Gotch, *Architecture of the Renaissance in England*, vol. i (London: B.T. Batsford, 1894), 42.

Northamptonshire estates during these same decades.<sup>16</sup> In the 1590s, as Tresham's fanciful lodges at Rushton and the gardens at Lyveden were in progress, John Brudenell (Sir Edmund's brother) built a new house at the family's Glapthorne estate just a few miles from Lyveden – from 1606 to 1636 it was Mary Everard Brudenell's dower house.<sup>17</sup> In 1604 Edward Watson's son, another Edward, built a banqueting house at his lodge in Rockingham Park, which he intended for (and used during) King James's visit the following summer.<sup>18</sup> Sir Thomas Brudenell, the antiquary, added a battlemented tower and an extension on the northern end of the house at Deene in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Although most of the Catholic gentlemen who participated in the building culture were at least occasional conformists to the state church, there were a few recusants who took part in the architectural fervor. Sir Thomas Tresham was the most prominent recusant to engage in building projects, undoubtedly as part of his effort to highlight his family's social status rather than their religious status. Thirty miles to the south of Tresham's estates, just over the Buckinghamshire border, Tresham's brother-in-law Robert Throckmorton of Coughton rebuilt his house at Weston Underwood in the 1560s and 1570s. It was probably no coincidence that he embarked on his building projects at the same time that his office-holding career ended.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps he wished to leave a rebuilt estate as a legacy; he died in 1581. In 1599, Throckmorton's grandson-in-law,

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<sup>16</sup> In the sixteenth century, Burghley House was situated within the Soke of Peterborough, which was considered part of Northamptonshire. Today, due to shifts in boundaries over the centuries, Burghley House is usually considered to be in Lincolnshire.

<sup>17</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 98. Mary Everard Brudenell was aunt to Sir Thomas Brudenell (the antiquary).

<sup>18</sup> Wise, *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons*, 41. Watson's Rockingham Castle was c. 9 miles northwest of his friend Tresham's Lyveden estate, six miles due west of the Brudenells at Deene Park and less than five miles due west of Kirby Hall.

<sup>19</sup> Nicolas Barker and David Quentin, *The Library of Thomas Tresham and Thomas Brudenell* (privately printed for the Roxburgh Club, 2006), 143.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Hodgetts, "A Topographical Index of Hiding-Places" *Recusant History* 16 (1982): 152.

Henry Griffith, abandoned the building of his new house at Wichnor, Staffordshire when he was appointed to the Council of the North. Instead, he concentrated on the construction of a lavish new house at Burton Agnes, Yorkshire that was designed to convey his status and his authority in the region.<sup>21</sup> Still extant, it is one of the finest examples of early Jacobean architecture.<sup>22</sup> Building was a means by which men anxious to solidify their social and political status in their locality or county could advertise their wealth, position and their family's ancient standing.

These projects, whose construction extended over several years, would have provided ample subject matter for lively conversation among families' networks and perhaps also with their aristocratic neighbors, and would have emphasized Catholic builders' membership in the social elite of their county. Joan Wake has speculated that men regularly discussed building practices and their individual projects during the course of their work day – on the county bench, for instance, or over a meal afterwards – and that they enjoyed visiting one another's estates to inspect and discuss works in progress.<sup>23</sup> Given the close relationship of the families, Throckmorton must have spoken with his son-in-law, Tresham, about his project at Weston Underwood, and Tresham and his wife undoubtedly saw some of the work in progress during visits to her family home.<sup>24</sup> The gift of a horticultural book from the Vauxes (probably Tresham's sister, Lady Vaux, or her husband William) to Tresham indicates that they shared an

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<sup>21</sup> The house at Burton Agnes might have already been underway by the time of this appointment. Rev. Carus Vale Collier, *An Account of the Boynton Family and the Family Seat of Burton Agnes* (Middlesbrough: William Appleyard, 1914), 74. Griffith's wife was Elizabeth Throckmorton, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Throckmorton of Coughton. It is unclear to what extent their household adhered to Catholicism, but there is a suggestion that Lady Constable converted Griffith to Catholicism by July 1605, and that as a result "S[i>r Henry and all his had cause continually to curse hir in regard of his alteration of religion." University of Colorado, Boulder Department of Special Collections, MS 407.

<sup>22</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner and David Neave, *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire: York and the East Riding* (1972; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002) 62-63, 367-368.

<sup>23</sup> Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 64.

<sup>24</sup> Tresham was a ward of Robert Throckmorton from 1559 to achievement of his majority. He wed Throckmorton's daughter, Muriel, in 1566.

interest in gardens and that they probably discussed Tresham's projects.<sup>25</sup> Given the proximity of many of these projects to one another – some close enough to hear construction noise from neighboring estates – it seems very likely that neighbors paid regular visits to admire and discuss the evolution of a particular building or garden. Some of these friends and neighbors clearly checked in on the progress of other works, even when the owner was not at home. In 1579 Lord Burghley paid a high compliment to Hatton regarding the newly-erected staircase at Holdenby, saying that he had “found no other thing of greater grace than your stately ascent from your hall to your great chamber.”<sup>26</sup> Hatton and Tresham were in conversation about Tresham's work on the Market Cross; as the project neared completion in the early 1580s Hatton gave his friend freestone from the quarry he owned at Weldon for the finishing work on the structure.<sup>27</sup> A generation later, in 1605, Sir Fulke Greville wrote to Burghley's son, the Earl of Salisbury, to say that he had visited Theobalds, as Salisbury had asked him to do. Greville complimented his friend on his building and remodeling efforts and his gardens; the two men were clearly close enough that Greville felt he could be honest about features that needed repair or could be improved, such as the “little quarrel” he had about the position of the windows in “your new old gallery.”<sup>28</sup>

Building a house or installing gardens, particularly in accordance with Renaissance trends, was enough to remind others of one's status, but to highlight virtue the architecture and design of those spaces had to be infused with displays of wit in the form of clever devices. Often, buildings themselves were employed as devices in their own right, conceits that expressed an

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<sup>25</sup> Nicolas Barker and David Quentin, *The Library of Thomas Tresham and Thomas Brudenell*, 85.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 313. It is unclear from where Burghley traveled to see Holdenby. If he made the trip from Burghley House near Peterborough he would have had a journey of approximately 40 miles.

<sup>27</sup> *HMCV*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> HH, CP 110/168 (pr. *HMCS*, XVII, 214)

individual builder's specific taste, what John Summerson refers to as "intellectual whim and emotional caprice."<sup>29</sup> In the Elizabethan period the "E" plan became fashionable both for the symmetry of the design and because it honored the queen. Geometrical conceits were popular because they symbolized geometric and mathematical perfection, they signaled a connection to the natural world or to religious symbolism, and perhaps most of all, because they offered the symmetry of which builders in this period were so fond.<sup>30</sup> John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury, appended a seven-sided porch based on a "faceted plan" to a church in Berkshire; it was probably designed both as a play on the bishop's name and in recognition of the spiritual importance of the number seven, a number that held a great deal of significance among Protestants and Catholics alike.<sup>31</sup>

Gardens, like architectural spaces, were infused with symbolic meanings. They were enjoyable in themselves for the arrangement of plants and the interplay of pleasant scents, but the symbolism was intended to focus the viewer's mind on the signification of the space. A garden symbolic of loyalty or love for a monarch, such as the Earl of Leicester's at Kenilworth or those of John, Lord Lumley at Nonsuch in Surrey, would have encouraged an informed observer to reflect on one's own loyalty or political position. A garden that was emblematic of a particular set of religious beliefs would have held a deep significance for those people who engaged with the religious function of the place, particularly if the viewer was a practitioner of the religion which the space symbolized.<sup>32</sup> Sir Thomas Tresham intended that one of the walkways in his

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<sup>29</sup> John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993), 74.

<sup>30</sup> Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 19-25; Nicholas Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry 1480-1680* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 30.

<sup>31</sup> Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> John Manning and M. van Vaecck, *The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 3-8.

new gardens at Lyveden be reminiscent of a walkway at Bishop Wickham's house at Buckden, wherein he was imprisoned for seven months in 1588-89.<sup>33</sup> Whether he appreciated the design of the walk or whether he intended it as a memorial of the friendship he developed with Wickham while at Buckden, or even as a remembrance of the reasons for his imprisonment he did not record.

Garden architects and their patrons recognized the landscape as a canvas on which one could inscribe a variety of complex messages via the garden's design, symbolic elements and plant selection. Aristocratic gardeners employed devices in planted landscapes much as they did on their buildings. Plants were instilled with complex meanings and contained a symbolic language similar to that of building designs and embellishments. While orchards and gardens had predictably utilitarian purposes such as provision of produce for a household and the obvious aesthetic purpose of beautifying an estate, they were also laden with messages – messages that could be personal, political, religious, or a combination thereof. Perhaps the most famous garden message in the late sixteenth century was Robert Dudley's flattery and proposal of marriage to Queen Elizabeth which he encoded in his garden and a new lodge at Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, at once both a personal and a political gesture. The Catholic John, Lord Lumley encoded an apology and appeals for the queen's forgiveness into his gardens at Nonsuch in Surrey in the early 1580s. Lumley's message to the queen was a political one: ten years previously he had taken a minor part in the Ridolfi Plot. The queen had spared his life but earning his way back into her good graces took a great deal of time and effort. In the Grove of Diana Lumley included imagery and texts by which he pledged his loyalty to the queen and cast himself as a fool who had been too easily led astray, "the smitten fisher [who] at length grows

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<sup>33</sup> BL Add. MS 39831, f. 66r & v; *HMCV* ii, liii.

wise.”<sup>34</sup> With the Fountain of Diana, the centerpiece of the grove, Lumley depicted the goddess as a lactating mother. The imagery was clear enough: the chaste Diana was the Virgin Queen, who cared for her people as a mother cared for her children, and whose mercy flowed as freely to those children as would the nourishment of a mother’s milk – mercy which had saved Lumley’s life after the Ridolfi fiasco.<sup>35</sup> In the Privy Garden Lumley erected a caryatid fountain with an Imperial Crown made of porphyry, around which was cast a gilded coronet, at the top of which was Diana’s crescent moon.<sup>36</sup>

The garden features were part of Lumley’s attempt to flatter the queen, but might also have represented a subtle message of disagreement with her religious policy. Lumley’s choice of stone for the Privy Garden, porphyry, might have been a clever device designed to invoke the Neoplatonist Porphyry’s intellectual attack on early Christians, the equivalent of which, for Lumley, might have been criticism of Protestant doctrine.<sup>37</sup> By selecting varieties of plants that held particular symbolic power, Lumley’s coreligionist, Sir Thomas Tresham, embedded imagery of Christ and the Virgin Mary throughout what was otherwise a very conventional Renaissance garden plan at Lyveden in Northamptonshire. Both the Lumley and the Tresham gardens may have contained imagery specific to the Catholic faith, but softened by multiple meanings and subtle displays of wit that made those messages acceptable within the wider context of Renaissance aristocratic culture.

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<sup>34</sup> Martin Biddle, “The Gardens of Nonsuch: Sources and Dating,” *Garden History* 27, no. 1 Tudor Gardens (1999):166; Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 93. See also Kathryn Barron, “The Collecting and Patronage of John, Lord Lumley (c. 1535-1609),” in E. Chaney, ed., *The Evolution of English Collecting* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 147.

<sup>35</sup> John Gerard, in his *Herball*, also depicted Elizabeth as a nursing mother. See Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen’s Herbal Texts, 1550-1650* (Farnham, U.K.; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 60.

<sup>36</sup> Biddle, “The Gardens of Nonsuch,” 153-154, 177.

<sup>37</sup> Eusebius, “Church History,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. i, 2nd Series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), 265-266.



Religious symbolism was a common device among builders and gardeners regardless of their religious views, and occasionally, the same device was employed by builders of different religions, as happened with the Trinitarian symbolism employed by both Sir Thomas Gorges and Sir Thomas Tresham. Gorges's Longford Castle in Wiltshire (c. 1580s and early 1590s), and Tresham's Warrener's Lodge in Northamptonshire (mid-1590s) were triangular in shape and were both intended as an allusion to the Holy Trinity.

Scholars have not yet considered an even more significant symbolic representation: both Longford Castle and the Warrener's Lodge were consciously intended as architectural manifestations of the *scutum fidei*, or Shield of the Trinity. The *scutum fidei* was the heraldic device of the Holy Trinity and of God the Father, and occasionally also employed as the heraldic symbol of St. Michael. The architect John Thorpe's drawn plans for Longford Castle include a sketch of the *scutum fidei* in the center of the triangular house plan, making plain the symbolic intent of the structure.<sup>38</sup> This heraldic device is unmistakable in the drawn plans for Tresham's triangular Warrener's Lodge and on the still-extant finished product.<sup>39</sup> Tresham's other lodges also contained religious symbolism. His design for Lyveden New Bield, for instance, was a squared Greek cross influenced by the designs and advice of Leon Battista Alberti, Carlo Borromeo and Pietro Cataneo, and which was at once both a Renaissance design and an example

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<sup>38</sup> Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House: A Building History*, with a foreward by Mark Girouard (Godalming, Surrey: Bramley, 1998), 10; John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 72; Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 33.

<sup>39</sup> J.A. Gotch provided thoroughly detailed artistic renderings of Tresham's various building projects, including the Warrener's Lodge, in his *A complete account, illustrated by measured drawings, of the buildings erected in Northamptonshire, by Sir Thomas Tresham between the years 1575 and 1605* (Northampton, U.K.: Taylor & Son; London: B. T. Batsford, 1883), Plate 1 TrLo; see also John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 72. For Gotch's remarks on the unique nature of the triangular chimney on the Warrener's Lodge at Rushton, see Gotch, *Early Renaissance Architecture in England* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1901), 128-129.

of very early Baroque architectural form associated with the Counter-Reformation.<sup>40</sup> The five sections of the cross (divided equally between the four arms and the center) symbolized, for Catholics, the Five Wounds of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

By the late sixteenth century, the anxiety of both Protestant and Catholic gentry over their status in their county hierarchy impelled an increased in heraldry as a common feature of exterior ornamentation. The expense of grand building projects broadcasted wealth and status, but a display of heraldry emphasized the ancient lineage of the family and marked the household as one of superior virtue and honor to those with less to display. The Protestant Abigail Sherrard included heraldry on the exterior of her house at Stapleford, Leicestershire in 1633, along with an assortment of statues depicting the family's ancestors and a band of text at the roofline that made plain the honor of her husband: "William Lord Sherard Baron of Letrym Repayred this Bylding Anno Domini 1633."<sup>42</sup> Catholics relied on heraldic displays to buttress their weakening positions in the political structure of their respective counties. On his new gatehouse tower at Coughton Court, Sir George Throckmorton installed armorial glass that included arms going back over a century, to his Olney ancestors of the early fifteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Throckmorton was a

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<sup>40</sup> Alberti argued that organic geometry, a conformity of ratios and measurements, should be observed in building, and above all in churches, since their purpose is to inspire piety through the structure's beauty and perfection. Borromeo in 1572 "applied decrees of the Council of Trent to church building;" he dismissed the circular form favored by Renaissance artists and architects (reflecting geometric perfection and perfection in nature, e.g. bird nests, globe, stars, trees) as pagan and advocated a return to the *formam crucis*, in particular that of the Latin Cross. Cataneo also advocated the form of the Latin Cross. Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism: with a new introduction by the author*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Columbia University Studies in Art History and Archaeology, #1 (New York: Random House, 1971), 31-32. Alberti's *L'architettura* (1550 and 1565 editions) and Borromeo's *Pastorum instructions ad concionandum, confessionisque et eucharistiae sacramenta ministrandum utilissimae* (1586) and Cataneo's *I Quattro primi libri di architettura* (1554) were among the architectural and theological books in Tresham's vast personal library. Barker and Quentin, *The Library of Thomas Tresham and Thomas Brudenell*, 195, 233, 247.

<sup>41</sup> Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 32-33.

<sup>42</sup> Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, 35; Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 61/Folder 1, f. 2r.

religious conservative in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, and although he and his many sons retained office and influence into the 1560s, he was anxious to remind his Warwickshire peers of his family's continued prominence in the social structure of their home county. Edward Griffin, building in the 1560s, and Edmund Brudenell, building in the 1560s and 1570s, included the shields of their ancestors on fairly typical Renaissance exteriors; in the early seventeenth century, Sir Thomas Brudenell added the armorial bearings of his wife, Mary Tresham, and their ancestors, to the new armorial glass in the Great Hall at Deene, and on portions of the building's exterior.<sup>44</sup> From 1575-1605, Mary Tresham's father, Sir Thomas, included heraldry on the exteriors of all of his known building projects, including Rothwell Market Cross, the Warrener's Lodge at Rushton and on the garden lodge at Lyveden.<sup>45</sup>

In the roughly eighty years between the Elizabethan Religious Settlement and the Civil Wars, and particularly during the Elizabethan period, Catholics relied on exterior heraldic displays to emphasize the lineage that contributed to their honor and also to remind observers of their continued membership in the social and political hierarchy of the county. Although both non-Catholics and Catholics utilized texts and heraldry on their domestic exteriors, in the Midlands counties of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire the majority of such ornamentation was done by Catholics, which suggests their sense of heightened anxiety over their status and positions. The extensive texts at Dingley and Lyveden New Bield appear not to be the norm either in the county or across England, and clearly stem from a sense of frustration and an anxiety to protect virtue and honor by both Edward Griffin and Sir Thomas Tresham. The abundance of heraldry that appears on the domestic exteriors of Catholic homes reveals an

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<sup>44</sup> Barker and Quentin, *The Library of Thomas Tresham and Thomas Brudenell*, 143.

<sup>45</sup> The heraldry at Lyveden New Bield was to be done following completion of the religious texts and symbols, but Tresham's death in September 1605 ended the project and the shields were not completed.

anxiety to demonstrate a family's virtue and honor by underscoring their longevity in the county, intermarriage with other prominent families of high status, and extensive records of service to the Crown.<sup>46</sup>

Inscribing religious texts and devices on building exteriors was one way in which aristocratic builders of various doctrinal views expressed their religious virtue and demonstrated their honor. The symbolism that a particular builder used reflected his religious views in ways that resonated with that individual. Protestant religious imagery sometimes related to significant secular themes such as hospitality: Sir Humphrey Stafford's porch at Kirby Hall (c. 1570) invoked Proverbs chapter nine, the "Word of Wisdom," as an allegory for the hospitality offered within the house.<sup>47</sup> In the second decade of the seventeenth century John Strode used the "E" shaped building design so popular in the Elizabethan period not in honor of the late queen but to signify *Emmanuel*. He inscribed this over the main entrance door and in his writings noted that he intended it to convey "it is God who is with us for Eternity."<sup>48</sup> In 1631 Henry Oxinden built a circular banqueting lodge of his own design, conceived to imitate God's creation of Heaven and Earth (in itself a popular Renaissance conceit). If Oxinden intended it for hospitality, he soon changed his mind and preferred it for intimate family retreats. He told his brother only five years after the lodge's construction that he had tired of guests who overstayed their welcome and that "I do not desire any more company in my house than my wife, children and servants."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The example of John, Lord Lumley indicates that similar anxiety existed amongst at least some Catholic nobles. Contemporaneous with his departure from the royal court in the 1570s, Lumley added heraldic ornament to the exterior of Lumley Castle in Durham and installed the elaborate gardens discussed earlier in this chapter. For further discussion of Lumley's building projects see Paula Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 88.

<sup>48</sup> Airs, *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House*, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 271.

Engagement in the building culture was a significant component of honor for members of the gentry, whatever their religious predilection.

In Northamptonshire two Catholics, Edward Griffin and Sir Thomas Tresham, utilized extensive textual inscriptions to impart subtle politically- and religiously-charged messages, perhaps out of frustration at being marginalized in political life. These projects reveal a departure from Protestant builders since they are pointedly critical of the state's religious policy and of Protestants as a whole. However, the messages remained ambiguous and thus were also in keeping with aristocratic expectations of wit and coded meaning in visual culture. Griffin had held the office of attorney general under Mary but lost his position early in Elizabeth's reign. He retired to his country estates and occupied himself with building projects, particularly at his seat, Dingley. The texts he appended to the exterior of Dingley – two in English and six in Latin – reveal his frustration at his displacement and his disagreement with the religious policies of the new regime while also demonstrating his desire to appear honorable in his defeat. *What thing so fair but Time will pare Anno 1560*, he mused, and continued: *Sorte tua contentus abi. Ne sutor ultra crepidam. Emeri pro virtutem proesta quam per dedus vivere. That that thou doest do it wisely and mark the end and so forth. Invigilate viri, tacito nam tempora grassu/ Diffugiunt, melloque sono convertitur annus. Si Deus nobiscum quis contra nos. God save the King 1560.*<sup>50</sup>

One should “be content with what you have” and not go beyond his own knowledge (“the cobbler should not go beyond his last”) for a virtuous life is better than a dishonorable one. He warns against nicodemites and reminds himself, if not also other Catholics, that since God was on their side, no earthly being could truly oppose them. Nikolaus Pevsner and, more recently,

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<sup>50</sup> Gotch, *Architecture of the Renaissance in England*, vol. i, 41. The English translations of these texts are as follows: “What thing so fair but time will pare. Anno 1560. Be content with what you have. The cobbler should not go beyond his last. Having lived disgracefully, he may thereafter acquire virtue. That that thou doest do it wisely and mark the end and so forth. Be wary of men that loiter about in silence/ They disappear at the pleasant song and at the changing of the season. If God is with us then who shall be against us. God save the King 1560.”

Paula Henderson have argued that the last text, *God save the King 1560*, reflected Griffin's hope for a marriage between Elizabeth and Philip of Spain. Although the queen had dismissed the possibility of marriage to Philip by 1560, Griffin might have held out hope for it regardless. In any event that was probably his most overtly political comment inscribed on Dingley. The texts were subtly political and even more subtly religious, but not seditious, which would have compromised the honor he sought to protect.

The seven texts that Sir Thomas Tresham inscribed on Lyveden New Bield in the late 1590s and very early 1600s bore some similarity to Griffin's, including that their ambiguity would have made it difficult to accuse the builders of seditious intent. Like Griffin, Tresham commented on the superiority of the Roman faith to the new Protestant variety, and of the spiritual superiority of Catholics, as custodians of an ancient faith, to the spiritual condition of those who practiced a new, upstart religion. But Tresham also used his texts to convey significant tenets of the Counter-Reformation, namely the need for unity among God's people, the importance of the Virgin Mary, and the centrality of Christ's sacrifice (or Passion) for all humanity, rather than a focus on God's grace for all believers. For example, a verse he drew from I Corinthians 1:18, *Verbum autem crucis pereuntibus quidem* ("But the Word of His Cross is even foolishness to those perishing") casts Protestants as spiritually perishing due to an inability to truly understand Christ's message and forcing division rather than Christian unity on the realm. Tresham also employed this verse to argue for unity among English Catholics. The English Catholic laity grew divided in the 1590s as the seminarians and Jesuits fought for control over the Catholic body.<sup>51</sup> This division sometimes drove factions within families and prevented Catholic missionary efforts from strengthening further, and thus interfered with one of the chief

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<sup>51</sup> Michael Questier's recent work on the Viscounts Mountague treats this subject in great detail. Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community*. See also P. Renold, ed. *The Wisbech Stirs (1595-1598)* Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. 51 (London: Catholic record Society, 1958).

aims of the Counter-Reformation. This verse was a clever, witty and subtle way to maintain a sense of superiority over Protestants, in a sense calling Protestants fools, but without serious consequences since Tresham could insist that this was actually an argument for toleration or for social unity among all Englishmen.

With a selection from Galatians 6:14 Tresham warned his coreligionists of the dangers of following Protestants who promised worldly comforts, fame, or fortune, if only Catholics would convert to the heretical religion. This verse, *Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri XP* (“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Christ”) Tresham drew from Paul’s letter to the Galatians, wherein Paul cautioned early Christians to beware of false prophets and of those who urged conversion to Judaism more for appearance’s sake than for true spiritual conviction. Paul concluded his letter by exhorting members of the Galatian church to stand firm against people who tried to tempt them to renounce the true faith in order to avoid persecution. These people, said Paul, sought glory in earthly things rather than offering absolute obedience and glory to God. Galatians echoes the situation in which English Catholics regarded themselves: that they were forced to endure persecution on all fronts and the temptations of false prophets for the sake of the true religion. The late-Elizabethan state regularly promised recusant Catholics release from prison, cancellation of fines, and even the possibility of appointment to office if only they would convert to Protestantism and maintain regular attendance at their parish church. With this verse, Tresham reiterated to his coreligionists the dangers of the disunity that stemmed from the dispute between the Appelants and Jesuits. If English Catholics were to survive amongst the heretics who surrounded them, they had to be unified amongst themselves to a single purpose under the spiritual direction of a single leader.

Tresham incorporated layers of meaning throughout the texts and *impreses* he inscribed on Lyveden New Bield, which allowed him to convey multiple meanings to multiple consumers. The texts that offered praise to the Virgin Mary would have simultaneously offered praise to Elizabeth as England's Virgin Mother, a role in which the queen had cast herself. *Gavde Mater Virgo Maria* (Rejoice O Mary Virgin Mother), *Maria Virgo Sponsa Innuptat* (Mary, Virgin, Maiden Spouse) and *Benedixit te Deus in Aeternum Maria* (God blessed thee forever, O Mary) allowed Tresham to exhibit the depth of his wit or cleverness by simultaneously paying homage to the Virgin Mary and to Queen Elizabeth, who herself appropriated Marian imagery to promote loyalty to herself and her regime.<sup>52</sup> In this way, Tresham could have defended himself against anyone who took umbrage with his Marian veneration by claiming that he had actually paid homage to his queen. He would thus have underscored the claims of loyalty to Elizabeth that he made in his numerous petitions to the crown at the same time he transmitted post-Tridentine doctrine.<sup>53</sup> His patriotic claims of loyalty were recognized and accepted by at least some officials in Elizabeth's government. John Snowden, a former priest working as an English spy on the continent, reported to Sir Robert Cecil in June 1591 that he had heard that Tresham, his brother-

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<sup>52</sup> Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 26-7. *Gavde Mater Virgo Maria* and *Benedixit te Deus in Aeternum Maria* are reminiscent of the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary in Luke 1:26-33 and would have been a reminder to focus on Mary as the queen of Heaven. The former, *Gavde Mater Virgo Maria* may also have been drawn from a Responsory at Matins and echoed in a motet, "Gaude Virgo, Mater Christi" written in the early sixteenth century by Josquin des Prez. *Maria Virgo Sponsa Innuptat* is drawn from an Antiphon for the Virgin Mary's Saturday Office. The latter two invoke Mary's mystical marriage to God and her obedience and devotion to Him, and seem to have been used as well in devotional poetry, Marian hymns, and Rosary manuals printed in the late sixteenth century – many of which Tresham had in his personal library. See *The Rosary with the articles of the lyfe & deth of Iesu Chryst and peticio[n]s directe to our lady* [London]: Imprinted at London in Fauster lane, by Iohn Skot dwellyng in Saynt Leonardes parysshe, M.CCCCxxxvij [1537]. STC (2nd ed.)/17545.5; also T.N.A., SP12/172, f. 169r. See also Helen Hackett, *Virgin mother, maiden queen: Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> The Marian texts very closely resemble ejaculatory prayers, which might have been an additional use of these texts. In July 1587, Pope Sixtus V granted an indulgence of fifty days to ejaculatory prayers that venerated Christ or the Virgin Mary. The potential for the wealth of indulgences that may have come from ejaculatory prayers written in stone might have been another factor in Tresham's choice of texts.



in-law Lord Vaux, and three other men were “accounted very good subiectes,” for their opposition to Spanish plots against the queen, their obedience to the state and their loyalty to the queen.<sup>54</sup>

Since not all officials shared this appreciation of the loyalty and good behavior of Catholics like Tresham and Vaux, Tresham determined that to ensure the survival of his work and prevent its defacement or destruction, he had to encode the devices and emblems so cleverly that they would be accessible not to the “vulgar sorte” but only to his social and cultural equals, “men of skylle, especially yf skylled in that wherin the imprese or ...scene reacheth unto.”<sup>55</sup> Tresham’s intent here echoes Sir William Skipwith’s practice of designing devices and *impreses* that would be accessible only to his peers.<sup>56</sup> Tresham’s social and cultural equals would appreciate his wit even if they disagreed with the meaning and intent of the devices. But since even that disagreement could be dangerous, he created conceits with multiple and complex layers of meaning, similar to the kinds of multiple messages for multiple audiences that Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague, encoded in his entertainments for Elizabeth at Cowdray, Sussex in 1591.<sup>57</sup> For instance, some of the religious devices Tresham chose to symbolize the Passion had political connotations: the Jesuit badge for its connection to a clerical force closely allied with the military strength of Spain and the heraldic image of the Five Wounds of Christ, also called

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<sup>54</sup> TNA, SP12/239, f. 36r.

<sup>55</sup> BL, Add. MS 39831, f. 5r&v; B.L. Add. MS 39828, ff. 22-23r & v.; *HMCV*, 91.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Fuller, *History of the Worthies of England*. London, 1662. N. pag. Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership. Accessed 10 October 2010, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A40672.0001.001>.

<sup>57</sup> Curtis Breight, “Caressing the Great: Viscount Montague’s Entertainment of Elizabeth at Cowdray, 1591,” *Sussex Archaeological Collections* vol. 127 (1989): 147-166.

the *Arma Christi*, for its connection to the Northern Rising in 1569 and to earlier Tudor uprisings.<sup>58</sup>

Architecture and gardens in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period were infused with political statements.<sup>59</sup> The architecture of both Lyveden New Bield and the gardens which surrounded it simultaneously transmitted counter-Reformation doctrine, venerated Christ's sacrifice and honored the Virgin Queen. Whether the viewer interpreted that queen as the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, or as Elizabeth, England's Virgin Queen, depended on the consumer. The gardens of John, Lord Lumley at Nonsuch shared similar themes of patriotism and Catholicism to what Tresham effected at Lyveden New Bield and, like Tresham's efforts at Lyveden and Montague's pageantry at Cowdray, spoke to multiple audiences. Lumley's use of the phoenix rising from ashes, for instance, was imagery that Queen Elizabeth had appropriated for herself, but it also represented the hope of Catholics that the Roman faith in England would recover from near-destruction.

The political dynamic of each county was reflected in its building culture. In the Midlands counties of Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, the latter stands out as a particular focus of building activity during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This might reflect, in part, the oligarchical nature of Northamptonshire governance; with no one "great man" dominating the county, a constant tension existed in the Northamptonshire power structure that was played out in the building culture. Men scrambled to gain and keep their position and status within the county hierarchy. Even the Cecils, as fairly "new men" exhibited

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<sup>58</sup> K.J. Kesselring, "'A Cold Pye for the Papistes': Constructing and Containing the Northern Rising of 1569" *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 426-427.

<sup>59</sup> Tom Williamson has argued that in the eighteenth century, garden design was a "political act" that helped to define "a broad social elite and subtly exclude[ed] the rest." Tom Williamson, "The Archaeological Study of Post-Medieval Gardens: Practice and Theory," in *The Familiar Past?: Archaeology of Later Historical Britain*, ed. Sarah Tarlow and Susie West (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 254. Late sixteenth and early seventeenth century garden design held similar political connotations, a comparison that merits investigation in its own study.

some anxiety to display the ancestry that would support the legitimacy of their rising status.<sup>60</sup> In Leicestershire, building projects were dominated by the Hastings family, perhaps a reflection of the political and social hegemony of that family in that particular county. They erected banqueting houses at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, but as Nikolaus Pevsner has observed, Leicestershire, in contrast to its neighboring counties, has “no Elizabethan house of major importance.”<sup>61</sup>

Warwickshire’s building culture in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries suggests a level of political uncertainty. Similar to Leicestershire, building activity in Warwickshire was rather limited. The only major projects of consequence were carried out by the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth Castle in the 1570s and Sir Fulke Greville’s renovations at Warwick Castle in the early seventeenth century. Other than those projects, for the latter half of the sixteenth century, gentlemen in Warwickshire (regardless of their religious preferences) were still building gatehouses – a very medieval building scheme – while their contemporaries one county to the east were building gardening lodges and banquet houses. The gatehouses were often infused with the same kinds of heraldic messages that some builders appended to structures in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, which indicates that builders in Warwickshire adopted some of the new Renaissance forms being used elsewhere. Still, these gatehouses, such as the one Sir George Throckmorton built at Coughton Court, were unmistakably defensive or protective spaces designed to separate the household from the outside world. Warwickshire’s building culture in the late sixteenth century resembles Leicestershire’s building culture at the same time: dominated by one great lord and reflective of the dominance of that great lord.

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<sup>60</sup> Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 67.

<sup>61</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Revised by Elizabeth Williamson (London; New York: Penguin Group, 1977), 31.

Following the deaths of the Earl of Leicester in 1588 and his brother, the Earl of Warwick in 1590, however, Warwickshire's building culture was static. The gentlemen of the county, whether Protestant, Puritan or Catholic, did not take on major building projects as did gentlemen in other Midlands counties.

The rather frenetic display of building, rebuilding and landscaping that took place in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries slowed by the early 1630s, as the gentry and nobility shifted their focus to the capital. As Linda Levy Peck has pointed out, by the waning years of King James's reign and into the first decade of Charles I's, gentle and noble builders increasingly devoted their energies and monies to building in Westminster and London, where they could enjoy close access to the King and Court.<sup>62</sup> The extent to which patronage also changed in this period, due to the Duke of Buckingham's monopoly on royal favor in the 1620s, is explored in the following chapter.

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### **Cultural Networks**

Architectural networks come into view through personal letters, accounts books, and sometimes by following the movements of the craftsmen hired by the gentleman builders. Communication between Lord Burghley and Sir Christopher Hatton, for example, makes clear that they talked, probably at some length, about their projects and that whenever possible they checked on them in person. In 1579 Burghley visited Holdenby in Hatton's absence and reported that he found "a great magnificence in the front or front pieces of the house, and so every part answerable to [the] other, to allure liking...I visited all your rooms, high and low, and only the

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<sup>62</sup> Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 206-209.

contentation of mine eyes made me forget the infirmity of my legs.”<sup>63</sup> The Earl of Salisbury asked his friend and client, Sir Fulke Greville, to examine the water features and ongoing construction at Theobalds. Greville, who had undertaken the herculean task of building and landscape improvements at Warwick Castle, had a good eye for both the aesthetics and the mechanics of a large project.<sup>64</sup> He acknowledged that the “5 islands as they are show pleasantly one in proportion to another. Notwithstanding, if they were taken out your judgment is true, that you should have the more water; but because it is so well already I dare not counsel a change.”<sup>65</sup> He advised removal of the “banks that lie all along under the water” and expressed reservations about the design of some windows, but overall expressed his admiration and approval of what his patron had constructed.<sup>66</sup>

Relationships are also visible in the craftsmen and gardeners people shared, through the other aristocratic builders and gardeners with whom they exchanged ideas and building materials, and can be inferred through similarities in design among people who were part of the same social or kinship network. While still imprisoned at Ely in 1597 Sir Thomas Tresham directed his steward at Lyveden to contact the Dean’s man, probably his gardener, from whom he could procure a specific variety of pear.<sup>67</sup> Tresham’s knowledge of the various plants and

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<sup>63</sup> Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), 19.

<sup>64</sup> Joan Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, 1554-1628: a critical biography* (Berkeley; Los Angeles, C.A.: University of California Press, 1971), 14-15.

<sup>65</sup> HH, CP 110/168 (pr. *HMCS*, XVII, 214)

<sup>66</sup> Greville’s clientage to Salisbury began late in Elizabeth’s reign. Correspondence between the two men indicates that, while friendly and perhaps even based on friendship, their relationship was also one of patron and client. See, for example, HH, CP 54/99 (pr. *HMCS*, VII, 370; CP 177/104 (pr. *HMCS*, VIII, 367; CP 88/147 r&v (pr. *HMCS*, XI, 433); CP 88/169 (pr. *HMCS*, XI, 442); CP 101/73 (pr. *HMCS*, XV, 202).

<sup>67</sup> BL Add. MS 39831, f. 74r; the Dean of Ely in 1593 was Humphrey Tyndall, James Bentham, *The History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely*, vol. 3 (Norwich: Stevenson, Matchett and Stevenson,

varieties of fruit trees in the Cathedral Dean's orchard at Ely and the ease with which he was able to procure grafts from those trees suggest that Tresham and the Dean, Humphrey Tyndall, had become friendly enough to consider one another part of a wider network of horticultural enthusiasts, a network that, two decades previously, had included Tresham's patrons, Lord Burghley and Sir Christopher Hatton. Tresham also shared an interest in building and gardening with the Earls of Worcester, in whose household at Raglan Castle Tresham's eldest son Francis was raised and educated. William Somerset, the third Earl of Worcester (d. 1588) and his son Edward, the fourth Earl, built lavish landscape gardens at Raglan Castle, complete with a series of knot gardens, a "stately Tower" as a summer or banqueting house, water features and a fountain that ran throughout the day and night.<sup>68</sup> Although both William and Edward were avid gardeners, the fourth Earl in particular was "in the forefront of garden-making in his day," along with Lord Burghley (Theobalds and Hatfield) and Sir Nicholas Bacon (Gorhambury). Tresham must have been aware of the garden projects at Raglan and at Worcester's London house, Worcester Lodge, or must have been in contact with the earls about their shared interest, since some of the designs at the Worcester properties and Lyveden bear strong similarities. For example, Robert Smythson's description of the terraces, bowling green and one of the water gardens at Raglan sounds similar to what Tresham did at Lyveden.<sup>69</sup>

In his garden planning, Tresham seems to have drawn ideas and inspiration from the landscape designs his patrons employed over the two decades prior to Lyveden's construction. The gardens that Worcester, Hatton and Burghley built in the 1570s and 1580s incorporated the

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1817), 33; Ely Episcopal Records: a calendar and concise view of the Episcopal records preserved in the muniment room at the palace of Ely, ed. A. Gibbons (Lincoln: James Williamson, 1891), 450.

<sup>68</sup> Cooper, *Houses of the Gentry*, 65; Elisabeth H. Whittle, "The Renaissance Gardens of Raglan Castle" *Garden History* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 83-84. William, third Earl of Worcester died in 1588.

<sup>69</sup> Whittle, "The Renaissance Gardens of Raglan Castle," 87, 91.

most fashionable Renaissance features drawn from Italian, French and English influences, and probably stimulated the imagination of many other Elizabethan and Jacobean gardeners.<sup>70</sup> Still, Tresham applied his own stamp to his gardens, thereby adopting typical Renaissance designs but adapting them to suit his own desires and requirements. His water garden, for instance, was a moated orchard set in the design of a labyrinth while the similar feature at Raglan appears to have been a moated set of flower gardens.<sup>71</sup> Sir Nicholas Bacon, who installed his gardens at Gorhambury three decades prior to the establishment of the gardens at Lyveden, did much the same thing. He based his designs on Italian models but intended the landscape as a reflection of his stoic philosophy and as a space for solitude, reflection and intimate conversations with friends, a far different set of intentions than those his brother-in-law, William Cecil, had for his gardens at Theobalds.<sup>72</sup> If we trace networks through influences, then it appears that at least some builder networks reflect networks of kinship and of clientage and patronage, as seems to have been the case with Tresham and with Bacon, and perhaps also for Sir Fulke Greville.

Kinship, clientage and patronage were significant factors in the employment of skilled craftsmen or workmen and help to illuminate the connective tissue in building and gardening networks. Hugh Hall, a Catholic priest and a gardener, worked extensively in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Northamptonshire, although his work was not restricted to Catholic families. Priests often concealed themselves in Catholic households by adopting roles that would make them appear as natural members of the household, but Hall actually worked as a gardener and

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<sup>70</sup> Whittle, "The Renaissance Gardens of Raglan Castle," 87, 91; Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 226-228.

<sup>71</sup> Whittle, "The Renaissance Gardens of Raglan Castle," 90.

<sup>72</sup> Hassell Smith, "The Gardens of Sir Nicholas and Sir Francis Bacon: an enigma resolved and a mind explored," in *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain: Essays in honour of Patrick Collinson*, Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts, eds. (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 150-151.

was recognized in the central Midlands as one of great talent and honesty.<sup>73</sup> He was with the Talbots at Grafton Hall, Worcestershire in 1568-9, worked on Hatton's gardens at Holdenby in the early 1580s and was resident with both the Ardens and the Throckmortons in the late 1570s and early 1580s.<sup>74</sup> A gardener trained by him worked for Tresham's sister, Mary, Lady Vaux at Harrowden in the 1590s, and Tresham may have hired him to help his foreman, John Slynne, and another servant, John Andrews, "manage the arbours" at Lyveden in 1597.<sup>75</sup> Hall and his protégé earned excellent reputations and steady work throughout the Midlands in the late sixteenth century because they circulated amongst a network of building and gardening families, not all of whom were Catholics.

The close relationships formed by those who shared an affinity for similar cultural pursuits might have helped to keep a skilled craftsman or laborer working within the confines of a specific group and prevented the poaching of talented labor by other aristocratic builders. Talented gardeners, masons, craftsmen and laborers were not always easy to secure, and once employed they needed to be supplied with steady work to prevent them going to work for someone else. Tresham wrote from prison to ask his steward, George Levens, to be sure to speak to his masons about the work remaining to do at Lyveden before they left for "Cissiter" lest Sir John Stanhope, who was building at Harrington in Northamptonshire, persuade them to go to work for him. If that happened, fretted Tresham, "then know not I wher to have so good workmen."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *HMCV*, liii.

<sup>74</sup> Strong, "The Renaissance Garden in England Reconsidered": 5-6; T.N.A. SP12/164, f. 141r &v.

<sup>75</sup> *HMCV*, liii; Henderson, *Tudor House and Garden*, 115; Strong, "The Renaissance Garden in England Reconsidered," 5-6.

<sup>76</sup> *HMCV*, lv.



Builders do not appear to have let religion determine the craftsmen they hired, the laborers they employed, or the people from whom they purchased or exchanged materials. Rather, they opted for the best talent and labor they could hire, and sought out building materials, trees and plants that they thought were best for their project, or that they simply liked. While directing his projects from confinement at Ely, Tresham wrote about a mason's or gardener's particular skills, but not once mentioned a workman's religion: a free mason who was a "good workman and verry paynfull [painstaking]," a "ditcher" who was "greatly experienced in the setting of birches...and is to be sent for to Lyveden" to direct the planting of the birch arbor, and the gardener, who besides his skill "is accounted a very honest man."<sup>77</sup> The Catholicism of Hugh Hall and the other gardener (or gardeners) he trained no doubt appealed to Catholics who had gardens in need of tending, but his popularity was not based exclusively on his religion, as his employment at Holdenby attests. That Sir Christopher Hatton hired Hall points to the gardener's talent, since Hatton, although sympathetic to certain Catholics, was not one himself.

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Catholic gentry and nobility who engaged in typical aristocratic cultural pursuits highlighted their social, economic and cultural similarity to non-Catholic gentry and nobility. In short, they were behaving as aristocrats more than they were behaving like Catholics. Architectural taste and expertise had the potential to transcend religious differences among gentlemen. Their shared interests encouraged the exchange of ideas, materials and expert craftsmen as well as the mutual appreciation of one another's cleverness, wit, and status. The networks that were developed or reinforced as a result of common cultural interests helped to

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<sup>77</sup> *HMCV*, liii-lv.

fortify patronage ties because these common interests drew people closer to one another and helped to bind them to patrons and, in some cases, to the state. In some cases, patronage relationships were strengthened because clients could use their designs, especially their garden designs, to pay tribute to their patrons through imitation of the patron's design. Imitation was in these cases indeed a form of flattery; for a patron intent on enhancing his own prestige it was one of the best gifts a client could offer.

## Chapter 6

### Patrons and Clients

Patronage was a key feature of aristocratic life in the post-Reformation period, particularly for Catholics. The applications of patronage ranged widely, from social and economic concerns to political and military offices, artistic commissions and religious appointments. Patronage and clientage are typically considered a vertical relationship wherein a person of superior social, economic, or political status offered protection and favors to one of inferior status in exchange for the subordinate's loyalty and service. Yet patronage and clientage also existed on a horizontal axis, when friends or family members extended favor to one another.<sup>1</sup> Patronage was a system of exchange and reciprocity wherein one party was able to effect what another party needed, and wherein the recipient was obligated to return a favor or answer a need in some way. In post-Reformation England, Catholic gentry relied on patronage for protection and sometimes survival, and also for benefits typical of their standing as members of the ruling class, such as an award of office or the accumulation of property. Patron-client relationships helped Catholics to remain integrated into the corpus of elites, both as clients to more powerful patrons and as patrons with clientages of their own, and worked to tether Catholics, including recusant Catholics, to the early modern state.

Patronage was the foundation of sixteenth and early seventeenth century political and aristocratic life. The crown was the source of all bounty, which inevitably lends a political tint to the many and varied kinds of patronage.<sup>2</sup> J.E. Neale maintained that patronage was the primary

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<sup>1</sup> Paul D. McLean discusses the role of friendship in patron-client relationships in *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham, N.C.; London: Duke University Press, 2007), see especially 150-169.

<sup>2</sup> For discussion of patronage and the process of state formation, see Michael Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 87-89.

tool of political control through which the Tudor monarchs established a strong, thriving monarchical government.<sup>3</sup> As Wallace MacCaffrey has noted, patronage was a crucial component of social functioning, especially for those of upper status.<sup>4</sup> The corpus of elites, including county gentlemen, was in the Elizabethan period still small enough that most of them knew one another, or knew *of* one another, and also knew the realm's top officials.<sup>5</sup> This social group was also the chief political group, and its members – women as well as men – were important sources of patronage, especially when they were in positions of proximity to the monarch. The influence of these men and women was directly related to the patronage they were able to distribute and, for many, their membership in the clientage of individuals more powerful (or with better connections) than themselves.

For some scholars, patronage and faction go hand-in-hand. Neale and, to a lesser extent, MacCaffrey, argued in the mid-twentieth century that patronage was used to assemble and maintain factions. Alan G.R. Smith agreed. In his study of Elizabethan government, he posited that Elizabeth's policy of maintaining multiple open channels of patronage through various patrons led to the formation of factions around leaders such as Leicester, Burghley, and Essex, and that through patronage the queen and her closest advisors "secured the loyalty of the great majority of the politically conscious members of the Elizabethan community."<sup>6</sup> Linda Levy Peck called that into question with her work on patronage at the early Stuart court by demonstrating

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<sup>3</sup> J.E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene," (first published 1948) in *Essays in Elizabethan History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 59-84.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, "Patronage and Politics under the Tudors," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22; MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," in *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale*, ed. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, C.H. Williams (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1961), 95-126.

<sup>5</sup> MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," 99.

<sup>6</sup> Alan G. R. Smith, *The Government of Elizabethan England* (New York: Norton and Co., 1967), 64.

that “factions were important only in unusual political circumstances.”<sup>7</sup> Natalie Mears has argued that Neale’s assessment of factionalism was “imprecise” and failed to consider significant factors such as the “composition and functioning of the Privy Council” in the 1590s, after Leicester, Hatton and Walsingham had died.<sup>8</sup> Simon Adams also disagreed with Neale’s perspective, based on the lack of faction-building he saw in his research on the Earl of Leicester. Instead, Adams proposed that in order to understand how patronage worked in the late sixteenth century, modern scholars should examine patronage not as a political subject, but “from the contemporary perspective of the reward of service.”<sup>9</sup> Patronage was not, however, limited to politics or the royal court; it functioned also in economic, ecclesiastical, and cultural contexts. Rosemary O’Day, for example, has pointed out some of the ways in which patronage functioned in both economic and ecclesiastical contexts. She argues that for young aristocrats, proper education, connection and access to patronage was essential to their economic health.<sup>10</sup>

Given that the upper sort in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were also by birthright the ruling class, it is not entirely possible to disentangle the political from the religious or the social, but we can discuss patronage and clientage separate from faction. For instance, although this dissertation does not explore the relationship of Catholic patronage to court faction or political faction, the political aspects of the subject nevertheless loom large. Aristocratic

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<sup>7</sup> Peck did, however, see a build-up of corruption in court patronage from the 1590s through the early Stuart period. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Natalie Mears, “*Regnum Cecilianum?* A Cecilian Perspective of the Court,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47.

<sup>9</sup> Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 71. See also Paul E.J. Hammer, “Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, 65-86.

<sup>10</sup> Rosemary O’Day, *Women’s Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies: Patriarchy, Partnership and Patronage* (Harlow, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Pearson Longman, 2007); Rosemary O’Day, “Matchmaking and Moneymaking in a Patronage Society: The First Duke and Duchess of Chandos, c. 1712-35,” *Economic History Review*, Early View First Published Online 14 May 2012: 1-24.  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2012.00653.x/pdf> [accessed 22 June 2012];

Catholics remained part of the patron-client system of exchange due in part to their status and their desire to remain connected to the state, but also because the monarch, chief ministers of state and savvy local officials understood the wisdom of keeping one's friends close, but binding potential enemies closer.<sup>11</sup>

The patronage activities of Midlands Catholics bound those Catholics to one another, to other members of the ruling elite in their region across the doctrinal spectrum, and, inevitably, to the crown. The bonds fostered by patron-client relationships strengthened ties of kinship, neighborhood, and network. In 1605 Elizabeth, Baroness Vaux, assured Sir Richard Verney, whose niece Mary was in Vaux's household, that if he could provide the help, or patronage, she required, then "you shall so farre bynd me & myne unto you that if euar it lye in my powar though it be with the hassard of my estate I will requite this kindnis."<sup>12</sup> Patron-client relationships had a range of applications and meanings: the relationships could provide financial support, social or legal protection, advancement to office, and, for religious nonconformists, relief from prosecution or punishment for their refusal to conform to the state church.<sup>13</sup> This chapter examines the purposes for which Catholics in the Central Midlands used patronage: to what ends Catholics and recusants used the patronage relationships they cultivated, and how they maintained those relationships over time.

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<sup>11</sup> Royal patronage for religious nonconformists had some precedent in the reign of Mary I. Despite Mary's reputation (and legacy) as an ardent persecutor of Protestants, she did extend her favor to some, particularly those in the clientage of one of her favorites, John Feckenham, Abbot of Westminster. Feckenham had a personal relationship with the queen and enough of her favor himself that he was able to "procure pardon of the faults, or mitigation of the punishments, for poor Protestants. Fuller, *Worthies*, vol. 3, 375-6.

<sup>12</sup> TNA SP 14/216/2, f. 178v.

<sup>13</sup> Sharon Kettering maintains that in the English language, patronage (or "clientelism") "denotes an individual relationship, multiple relationships organized into networks, and an overall system based on these ties and networks." Sharon Kettering, "Patronage in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* vol. 17, no. 4 (1992): 839-862.

## Catholics and Patronage

Both the greater and the lesser gentry, regardless of their doctrinal affiliation, relied upon patron-client exchanges for advancement, favor and to advertise their status. Catholic gentry used patronage in ways very similar to their non-Catholic counterparts, but also had special need of patronage that most Protestants did not experience. Prominent recusants who faced recurrent imprisonments relied on the patronage of members of their networks to effect liberty or to secure a transfer to a more comfortable prison. Convicted recusants utilized both network and patronage relationships to secure licenses to travel when their mobility was restricted in 1593. Recusants also employed patronage to request mercy for a loved one; to protect the family economy, particularly the depredation of estates; and to shield themselves or members of their network from overzealous local officials.

One of the most pressing concerns for Catholics, particularly recusant Catholics, was the management of the penalties they incurred for their religious practice. As the Tresham and Throckmorton examples discussed in previous chapters indicate, recusant families worked diligently to ease the discomfort of imprisonment for family members and enlisted a patron's influence to secure relief from imprisonment or, failing that, relocation to a different prison. In 1580 Anne Throckmorton Sheldon petitioned that her husband, Ralph, be released from the Marshalsea prison to the Dean of Westminster's residence for life-saving surgery. Her request was granted; he survived and perhaps as a gesture of thanks, he promised the queen his conformity (which turned out to be short-lived).<sup>14</sup> Thomas Palmer, a recusant who had been in prison for his religious nonconformity periodically since at least 1581, evoked the language of patronage when he successfully appealed to Lord Burghley for release in 1584. He promised to

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<sup>14</sup> 'Parishes: Beoley', *A History of the County of Worcester: volume 4* (1924), pp. 12-19. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42847&strquery=> Date accessed: 16 January 2011.

requite Burghley's favor by conforming to the state church and to advertise Burghley's honor by dedicating a book to him.<sup>15</sup>

Conforming Catholics, too, benefited from their patrons' assistance in reducing the penalties they incurred for their religious practice or, more typically, that of the family members whom they shielded. In November 1592 either John or Robert Brudenell enlisted the help of Mr. Roger Manners, uncle to the Earl of Rutland, to forward a suit Brudenell had pending with Lord Burghley. Although Brudenell claimed to be an "urnest protestant" who "governed his howse and famylly...very ordely and obediently," he was unable to compel his wife to go to church.<sup>16</sup> Two months previously, the Privy Council had ordered obstinate recusant women imprisoned on the grounds that they were seducing their households and neighborhoods away from "due obedience in matters of religion."<sup>17</sup> Brudenell sought relief from prosecution and was particularly keen to prevent his wife going to prison for her recusancy. He counted on Manners's connections to Burghley to help broker the patronage Brudenell sought: Manners was a friend of Michael Hicke, one of Lord Burghley's secretaries, and had some influence himself as a close relation of the Earl of Rutland. Brudenell hoped that, through Manners and Hicke, his plea for leniency would not only reach Burghley's ear, but that the personal connection through a chain of patrons, brokers, friends and clients would help to influence Burghley to view Brudenell's cause with sympathy.

Catholics, and prominent recusants in particular, used their clientage to powerful patrons as a means to enhance their bond with the state, to reassure the state of their loyalty and to

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<sup>15</sup> BL Lansdowne vol 43, f. 104r.

<sup>16</sup> BL Lansdowne 72, f. 203r. In 1592, John and Robert were the only Brudenell men with Catholic wives. Both Mary Everard, John's wife, and Catherine Talyard, Robert's wife, were obstinate recusants. Joan Wake, *Brudenell of Deene*, 94-100.

<sup>17</sup> *APC* vol. 23, 202-203, 215-16; *APC* vol. 24, 9.



attempt to preempt increasingly stringent future legislation against Catholics. Through relationships with courtiers, royal favorites, chief officers of the realm, Privy Councilors and even, occasionally, with the monarch, Catholics emphasized their loyalty to the monarch and the realm and maintained that regardless of their religious belief and practice, they were first and foremost English subjects. Sir Thomas Tresham's petitions echoed this theme of loyalty throughout the 1580s and 1590s while also commenting on specific policies.<sup>18</sup> Tresham's cultivation of the Cecils in particular allowed him to act as a patron to Catholics generally and placed him in a position to subtly move against policies that the monarch and Privy Council were contemplating putting into law (the proposal to penalize a husband for his wife's recusancy being one example).<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, the surviving evidence does not allow for analysis of a broader pattern of this kind of patronage by other prominent Catholics, but it is possible that Tresham was not alone in performing this role.

For its part, the state used patronage as a means to maintain fairly close contact with prominent recusants, those who were thought to have had the greatest potential to provoke their neighbors and tenants to insurrection. In October 1589 Sir William Catesby appealed to the Privy Council to be placed on house arrest in the custody of Mr, Doctor Daye, Dean of Windsor. Day was "contented to receive him into his house and to take charge of him...."<sup>20</sup> The order specified that Catesby was not to leave the dean's residence unless chaperoned by the dean himself. The dean was not so much Catesby's gaoler as his custodian and guardian. Arrangements such as this one sometimes resulted in friendships developing between the custodian and the recusant. As

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<sup>18</sup> BL, Add. MS 34394, f. 38b; BL, Add. MS 39828, ff. 100b, 106b; BL, Add. MS 39829, ff. 19, 25 27, 104; *HMCV*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> *HMCV*, 111.

<sup>20</sup> *APC* vol. 18, 172-173.

mentioned in the previous chapter, Sir Thomas Tresham and the Bishop of Lincoln formed a friendship when Tresham was in the bishop's custody in 1588; they seem to have bonded over their mutual interests in architecture and horticulture. The development of a friendship, when it happened, was another avenue by which the state could strengthen its connections to recusants it perceived as a potential threat and, in the process, work to defuse that threat.

The monarch and Privy Council also used expressions of mercy to recusant prisoners to enhance the bond with potentially troublesome subjects. In January 1587/8 Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton petitioned the Earl of Leicester, a Throckmorton patron for over thirty years, for permission to move from imprisonment with the bishop of London to house arrest at his own house in Holborne.<sup>21</sup> Later that month, the Privy Council assented to his request on condition of a bond.<sup>22</sup> In 1602 Throckmorton, sick with smallpox, wrote to his new patron, Sir Robert Cecil, to "beseech liberty" to remain at home rather than returning to confinement as he had been ordered to do.<sup>23</sup> Following the abortive Bye Plot in 1603 Mary Griffin Markham of Kirby Bellars, Leicestershire, asked her patron, the Earl of Shrewsbury, to "intercede" for her sons, Griffin and Thomas.<sup>24</sup> The young men incurred a financial penalty and Griffin was exiled, but those were far better punishments than the death sentence they could have received.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 3. Simon Adams has said that the "precise reasons for appeals to Leicester for liberty" by prominent recusant gentlemen such as Throckmorton is "unclear." Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 372, n. 232. Yet the reason is undoubtedly due to the relationship between the individuals in question. In Throckmorton's case, at least two of his brothers-in-law, Huband and Sheldon, were Dudley retainers and the Throckmortons had an extensive history of service and clientage with the Dudley family in their own right.

<sup>22</sup> APC vol. 15, 346. Throckmorton's liberty was short-lived. By March of the following year he and his fellow principal recusants were in confinement at Banbury and Ely, due to reports that the Spanish king was preparing for war against England. APC vol. 18, 412-414.

<sup>23</sup> HH, CP 92/55 (HMCS, vol. 12, 698).

<sup>24</sup> LPL, Talbot Papers MS 3203, f. 98r.

<sup>25</sup> Through Shrewsbury's brokering, another client, Sir John Harrington, secured from the king a promise that Griffin Markham would satisfy a debt to Harrington as a condition of his pardon. In the end, Griffin Markham was

The frequent imprisonments of leading Catholic gentlemen such as Catesby, Throckmorton and Tresham prevented them from accumulating a local power base in the Midlands from which they could rebel against the crown. In March 1589/90 Sir Thomas Tresham was again in prison for his Catholicism, this time in the custody of Mr. Arkenstall at Ely. Lady Tresham wrote separately to both Lord Burghley and his son, Sir Thomas Cecil, to ask that her husband be transferred from Ely to Banbury, “allowing for y<sup>e</sup> difference of y<sup>e</sup> ayre.”<sup>26</sup> Although she did not say so in her petition, Banbury was also more attractive because Lady Muriel’s brother and coreligionist, Thomas Throckmorton, was to be imprisoned there.<sup>27</sup> Her efforts were perhaps more successful than she hoped, since Tresham did not go to Banbury but to his own house in Hogsden by April and remained there through early 1592/3, when he was granted permission to go into the country, to his house at Rushton.<sup>28</sup> Lady Tresham’s concerns about her husband’s health at Ely were well-founded. In August 1590, five months after Tresham was released, the Privy Council expressed concern about reports of an inadequate water supply at the palace and an outbreak of ague in both the prison and the town. The Council ordered the keepers at Ely to allow recusants to walk in the palace’s gardens and orchards, on the leads and that they could “take the ayre for a mile or two” in the keeper’s company. The queen’s intent was that the recusant prisoners were to be kept “under safe custody, but not to be punished in suche sort wherby their health might be impaired.”<sup>29</sup>

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exiled and the king granted his lands in Nottinghamshire and Essex to Harrington. LPL, Talbot Papers MS 3203, ff. 84r, 204r; Mark Nicholls, “Treason’s Reward: The Punishment of Conspirators in the Bye Plot of 1603,” *Historical Journal* vol. 38, no. 4 (Dec. 1995): 830.

<sup>26</sup> BL Add MS 39828, f. 137r.

<sup>27</sup> *APC* vol. 18, 412-415; *APC* vol. 20, 6.

<sup>28</sup> TNA PC 2/18, f. 799; PC 2/17, f. 812r.

<sup>29</sup> *APC* vol. 19, 387, 409.

Recusant Catholics relied on their networks and relationships with officials not only for liberty or mobility between prisons, but also for general mobility when they were at home. The legislation of 1593 restricted the mobility of convicted recusants over the age of sixteen to a five-miles radius of home and required convicted recusants to obtain a license if they needed to travel beyond that distance. Even leading recusants in the Central Midlands acquired these licenses so frequently and with such apparent ease that the law was more a nuisance than a penalty. The particularly well-preserved cache of licenses in the Throckmorton papers allows for a snapshot of this with respect to one family. Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton received at least thirteen licenses between 1593 and 1605.<sup>30</sup> His grandson Robert received at least thirty-two between 1615 and 1634.<sup>31</sup> In 1593, shortly after the implementation of the new legislation, Sir Thomas Tresham encountered difficulty in securing all of the signatures necessary for a valid license. He quickly turned to his friend, Edward Watson, who sat on the commission of the peace and also dashed off a letter to his friend Tobie Matthew, bishop of Lincoln, requesting their influence in pressuring Richard Howland, bishop of Peterborough to sign his license.<sup>32</sup>

For some of the most militant recusants patronage could literally be a lifeline. When Francis Tresham faced the possibility of execution for treason following the Essex Rebellion his family employed all of the patronage resources at their disposal. Francis himself sought mercy through the patronage of Sir Robert Cecil, whose family had been Tresham patrons for nearly two decades.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Tresham's sister, Lady Monteagle, and his wife, Anne Tufton Tresham appealed to Lady Katherine Howard for help. When she hesitated, doubting her ability

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<sup>30</sup> WRO, CR1998/Box 62, ff. 1-35.

<sup>31</sup> WRO, CR1998/Box 62, f. 18r; CR1998/Box 62, f. 25r; WRO, CR1998/Box 62, f. 31r; CR1998/Box 62, f. 40r; WRO, CR1998/LCB/25.

<sup>32</sup> *HMCV*, 74, 76-77.

<sup>33</sup> *HMCS* vol. 11, 198.

to “promise any security of his life by pardon,” they asked their uncle, John Throckmorton to “use the like means for his relief” as he had done for his nephew Robert Catesby.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, Sir Thomas Tresham worked with his cousin, John Osberne, who had some influence with Lady Katherine Howard. Both Howard and Throckmorton claimed credit for saving Francis’s life, although it appears that the pardon indeed came through Throckmorton’s efforts.<sup>35</sup> William Habington’s network swung into action in a similar fashion following the Gunpowder Plot. At the urging of Habington’s wife, Dorothy Parker Habington, her brother, Lord Monteagle, obtained William’s pardon.<sup>36</sup> Extant evidence does not suggest that he sought a pardon for his other brother-in-law, the alleged conspirator Francis Tresham.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to management of imprisonment and mobility, both recusants and conformists utilized patron-client relationships to protect or enhance the family economy. Extended periods of incarceration had the potential to interfere with proper estate administration and pending legal cases. Furthermore, recusants faced possible confiscation of property and moveable goods. The Privy Council and leading statesmen tended to approve requests concerning the management and protection of a recusant’s property. It was, after all, in the greater interest of the realm that matters involving land and property were handled in a way that would protect the order and security of the realm. In 1592 the Earl of Shrewsbury successfully petitioned Lord Burghley on behalf of his kinsman and client, John Talbot of Grafton, hoping to secure Talbot’s release so

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<sup>34</sup> *HMCV*, 109. John Throckmorton was the conformist (usually) head of an otherwise recusant household and a trusted officer of the queen’s.

<sup>35</sup> *HMCV*, 108-110.

<sup>36</sup> John Gerard, *The Condition of Catholics under James I*, 266-7.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Tresham was the alleged writer of the “Monteagle Letter” that informed the government of the Gunpowder Plot. It is possible, however, that as part of his effort to ingratiate himself with King James and to establish himself as steadfastly loyal to the regime, he orchestrated the writing of the letter and the delivery of that letter to himself. If that were indeed the case, then he might have preferred that Tresham was out of the picture and unable to call attention to Monteagle’s bit of political theatre.

that he could attend to business matters.<sup>38</sup> In March 1596/7 Thomas Throckmorton asked Sir Robert Cecil's help in obtaining liberty from his imprisonment at Banbury so that he could attend to a suit he had pending with Sir Moyle Finch.<sup>39</sup> Throckmorton had a great deal at stake with the suit: his manor of Ravenstone, which Finch had attempted to seize on a technicality, and the tenants on the manor, whom Throckmorton was determined to protect.<sup>40</sup>

The Privy Council acknowledged the pivotal role wives played in estate administration and frequently approved a wife's access to her husband to discuss estate matters. In early March 1596/7 the Privy Council approved Thomas Throckmorton's petition that his wife, Margaret Whorwood Throckmorton, "maie have accesse unto him to conferr with him about certaine suites he hath which doe greatlie import him dependenge in the lawe betweene him and others, and for his howshold affaires and other matters that doe conscerne him and his estate."<sup>41</sup> But the Council kept a watchful eye on these visits and was quick to rescind permission when a wife's presence seemed to harden the husband's resolve toward obstinate recusancy. In 1590 the Privy Council approved Sir William Catesby's petition to allow his wife, Anne Throckmorton Catesby, to visit him in prison at Banbury so that they could discuss family and estate matters. By July,

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<sup>38</sup> LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 42r. Talbot frequently helped Shrewsbury with the Earl's legal and estate business, and it could be that was the impetus behind this appeal for the recusant's release.

<sup>39</sup> HH, CP 49/86 (HMCS, vol. 7, 135).

<sup>40</sup> WRO CR1998/Box 53. In 1588 Sir Moyle Finch acquired the reversion of Ravenstone and immediately attempted to seize the manor on the grounds that in 1564 the annual rent payment was tardy. Throckmorton explained that the rent, which was paid by his father Robert, was delayed by a negligent servant but that a "Quietus Est and full discharge thereof made," after which the Throckmortons had continued to enjoy the land and pay annual rent for 22 years until in 1588/9 Finch launched a series of lawsuits in attempt to claim the manor. Throckmorton argued that since the queen held the reversion of Ravenstone at the time of the default she would have been the rightful claimant of reversion. Since the queen had determined not to reclaim it and instead issued a *Quietus Est* and allowed the Throckmortons over two decades of subsequent use and possession, the family rightfully possessed the manor.

<sup>41</sup> APC vol. 26, 538-539.

however, the council withdrew permission and ordered that Lady Catesby was not “to have accesse unto or speak to” her husband.”<sup>42</sup>

Both conformist and recusant Catholics helped others in their networks to protect family property by concealing land. Catholics who conformed to the state church faced little risk of property confiscation but for recusants the risk could at times be acute. Catholics often protected their land by concealing it through a series of labyrinthine land transactions; patrons, clients and kin were frequently party to the scheme. Sir Francis Stonor of Stonor Park, the conforming head of a recusant family in Oxfordshire, employed this strategy to protect the family’s dower lands in the 1580s and 1590s.<sup>43</sup> Stonor received the benefit of recusancy for his mother, Cecily, and became the steward of his mother’s lands – property that, after her death, would revert to him anyway.<sup>44</sup> It must have helped that Francis Stonor was a prominent member in Sir Robert Cecil’s clientage.

Catholics relied not just on their coreligionists for assistance in concealing land, but also on Protestants in their networks. In the second decade of the seventeenth century, Thomas Lawe of Benefield, a client and tenant of Sir Thomas Tresham of Newton, successfully sought Tresham’s help in concealing lands. In c. 1613/14 Lawe leased “in all or most p[ar]t of his mannor and lande” and made a gift of his other goods to Tresham and Thomas Vavasour, a fellow recusant and tenant of the Catholic Treshams. The government investigated whether the lease was made for the purpose of defrauding the king “of such profite[s] as by reason of the said Thomas Lawe’s recusancy should accrew unto his Majestie.”<sup>45</sup> Lawe was originally the

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<sup>42</sup> *APC* vol 19, 846. The Privy Council did not explain their reasoning but simply altered their previous order that Lady Catesby be allowed access to her husband.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, *The English Reformation*, 142.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

client of the Treshams of Rushton and part of the wider Tresham network. After Sir Thomas of Rushton died in 1605 Lawe continued to appear in legal documents in connection with the family; in December 1612 for example Lawe, along with Muriel Tresham, her cousin Tresham of Newton, two longstanding Tresham servants (John Flamsteed and Thomas Vavasour), and three of Muriel's sons-in-law (Brudenell, Parham and Thetcher) transferred a lease to the Earl of Exeter and two of his gentlemen.<sup>46</sup> This could have been an instance of Exeter, one of Muriel's patrons, helping the recusant widow to shield some of her property – in this case the estate at Pipewell – from confiscation by the king. Just as likely, however, Muriel leased these lands to Exeter and his men because she was still trying to satisfy the debts of her late husband. The £4300 the lease produced for her would go a long way in that regard.

A patron of very high status could help to protect a client's land using more direct means. In March 1608/09 Lady Tresham turned to a long-time patron, the Earl of Salisbury, seeking relief in a set of lawsuits against her by John Lambe, the proctor of Northampton, lawsuits that Tresham represented as stemming from Lambe's propensity to harass an aged recusant widow. Although Lady Tresham had satisfied the legal statute and the king by forfeiting two-thirds of her property as her recusancy penalty, Lambe "continuallie laboreth" to have her prosecuted in both ecclesiastical and secular courts.<sup>47</sup> Lambe had a reputation as a contentious creature who would prosecute anyone out of conformity with the established church, whether Catholic or Calvinist, but in this instance Lambe was not interested in bringing Tresham into conformity. Instead, he hoped to enrich himself by acquiring valuable leases of land in Rothwell, which Lady Tresham held of the king. The religious overtones of Lambe's prosecutions were in this instance

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<sup>45</sup> TNA E 134/3/29 [Chas I/Mich29].

<sup>46</sup> Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/4P/20/1 [10 Dec 1612].

<sup>47</sup> TNA SP14/44, f. 100r.



a mask for his true motivation: his desire to acquire parcels of land from a widow he must have deemed an easy target. Salisbury's intervention brought the conflict to an end and protected Lady Tresham's lands. A decade later, Mary Beaumont Villers, mother to the Duke of Buckingham, helped to ease the penalties of recusancy for her kinsman and client, Sir John Beaumont of Grace Dieu, Leicestershire by acting as a broker between her client and Buckingham. Mary Villiers was herself a Catholic recusant, but her son's status overcame her own recusancy in terms of her own advancement and her ability to provide patronage.<sup>48</sup>

As the Tresham-Lambe case suggests, Catholic recusants sometimes had special need of a patron's protection against overzealous local officials. In the summer of 1587 the recusant Thomas Palmer of Leicestershire sought Lord Burghley's support against some local officials who, on the grounds of their objection to his Catholicism, were harassing him and interfering with his efforts to assemble a personal library. Although Palmer had broken the promise of conformity he made to Burghley three years previously, Burghley nevertheless continued as his patron, probably because Palmer, although he had lapsed back into recusancy, behaved well and did not attempt to convert his neighbors.<sup>49</sup> Burghley directed the sheriff to "forbear to seize" Palmer's property, specifically his books. In Burghley's estimation, Palmer's devotion to learning and to assembling a library constituted "honest study" and violated no English laws.<sup>50</sup> Palmer and Burghley shared an interest in cultural and intellectual pursuits, in "honest study," and Burghley had a reputation of "favour[ing] of those who be studious."<sup>51</sup> Yet in this instance

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<sup>48</sup> Roger D. Sell, "Sir John Beaumont and His Three Audiences," in *Writing and Religion in England 1558 - 1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory*, eds. Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009), 196.

<sup>49</sup> Lord Burghley's grant of liberty to Palmer in 1584 was discussed above. BL Lansdowne vol 43, f. 104r.

<sup>50</sup> HEH STT 194r.

<sup>51</sup> HMCS vol. 2, 518.

Burghley's patronage indicates something even more significant: that Burghley was protective of the private domain of a household and eager to maintain order in the countryside. His personal convictions regarding the temperament of members of the ruling elite – that they would behave soberly, responsibly, and be possessed of just morals – and his intention to maintain England's security meant that he would not tolerate a culture of search and seizure that could easily transform into an atmosphere of rampant disorder in the countryside, perpetuated by the very men appointed to protect order.<sup>52</sup>

At least occasionally, Catholics in legal trouble and facing loss of their lands were able to nominate the individuals to whom their lands would be redistributed, which suggests that the crown or the Privy Council saw value in a device that would give the appearance of punishment but also protect a gentleman's estates. When Bartholomew Brookesby lost his lands in Leicestershire, Islington and Dorset for his role in the Bye Plot (1603) he was able to ensure that they were "granted away...to other prominent Catholics of his own nomination."<sup>53</sup> The forfeited land of his co-conspirators, Sir Griffin and Thomas Markham, went to another client of their patron, the Earl of Shrewsbury: the Markhams' kinsman Sir John Harrington, a leading member of the Rutlandshire gentry and a religious conformist who straddled conventional religious boundaries.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Lamar Hill, "The Privy Council and Private Morality in the Reign of Elizabeth I" in *State, Sovereigns and Society in Early Modern England. Essays in Honour of A. J. Slavin* ed. Charles Carlton (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1998), 215; Stephen Alford, "The Political Creed of William Cecil" in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: essays in response to Patrick Collinson*, St. Andrew's Studies in Reformation History, ed. John F. McDiarmid (Aldershot, Hampshire; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 78, 83.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Nicholls, "Treason's Reward," 836-837.

<sup>54</sup> LPL, Talbot Papers 3203, f. 84. Harrington was cousin to the Markhams through his mother, Isabella Markham Harrington. Deborah Shuger refers to Harrington as a "Protesting Catholic Puritan" – one who opposed "Counter-Reformation push back" but also could not abide by Lutheran precepts of sola fide. Deborah Shuger, "A Protesting Catholic Puritan in Elizabethan England" *Journal of British Studies* vol. 48, no. 3 (July 2009): 627-629.

Members of a recusant's network helped to safeguard a family's finances by petitioning for benefit of recusancy, a device which kept land and income under the control of a trusted friend or family member. The strategy also reinforced the bonds of patronage that tethered individuals to the center by granting the favor of custodianship to those trustees. In 1609 George Shirley was granted "two thirds of the king's part in the lands and goods" of Eleanor Vaux Brokesby, with whose family he was allied in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.<sup>55</sup> The grant of the benefit of Brokesby's recusancy penalties to Shirley helped to protect Brokesby's interests and provided status and some residual income to Shirley. In 1625 Sir Thomas Brudenell and his brother-in-law, Sir Lewis Tresham, were awarded the "forfeitures for recusancy" of their kinsman, Edward, Lord Harrowden, "to the intent that he might sell part of his lands to pay debts."<sup>56</sup>

When the benefit of recusancy was assigned to a friend or kinsman the collection of those monies, if they were collected at all, was not problematic; for other collectors, however, the benefit of recusancy could be more trouble than it was worth. In 1605 Richard, Lord Say and Sele was entitled to the benefit of recusancy for eight recusants, but as the crown's collection agent he was unable to collect "unless he would join with them."<sup>57</sup> Some recusants offered bribes if he would "wink at" them, or look the other way; others he could not find; and still others were in hiding with friends who protected them. Frustrated and broke, he beseeched the king to "resume those recusants" (in other words, take them off his hands) and have instead what he thought was a more certain thing, the benefit of "a debt of 2,500*l.* owing by Jifford Watkyn to

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<sup>55</sup> *CSPD James I* vol. 1, 575; See also pp. 8-10 in Chapter 2, above. Shirley, of Staunton Harold, Leicestershire and Astwell Castle, Northamptonshire was part of the Hastings network and connected to Vaux through his friendships with others in her circle, including her father-in-law Robert Brokesby.

<sup>56</sup> *CSPD Charles I*, vol. 1, 534.

<sup>57</sup> *HMCS*, vol. 17, 633.

Francis Tresame for wool and sheep.”<sup>58</sup> The crown’s practice of granting oversight of land or financial benefit of a recusant to that individual’s friends or relations is instructive. Although the monarch and Privy Council prevented most recusant Catholic men from taking their normal role in governance they were not willing to take away their status, power, and traditional role in the county community.

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### **Similarities to forms of patronage for non-Catholics**

In many ways, Catholics and non-Catholics had similar need of patronage. For example, women shared in their family’s concerns about property and sought their patron’s help in recovering both goods and land. As Karen Robertson has demonstrated with the case of Elizabeth Throckmorton Raleigh, one of the Protestant Throckmortons, part of an elite woman’s career was to protect family assets, particularly with a view to her own support and her children’s inheritance.<sup>59</sup> The process of doing so helped to bind gentlewomen and noble women to the state both through their petitions and their patrons. In 1582, after the recusant Rice Griffin’s flight to the continent prompted government seizure of his goods, his mother, Lady St. John of Bletsoe successfully petitioned the Privy Council to grant her custody of those goods. She was particularly keen to recover his books.<sup>60</sup> Shortly after the Gunpowder Plot, Dorothy

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. As a prisoner of the crown for suspected involvement in the Gunpowder Plot, Tresham’s debts, on collection, were forfeit to the crown and thus available for disbursement as reward.

<sup>59</sup> Karen Robertson, “Tracing Women’s Connections from a Letter by Elizabeth Raleigh,” in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women’s Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford, U.K.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 149-164; Karen Robertson, “Negotiating Favour: the Letters of Lady Raleigh,” in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. James Daybell (Aldershot, U.K.; Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2004), 109.

Huddleston, the wife of one of the conspirators, petitioned the Earl of Salisbury for the return of her family's property, which was seized following her husband's arrest. Despite the government's orders that seized goods should be returned to the families of the prisoners "for the relief of their wives and children," the sheriff of Worcestershire had refused to comply.

Huddleston hoped that through Salisbury's influence the sheriff would be compelled to return the "four horses and other property" that he had taken.<sup>61</sup> Sometime before 1605, two daughters of John Sommerville, who was executed in 1583 for an alleged plot against Queen Elizabeth, asked their kinsman and patron, Sir Henry Goodere, to help them recover from the crown the family lands that were intended for their marriage portions and to stand as trustee for those funds.<sup>62</sup>

Political patronage, the means by which most gentlemen and noblemen held office in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, provided benefits to both patron and client. In 1597 Justice Francis Beaumont, the conformist head of a recusant household, recommended to Sir Robert Cecil that the Catholic William Parker, Lord Monteagle be made a JP for Lancashire.<sup>63</sup> Beaumont's support was crucial at this juncture in Monteagle's career, as he labored to create a career for himself that would ensure a future at court.<sup>64</sup> Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon benefited from dispensing political patronage to his Catholic clients by keeping those men and their families within the Hastings clientage. Robert Brokesby, Sir George Shirley, Anthony Faunt and his son William, and the Beaumonts all profited from Huntingdon's patronage. It was

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<sup>60</sup> TNA SP12/206, f. 184r; *APC* vol. 13, 386.

<sup>61</sup> *HMCS* vol. 24, 37.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; *CSPD* 1603-10, 221.

<sup>63</sup> *HMCS* vol. 7, 496.

<sup>64</sup> It is possible that Beaumont's support of Monteagle was brokered by Anne Vaux, who was a close friend of Monteagle's sister, Dorothy Parker Habington and a niece of Justice Beaumont.

in Huntingdon's best interest to plant as many of his clients as possible into Leicestershire offices in order to maintain his influence in the county and repress the Grey faction.

Indeed, patronage was so deeply embedded in the fabric of elite social and political life that a refusal to "play the game" could result in the denial of office or advancement regardless of a man's religion. Edward Montagu of Boughton, Northamptonshire was denied a commission in the Rockingham Forest in 1612 in part because of a failure of patronage. The Montagus prided themselves on "living of ourselves" rather than seeking promotion through the support of a patron.<sup>65</sup> Even worse for their ambitions, they were opponents of the Cecils, who controlled the forest commissions for the Rockingham Forest and who by the early seventeenth century were a veritable fountain of patronage for loyal clients. In the end, the commission went to a neighbor, the sometimes-conformist, sometimes-recusant Catholic, Sir Thomas Brudenell.<sup>66</sup> The perceived loss of political authority to a neighbor, and a recusant neighbor at that, was a humiliating defeat for Montagu.

Keeperships were minor offices, but were significant markers of local influence. A keeper wielded authority over not only the tenants but also in relationship to other landowners who neighbored the park. Rockingham Forest's status as a royal demesne meant that its officers, even minor ones, were direct officers of the monarch; as such the position provided a direct pathway to Cecil patronage, as overseers of the royal demesne, and more importantly, to the monarch. The episode in 1612 was the second time in the space of a decade that the Montagus had been thwarted in their attempts at a keepership in the royal forest. In 1603 Sir Thomas Tresham, a verderer in Rockingham Forest, and his son Francis secured the lease for the Little

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<sup>65</sup> *HMC Buccleugh at Montagu House* vol. 1, 244.

<sup>66</sup> Cope, *The Life of a Public Man*, 58-59.

Park over the competing claims of Montagu and Henry, Lord Mordaunt.<sup>67</sup> Regardless of their religious belief and practice, gentlemen benefited from forging ties with important local magnates and courtiers with influence. When they did, even loyal Catholics could enjoy favor and position. When they did not, even staunch Protestants could find themselves ignored and their status snubbed.

Patrons bound clients to themselves and to the political center via minor offices such as forest commissions and through major local offices such as the commission of the peace. Long-standing and loyal Catholic clients of the earls of Huntingdon, such as Robert Brokesby and Anthony Faunt, received continued support and were able to remain in office: Brokesby as JP and Faunt as sheriff in 1587.<sup>68</sup>

It was not unusual, especially in the years prior to the 1590s, for clients (regardless of their religion) to seek favor from multiple patrons.<sup>69</sup> By working with multiple patrons a client placed those patrons in contest with one another to see which one would prevail and be able to claim the recognition and honor that accompanied successful patronage. During the 1580s and 1590s, the elder generation of Treshams – Sir Thomas and Muriel – practiced a strategy of simultaneously appealing to multiple patrons, including Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Cecils. Their eldest son, Francis, was in the entourage of the Earl of Essex in the 1590s; whether he was part of the Cecil clientage at the same time is unclear, but he did

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<sup>67</sup> Lord Mordaunt and Tresham both held offices and leases in the royal Forest of Rockingham, although Mordaunt hoped to gain additional land and prestige by forcing Tresham out of the Little Park. See Pettit, *The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire*, 173-174.

<sup>68</sup> HEH HA 5437; Hasler, *The Commons* vol. i, 488.

<sup>69</sup> Linda Levy Peck, "Court Patronage and Government Policy: The Jacobean Dilemma" in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 30; Paul E.J. Hammer, "Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 68; Robert Harding, *The Anatomy of a Power Elite* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), 36-37, 241 n. 68. See also Kristen Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

appeal to Sir Robert Cecil for patronage after the Essex Rebellion. This kind of plurality in the pursuit of patronage remained common until the 1620s, when George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, demanded that his clients made him their “singular” patron to the exclusion of all others, a means by which he ensured all honor resulting from his patronage would accrue to him alone.<sup>70</sup>

Regardless of religious preference, proper behavior and displays of loyalty to a patron were essential to the cultivation and maintenance of patronage relationships, both within and without one’s network. Patrons were hesitant, if not loathe, to risk their own credit and reputation on an unworthy client; it was incumbent on clients to reassure patrons of their fidelity, and for patrons to use evidence of a client’s loyalty and good behavior when they solicited favor for those clients. When Anne Russell Dudley, Countess of Warwick petitioned the Privy Council in 1592 on behalf of her client, Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton, she emphasized Throckmorton’s loyalty to the state and his quiet constitution. Throckmorton merited release from confinement, she argued, because he was “not maliciouslie affected to the state” nor proselytizing amongst his neighbors, but “a quiett man savinge for the error of his abused conscience....”<sup>71</sup> His behavior and intentions were good; he erred only in his religious scruples.

A prisoner’s loyalty and trustworthy behavior was one important consideration in a recusant gaining liberty, together with the status of foreign affairs. For instance, when Throckmorton and other Catholic prisoners were released at the end of the summer of 1592, England no longer faced an imminent risk of a Spanish attack. The dangerous summer season was over and the radical Catholic faction – those who were still alive after the plots of the 1580s

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<sup>70</sup> Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, 52. The extent to which Catholic clientage lined up with political faction, such as Cecil vs. Essex, for example, requires further investigation.

<sup>71</sup> LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 41.



– were quiet. At the same time that Throckmorton was released from Banbury, Sir Thomas Tresham and his fellow prisoners at Ely were released from their imprisonment, “the summer being past.”<sup>72</sup>

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### **Catholics as Patrons**

Catholics participated in the exchange of patronage both as clients and as patrons. Catholic gentry, both conformists and recusants, accumulated and maintained networks of clients and in the process underscored their continued influence in the upper echelons of their respective counties. Catholic patrons behaved, in many ways, similarly to non-Catholics. They sought advancement for their clients, whether in political office, military careers, a position in a great man’s household, or in the furthering of a schoolmaster’s career. They loaned money, helped to collect debts on behalf of clients, and supported their clients’ efforts to acquire more property and status.

#### Advancement

Political patronage was an effective means by which statesmen and courtiers bound their subordinates to the political center and also by which Catholic gentry and nobility nurtured their own clients lower down the social scale. As Simon Adams has demonstrated, political patronage did not equate to a patron buying the votes or controlling the policy stance of the client. What, then, did political patronage mean and for what purpose was it employed? Political patronage meant that a patron had a particular office or position in his or her gift and was able to dispense those gifts in exchange for a client’s loyalty, obligation and continued presence in the patron’s

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<sup>72</sup> LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 43.

clientele. For the Earls of Huntingdon political patronage ensured an intact entourage, one large enough and strong enough to dwarf the Grey clientage and to thereby ensure the continued dominance of the Hastings family at the apex of Leicestershire governance. For the Earls of Leicester and Warwick in Warwickshire, political patronage allowed them to consolidate their own authority in the West Midlands and to populate offices with their own men. For the oligarchs in Northamptonshire, political patronage – both the granting and receiving of it – was essential to defining and enhancing a man's status in the county. Within their own neighborhoods, political patronage meant that a man had the ability to influence appointments in his locality; the right to make even fairly minor appointments such as that of schoolmaster demonstrated that a gentleman was still in a position of authority.

Catholics exhibited typical aristocratic behavior by seeking a patron's help in securing an office or position or by granting a position to one of their own clients. In January 1598/9 the Catholic Lewis, Lord Mordaunt wrote to the Earl of Essex on behalf of his nephew, an experienced soldier with two years' service in the Low Countries. Mordaunt asked that Essex take the nephew into his company and hoped, for the sake of the young man's honor, that he would hold at least the rank of lieutenant.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in 1606 Sir William Lane, a Northamptonshire Calvinist, petitioned Salisbury to take his son-in-law, Edward Waterhouse as a liveried servant, preferably in time for King James's imminent visit to Theobalds.<sup>74</sup> Taking a kinsman into service or asking one's patron to do so was a common feature of aristocratic life in the late medieval and early modern periods.<sup>75</sup> In these instances, Mordaunt and Lane

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<sup>73</sup> HH, CP 176/62 (*HMCS* vol. 9, 30).

<sup>74</sup> HH, CP 116/158 (*HMCS* vol. 18, 206). According to the Chronicle of St. Monica's at Louvain, Lane was the Protestant cousin of the Catholic Copleys of Warwickshire. Dom Adam Hamilton, O.S.B., ed. *The Chronicle of the English Augustinian Canonesses Regular of the Lateran, at St. Monica's in Louvain* (Edinburgh: Sands and Co., 1904), 89.

acknowledged the honor and status of Essex and Salisbury, respectively, by seeking to place their clients in the entourage, or the extended clientage, of the statesmen, and by helping to augment the noblemen's standing by expanding their clientage.

Protestant gentlemen exhibited the same kind of intent to support or protect a kinsman's career as did Catholics. When the Protestant William Cave's brother was ejected from his parish living by the vicar of Alcester in 1583, Cave asked his friend and fellow JP, Edmund Holte, to ask his brother-in-law, Humphrey Ferrers of Tamworth, to extend the younger Cave's position for another year, which would give the man sufficient time to find another living.<sup>76</sup> Although this letter employs some of the typical language of a patron-client exchange, it is evident that although Cave felt the relationship was an equal one, even between friends requests like these necessitated more formal language than what the two men might have otherwise used. Cave placed himself as subordinate in saying he did "most earnestly Crave yo[u]r friendly letters" to Ferrers, for which Cave would "thinke my sellfe greatly beholding to youe for the same" and that Holte would "even find me willing and prest [pressed/obligated] to pleasure youe or eny frend of yo[u]rs to my best in what so ever." He also promised his brother's loyalty, service and prayers for Holte for the rest of his life. Holte forwarded the petition to Ferrers and asked that so long as the ejected man's credit warranted such favor, Ferrers would grant the request.<sup>77</sup>

Maintaining a clientele and dispensing patronage to those below them on the social scale helped Catholic gentlemen to sustain authority in their locality. Good patrons were intent to protect the careers of their clients, whether they were family, as in the Cave-Holte example, or

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<sup>75</sup> Sharon Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1989): 418.

<sup>76</sup> BL Stowe MS 150, f. 29r.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

whether they were long-standing members of one's clientage. In the early 1590s, Sir Thomas Tresham still owned the rights to name a schoolmaster to the free grammar school at Rothwell, a Northamptonshire market town. In May 1591 the local schoolmaster, Owen Ragsdale, a Tresham tenant and client, was nearing the end of his life and wanted a role in choosing his successor. Tresham, together with three of his servants and tenants, Thomas Vavasour, John Flamstead and Thomas Walker, and the schoolmaster, Ragsdale, entered into an agreement with the twenty-six inhabitants of Rothwell that would allow Ragsdale to do just that. Ragsdale leased rights of preferment from Tresham and agreed to maintain the schoolhouse, school yard, and to pay the new schoolmaster.<sup>78</sup> Ragsdale died in December of that same year and the naming rights reverted to Tresham.<sup>79</sup> Tresham granted his rights to his client as a form of favor, although Tresham still benefited from it financially. By 1595 the school at Rothwell must have been in need of another replacement. Francis Sabie, a local schoolmaster and established client of the Treshams, dedicated one of his prose works to Sir Thomas's eldest son Francis, with two objectives in mind.<sup>80</sup> In the short term, he hoped for preferment to one of the schools in Sir Thomas's gift; in the long term, Sabie clearly hoped to continue into the next generation his family's status as part of the Tresham clientele. Intriguingly, all of the parties here (other than Sabie) were Catholics, yet there is no indication that any authorities at any level – local, regional or national – took issue

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<sup>78</sup> *Papers by Command*, vol. 90 (London: House of Commons, 1906), 116; Arthur F. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation, 1546-48* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1896), 148; *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1966): 69.

<sup>79</sup> S. Sharpe, F.S.A., F. G. S., "Rothwell Crypt and Bones," *The Archaeological Journal*, vol 36 (1879): 67.

<sup>80</sup> Francis Sabie, *Flora's Fortune. The second part and finishing of the Fishermans Tale*, Imprinted at London by Richard Ihones, at the signe of the Rose and Crowne, neere to S. Andrewes Church in Holborne, 1595. *Early English Books Online*. [http://gateway.proquest.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:11201:2](http://gateway.proquest.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:11201:2) [accessed 11 November 2011].

with one of the most high-profile Catholic gentlemen in the realm wielding his influence over the choice of a schoolmaster in Rothwell.<sup>81</sup>

In his quest for a position, Sabie employed a strategy of appealing to multiple patrons, which indicates that this practice occurred amongst middling-status clients as well as upper-status clients, as discussed earlier in this chapter. At the same time Sabie wrote his dedication to Tresham, he also crafted dedications to two other local figures: Lord Mordaunt and the bishop of Peterborough, Richard Howland. Whereas the dedication to Tresham acknowledged the existence of a durable patron-client bond, the dedications to Mordaunt and Howland indicate a desire to ingratiate himself and imply that the patron-client relationship was in its early stages.<sup>82</sup> Neither the dedication to Mordaunt nor to the bishop reveals the sort of long-term clientage the Sabies had enjoyed of the Tresham family.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, a gentleman's attachment to a patron had the potential to benefit the gentleman's own clients. The Cecil-Tresham bond benefited not only the Tresham family, but also other individuals in the wider Tresham network, including Catholics with whom Sir Thomas was imprisoned. In the 1580s and 1590s, Tresham was one of the principal petitioners on behalf of Midlands Catholics; he wrote many of the petitions that Midlands Catholics presented to the queen and her council, including petitions for release on behalf of himself and his fellow prisoners at Ely. As such, he positioned himself as a patron to his coreligionists. In December

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<sup>81</sup> Ragsdale's Catholicism is established in W. J. Shiels, *Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough*, 115.

<sup>82</sup> Francis Sabie, *The Fisser-mans tale: of the famous Actes, Life and loue of Cassander a Grecian knight*, Imprinted at London by Richard Iohnes, at the Rose and Crowne neere S. Andrewes Church in Holburne, 1595. Early English Books Online. Web. 11 November 2011. [http://gateway.proquest.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:11200:2](http://gateway.proquest.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:11200:2)

<sup>83</sup> Francis Sabie, *Adams Complaint. The olde worldes tragedie. David and Bathsheba*. Imprinted at London by Richard Iohnes, at the Rose and Crowne next above Saint Andrewes Church in Holborne, 1596. Early English Books Online. Web. 11 November 2011. [http://gateway.proquest.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:11220:2](http://gateway.proquest.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:11220:2)

1588 Tresham wrote a letter of thanks to Burghley on behalf of all of the Catholic prisoners at Ely who enjoyed liberty due to Burghley's patronage. The durability of the patron-client relationship is visible in the closing of Tresham's letter, when he "most humbly beseech[ed]" Burghley "that my Innocencie, and loyalty maye be ever sheltered under your honourable protection" and that Tresham and his family "dewlie [dewtie?] bound reverence your hono[u]r, not onlie a most excellent magistrate of this common wealthe, but as a speciall Patron of me in what I esteeme dearest."<sup>84</sup>

### Economic Protection

Upper-status Catholic patrons, like their Protestant counterparts, were intent to help their clients to acquire more property and wealth and to aid in the protection of that property. In June 1584 Roger Cave, a Northamptonshire JP (and a Protestant) asked Burghley's favor for his son-in-law and client, Mr. Bagott, who sought a lease of the Catholic Lord Paget's surrendered lands.<sup>85</sup> In 1596 Lord Mordaunt, a prominent Catholic in Northamptonshire, asked Queen Elizabeth to approve of a reversion of lands on behalf of his long-time servant and client, William Downall.<sup>86</sup> Mordaunt's suit was supported by Lord Burghley and won the queen's assent.<sup>87</sup> In July 1600, Lord Mounteagle wrote to a Mr. Francke to seek satisfaction for a debt. One of Francke's servants, Richard Radley, died before he could repay a debt of £40 to Mr. Foster, one of Mounteagle's servants.<sup>88</sup> In 1627 Sir Thomas Brudenell advocated on behalf of his

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<sup>84</sup> TNA SP12/219, f. 138r.

<sup>85</sup> TNA SP 12/171, f. 117r.

<sup>86</sup> HH, CP Petitions 570 (*HMCS* vol. 6, 536).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> BL, Egerton MS 2644, f. 115r.

client, Christian Ismay of Brigstock, widow of Roland Ismay, whose inheritance from her husband was called into dispute by suggestions they were never legally married. Brudenell wrote to John Lambe, Chancellor of Peterborough, with whom he maintained an amicable relationship, to “entreat your favor to her as that no mans solicitac[i]on against ^her^ may blemishe her in yo[u]r opinion nor any obiection that is beside the Cause whatsoever it be may be a hindrance to yo[u]r faire and iust p[ro]ceding.”<sup>89</sup>

Although Catholic recusants were notoriously cash-poor they still managed to fulfill a patron’s obligation of providing financial relief to clients, friends and kinsmen in their networks. Providing loans to friends and clients was a culturally-valued trait for the gentry and nobility regardless of their religious beliefs; it demonstrated their munificence and underscored their wealth. Some families engaged in the practice to their own detriment. The Vauxes of Harrowden lent money they did not have; William Lord Vaux was in dire financial straits throughout the 1580s and 1590s, in part because of his own fiscal mismanagement and in part due to the recusancy fines he was obliged to pay, yet he still lent money to tenants and clients.<sup>90</sup> The financial records of the Throckmortons of Coughton supply a snapshot of their money-lending practices. Into at least the mid-seventeenth century the Throckmortons of Coughton fulfilled their social role as leading members of the gentry in their counties by lending money to clients, tenants and kin, even when the family was in restricted financial circumstances themselves. Thomas Throckmorton lent 40s to Thomas Colwell of Bestow, Northamptonshire in 1590.<sup>91</sup> Colwell, a Northamptonshire recusant, was not in the inner circle of the Throckmorton network

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<sup>89</sup> TNA SP16/49, f. 54r&v.

<sup>90</sup> Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden*, 204-219; In 1592 Vaux’s finances were grim enough that he pawned his parliament robes. BL Lansdowne vol. 73, f. 74r.

<sup>91</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 63/Folder 1, f. 7r.

but was a client of Throckmorton's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Tresham.<sup>92</sup> In 1611 or 1612 Robert Throckmorton lent £108 to Michael Bray of Coughton Park; by June 1612 Bray had repaid "three score and sixe poundes" and hoped Throckmorton would extend his loan period while he raised the remaining balance.<sup>93</sup> In 1629 Robert Throckmorton lent £10 to his cousin Thomas Throckmorton, who was at the time residing at Harrowden, Northamptonshire, the seat of the Vauxes.<sup>94</sup> In 1639, toward the end of his life, Thomas Habington of Hindlip, Worcs., asked Robert Throckmorton to help him satisfy a £300 debt related to his daughter-in-law's marriage portion.<sup>95</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century a Throckmorton cousin, George Piggott, asked Robert Throckmorton for a loan of 40s.<sup>96</sup> The Piggotts had been part of the Throckmorton network since at least the 1560s and had a long history of borrowing from their patrons.

Occasionally, the lender would require a bond to as a reassurance of repayment. In 1610 Thomas Throckmorton lent his kinsman George Throckmorton of Grafton £50 but required a bond of £100, perhaps because he worried about George's creditworthiness.<sup>97</sup> The Throckmortons were more solvent than were the Vauxes but still sometimes spent more than

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<sup>92</sup> Colwell had been a Tresham client since at least the 1570s; why Throckmorton, and not Tresham, extended him this loan can probably be attributed to Tresham's financial retrenching that occurred at the same time. Anstruther, *Vaux*, 88-89; see also STAC 5 7/34; 14/19; *HMCV*, 60; TNA SP 12/208, f. 50r.

<sup>93</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 22r.

<sup>94</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 2, f. 1r.

<sup>95</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 2, f. 16r.

<sup>96</sup> WRO CR 1998/CD/Folder 48, f. 26r. The Piggotts had been part of the Throckmorton network since the 1560s at least and had a long history of borrowing from their patrons. The Piggotts remained in the Throckmorton affinity through at least the early eighteenth century. In 1719 Nathaniel Piggott was Sir Robert Throckmorton's solicitor. WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 2r; WRO CR 1998/Box 61/Folder 3, f. 13r.

<sup>97</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 61/Folder 4, f. 5r.



they took in. In 1612 the “Charges in howskeepi[n]g” for Thomas Throckmorton’s household at Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire amounted to £500 more than his receipts.<sup>98</sup>

Moneylending practices might reveal the ways in which individuals and families understood their respective roles in their county communities, particularly with respect to the maintenance of gentry honor. The financial constraints of the Throckmorton and Tresham families were similar – both were paying steep recusancy fines and both families had several daughters who needed marriage portions. Yet the Throckmortons were able to lend money more frequently than were the Treshams. The Throckmortons continued to act in accordance with a traditional social role; the family kept hospitality and dispensed financial support to clients and subordinates in need. The Treshams, by contrast, especially Sir Thomas, devoted most of their disposable income to the new Renaissance ethic of building and gardening that was particularly popular in Northamptonshire during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The family does not appear to have been as active with moneylending as were the Throckmortons in the neighboring county. Significantly, the building culture in the Throckmorton’s home counties of Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire was less enthusiastic than in neighboring Northamptonshire. Both families were thus able to demonstrate their honor via social and cultural behaviors that agreed with social and cultural expectations of their respective counties.

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<sup>98</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60/Folder 3, f. 26r.

## Maintaining the Bond

The patron-client relationship was maintained by the exchange of gifts; tokens; thank you letters and praise; and the client's right behavior, regardless of the religious affiliation of the parties involved.<sup>99</sup> Clients frequently nurtured the bond with their patron through brief letters and small gifts, both of which functioned to remind the patron of the client's existence and loyalty. After the Lambe dispute was settled, Lady Tresham sent the Earl of Salisbury a gift of "half a hundredth" trees from the Tresham orchards at Lyveden for the orchard "which I hear yo[u]r Lo[rdship] intendeth at Hatfeyld."<sup>100</sup> Lady Tresham offered the trees from Lyveden "bycause I thinck no one place can furnish yo[u]r lo[rdship] w[i]th more & better trees & of a fitter growth then this grownd, ffor my late worthie husband as he did take great delight, so did he come to great experience & judgement therein. Scarce is there I thinck any fruict of note but he had itt if it could be conveniently gotten."<sup>101</sup> Such a large gift expressed Lady Tresham's gratitude while also underscoring her family's status and their long-standing connection to the Cecil family; the Cecil landscape projects had, after all, provided some of Sir Thomas Tresham's inspiration for his designs at Lyveden, from where these gifted trees came.

Cultural endeavors such as building, gardening, literary writing and antiquarian work provided clients with opportunities to advertise publicly the honor and esteem of one's patron throughout the period examined here. Some clients bestowed on their patrons dedications in printed works, which were of course a public declaration of the patron's honor. Thomas Palmer's promise to Burghley to reward his patronage with a book dedication was noted earlier in this

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<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Sharon Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in early Modern France" *French History* vol. 2 no. 2 (1988): 131-151; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, "Gifts and Favors: Informal Support in Early Modern England," *Journal of Modern History* vol. 72, no. 2 (June 2000): 295-338.

<sup>100</sup> TNA SP 14/48, f. 186r.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

chapter.<sup>102</sup> In January 1606/7 Justice Beaumont's son, Francis the playwright, wrote to thank the Earl of Salisbury for his patronage even though the position Beaumont sought – the Mastership of the King's Cocks – was filled by someone else.<sup>103</sup> The recusant Thomas Habington used his antiquarian skills and the *History of Worcestershire* he compiled over four decades to broadcast the virtues of Protestant families with whom he enjoyed amicable relations.<sup>104</sup> In the 1620s the minister Theophilus Field told the Duke of Buckingham that he would reward his patronage by “writing an history of your good deeds to me and others.”<sup>105</sup> Clients could also work to maintain their patrons by paying them visible compliments in cultural forms, as both Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Thomas Tresham did when they replicated some of Lord Burghley's landscape designs for Theobalds in the garden designs on their own estates at Holdenby and Lyveden, respectively.<sup>106</sup> This was the ultimate form of gift, since it represented loyalty and the recognition of one's honor on a grand scale, and for other gentle and noble visitors to see.

A steady traffic of gifts and tokens was not the only way to maintain and protect a patron-client relationship, however; astute clients also worked to ensure that no episodes of offence would damage or destroy the patron-client bond. After William, Lord Vaux's brief house arrest in the custody of his friends, the Montagus of Boughton, Northamptonshire in 1581 he complained to his cousin, the hot-Protestant William Lane, about what he perceived to be

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<sup>102</sup> BL Lansdowne vol 43, f. 104

<sup>103</sup> *HMCS* vol. 19, 28.

<sup>104</sup> Jan Broadway, ‘To equall their Virtues’: Thomas Habington, Recusancy and the Gentry of Early Stuart Worcestershire,” *Midland History* vol. 29 (2004): 9.

<sup>105</sup> Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption*, 48.

<sup>106</sup> See Chapter Five above; see also David Jacques, “The Compartment System in Tudor England”, *Garden History* 27, no. 1 Tudor Gardens (1999), 39; Eric St. John Brooks, *Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen's Favorite* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 158; John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove: the Italian Renaissance garden in the English imagination* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 105.

forward speech of Lady Montagu.<sup>107</sup> Montagu's attempts to persuade Vaux of the merits of Protestantism were, in Vaux's estimation, "somewhat to zelas" and a deviation from her usual womanly modesty.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, Vaux's private complaints became a matter of gossip and thus imperiled both Elizabeth Montagu's reputation and Vaux's relationship with his friends – friends that were now in a position to act as his patrons and protectors.<sup>109</sup> He scrambled to both deny and apologize for the affront and to assure Lady Montagu that they shared common social values, including concern about reputation and credit.<sup>110</sup> The lack of sources for the Vaux family makes it difficult to evaluate the nature of the relationship between Vaux and Lord Montagu after this event. Montagu does not seem to have taken on the role of patron to Vaux, but to what degree that might have been related to this slight is not clear. In another example, although by the 1580s Sir Thomas Tresham's principal patron was Lord Burghley, Tresham worked through other patrons when he could so as not to overtax his relationship with Burghley. Occasionally, he relied on kinsmen or brokers close to Burghley to advocate for him rather than writing directly to Burghley himself.<sup>111</sup> In other instances Tresham sought patronage through less conventional channels. For instance, when in 1591 he sought relief for a tenant and servant convicted of recusancy, Thomas Vavasour, Tresham wrote not to his own patron, Burghley, but instead appealed to the tenant's kinsman, Mr. Gascoigne, for help in "obtaining freedom from his

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<sup>107</sup> Stanford Lehmberg, *Sir Walter Mildmay and Tudor Government* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1964), 194. It was not uncommon that custodians and their charges were friends or kinsmen and that relationships reached back across generations, and this case was no exception. See Norman Jones, *The English Reformation*, 142.

<sup>108</sup> BL Additional MS 39828, f. 60r.

<sup>109</sup> Although Vaux was in this instance not a guest in the conventional sense, in the days he spent in the Montagu's house before being transferred to London he was offered hospitality as though he were a houseguest. His criticism of Lady Montagu therefore spoke not only to her womanly modesty, discretion and obedience to her husband, but also to her hospitality. Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 192-3.

<sup>110</sup> BL, Additional MS 39829, f. 59r.

<sup>111</sup> TNA SP 53/21, f. 80v.

disturbance for recusancy.”<sup>112</sup> In this instance, Tresham did not pursue the typical patronage pathway of working upward through his own patrons, but instead made a lateral move to another gentleman and kinsman of his client, a creative and unusual way to secure patronage for a client. He might have hoped that Gascoigne would enlist the influence of Vavasour’s cousin, the gentleman pensioner Sir Thomas Vavasour. This maneuver allowed Tresham not to pester his own patron, who for a case like this one would have been Lord Burghley, while also allowing the honor and credit derived from the dispensation of patronage to accrue to Gascoigne rather than to himself.<sup>113</sup>

Shrewd clients knew the value of expressing their gratitude and acknowledging their patron’s superior status. In 1604 Mary Griffin Markham wrote to her eldest son Griffin, who was just emerging from his legal troubles with the Bye Plot, to “reprove him for his casual dealing” and to admonish him to write a letter of thanks and contrition to the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose influence had saved the lives of Griffin and his brother Thomas the previous year.<sup>114</sup> Mrs. Markham’s network was especially important when the patronage relationship between her husband, Thomas Markham, and his patron, the Earl of Rutland, broke down in the 1570s. Thomas Markham served in Rutland’s household as a young man, following his father’s service there. The relationship had broken down by 1578, however, with Rutland and his uncle, Roger Manners, consistently undermining Markham’s influence or officeholding in proximity to his seat in Nottinghamshire. From early in Elizabeth’s reign, Markham’s loyalty and dedication to

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<sup>112</sup> *HMCV*, 59-60. Exactly which Gascoigne this was is unclear; it might have been John Gascoigne of Parlington, Yorks. Bindoff, vol. 4, 193.

<sup>113</sup> Tresham was undoubtedly aware of the advice Lord Burghley had given his own son, Sir Robert Cecil, not to bother a great patron with “trifles,” which circulated in manuscript and print form during this period (from the 1580s through the 1630s at least). See, for example, William Cecil, Baron Burghley, “Certaine precepts or directions, for the well ordering and carriage of a mans life....” (London: Printed by T. C[reede] and B. A[lsop] for Ri. Meighen, and Thos. Iones, and are to be sold at St. Clements Church without Temple Barre, 1617). *STC* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 4897.

<sup>114</sup> LPL, Talbot Papers MS 3203, f. 234r.

the queen resulted in favor at court (for example, as a gentleman pensioner) and helped to compensate for the recusancy of Mary and Griffin.<sup>115</sup> Why he could not help his sons – or perhaps refused to help – is unknown. It could have been that his the recusancy of his sons, culminating in a plot against the state he had spent his career serving, exhausted his patience or was too great a credit risk and he refused to help them, effectively disowning them for their role in a treasonous plot.

The work a client performed to maintain a relationship with a patron could pay important dividends, including the advancement of the client's social status. George Kempson, a client of the Throckmortons of Coughton, recognized this potential. Kempson was a butcher in the small Warwickshire market center of Alcester, near Coughton and just a few miles distant from the larger market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1593 Kempson leased Oversley Park near Alcester from George Throckmorton, the youngest son of Sir Robert Throckmorton and brother to Thomas Throckmorton of Coughton.<sup>116</sup> Kempson and his brother Thomas were the Throckmorton's neighbors and, by 1611, if not before, Thomas was one of their servants. Thomas, along with his brothers Richard and George, were in service to the Throckmortons through the mid-seventeenth century, despite Agnes Throckmorton's advice to her son, Robert, to be wary of granting the Kempsons too much property or standing in the area. She had heard, she told Robert, that George Kempson had accumulated enough revenue that "if he hath it confirmed as it is now he will be a lorde there as well as you."<sup>117</sup> Agnes was concerned that another gentleman, or manorial lord, in such proximity to Coughton would dilute the

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<sup>115</sup> "Thomas Markham," History of Parliament Trust Online, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/markham-thomas-1523-1607> [accessed 4 January 2012].

<sup>116</sup> SCLA DR5/940; 'Parishes: Arrow', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), pp. 26-31. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56976> Date accessed: 14 December 2011.

<sup>117</sup> WRO CR 1998/Box 60, f. 3r.

Throckmorton's authority in the neighborhood and weaken her heir's social prominence. Despite Agnes's misgivings, the Kempsons continued in service to the Throckmortons and by the 1620s possessed the manor of Oversley Park, adjacent to Coughton, in their own right. By 1629 Thomas Kempson was referred to as "esquire"; his kinsman George was called "gentleman" by 1661.<sup>118</sup> In this instance, at least, a butcher and his brothers, through decades of service and clientage to a socially prominent family, acquired the wealth and status that elevated them to gentlemen in the space of one generation.

### Conclusion

Patron-client relationships strengthened bonds between individuals, between families and, perhaps more importantly, between individuals and the early modern state. For Catholic recusants, patronage relationships helped to mitigate the legal penalties incurred by their refusal to participate in the state church and worked to ease conditions of imprisonment or confinement. In some cases, patronage relationships were instrumental in saving a family member's life or fortune, as in the case of Francis Tresham and Robert Catesby following the Essex Rebellion and in the case of Thomas Habington following the Gunpowder Plot. Patron-client relationships also helped Catholics, particularly recusants, to protect their estates and fortune. State officials recognized the necessity of allowing imprisoned Catholics the liberty they needed to attend to lawsuits and general business matters if overall order was to be maintained. Patronage relationships within networks of kin and friends helped recusants to protect family property

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<sup>118</sup> It is unclear whether this George was Thomas's very aged brother, which seems unlikely, or Thomas's son, which is more probable. 'Parishes: Haselor', *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway hundred* (1945), pp. 108-115. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56992> Date accessed: 14 December 2011. In an agreement between George Kempson and Lord Brooke dated 1661 Kempson is referred to as "George Kempson of Alcester, gent." WRO CR 1886/Box 416/7/2.

through monetary loans, standing surety and land transactions that effectively shielded a recusant's land from confiscation by the state.

Patronage worked in two important ways for members of the Catholic gentry and nobility, and in the process kept upper-status Catholics engaged with the state (particularly the monarch and Privy Council) and integrated into their local communities. Through their clientage to powerful patrons at court and in proximity to the monarch, Catholics ensured that they remained connected to the state. And by including Catholics – even recusants – in political life, the state ensured their continued integration in gentle and noble life and kept them bound close to the crown and government. Catholic gentry and nobility who maintained their own clientage continue to wield influence in their neighborhoods and their networks and thus remained prominent in a social and economic context even if their participation in political office had been curtailed. Through patronage, the state was able to closely monitor the Catholic population, to protect the social structure and to encourage gentle and noble Catholics to retain a sense of proprietary rights in early modern England.



## Conclusion

Aristocratic Catholic families in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England constructed networks of kin, friends and patrons that provided the social, political and cultural connections that were integral to aristocratic life. Those relationships were also significant factors in helping Catholics to navigate the increasingly hostile legislation aimed at curbing their activities and their influence. Patronage relationships were an important mitigating factor in how the state's policies were carried out vis à vis individual Catholics or Catholic families. More importantly, patronage relationships were the means by which Catholics and the state related to one another and remained bound to one another and by which Catholics continued to wield influence, both in their local communities and at the national level.

Families utilized their relationships with family, extended kin, friends, neighbors and patrons as a network from which they drew various forms of support. Catholics relied on their networks for the usual aristocratic concerns of advancement, promotion and marriage, for example, but also for more pressing needs related to their religious nonconformity. This was especially true for recusants. Catholic families relied on their natal and marital networks, and also on the networks formed and maintained by women. Female networks overlapped but did not replicate male-dominated (or at least male-directed) family networks and thus provided additional avenues of support and patronage on which family groups could draw.

This dissertation has demonstrated that Catholic gentry and nobility remained engaged in English political life in a variety of ways, including but not limited to office holding. Catholic women, especially recusant women, found a potent political voice through their petitioning activities. Through their petitions, women were able to exercise some influence in relation to powerful state institutions such as the Privy Council. They were also able to voice their

disagreement – couched very carefully of course – over the state’s control of their families through imprisonment of the family patriarch. Furthermore, women understood how to use the stereotype of their feminine weakness to their advantage in their petitions, as Lady Tresham did when she argued that her family needed her husband at home to direct their daily life.<sup>1</sup> This study has also suggested ways in which recusant Catholics remained integrated in political conversations and, through their clientage, navigated factional disputes between courtiers, reassured crown officials and the monarch of their fidelity and worked to preemptively move against future policies against Catholics.

This study examined two ways in which Catholic men remained politically engaged: through office holding and through military service. Catholics continued to hold political offices in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period, especially on the local level. Recusant Catholics found this more difficult than did conformists, but with the right patronage support could enjoy a career as a JP, on various local commissions and a turn as sheriff throughout the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. Catholic men demonstrated their masculine virtue, honor and loyalty to the state through military service under both Elizabeth I and James I. For some, such as Sir Christopher Blount and William Parker, Lord Monteagle, both of whom moved between conformity and recusancy, that service produced patronage relationships that helped to support bids for political office. For others, especially those who came from prominent recusant families, such as Sir William Tresham and his brother-in-law Sir Edward Parham, military life provided them with careers that were more significant than any they could probably create on an estate or in local office.

Through political participation and engagement in cultural pursuits such as architecture Catholic gentry and nobility emphasized that they were fully participating members of the upper

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<sup>1</sup> *HMCV*, 29.

status group in English society. Catholic and recusant men constructed expensive banqueting lodges, renovated their existing home and installed elaborate gardens, all of which were in keeping with popular Renaissance culture. They did so at the same time and often in close proximity to their non-Catholic neighbors and fellow aristocrats, which helped them to create new relationships with patronage potential or to strengthen existing ones.

By utilizing their various networks and by behaving as gentry and nobility, Catholics were able to remain connected to and fully participate in the patron-client system. Catholics sought patronage from men and women of superior status and power to their own and from family members and friends with connections to powerful patrons. Catholics gentry and nobility also maintained their own clientage networks, as people of their status group were expected to do. Those clientages allowed Catholics, including prominent recusants like Thomas Throckmorton and Sir Thomas Tresham, to command authority in their localities and to maintain a significant social presence. Patron-client relationships functioned as the connective tissue that linked the state to Catholic gentry and nobility in the counties, and by extension to the various groups, or small communities, of Catholics in the counties.

Still, there is room for further inquiry into the mechanics of patronage and its function amongst Catholics of high status. It has been beyond the scope of this project to fully investigate the role Catholics played in Elizabethan and Jacobean military efforts. That is a particularly rich avenue for inquiry that merits a discrete study of its own. It has also been beyond the scope of this study to examine whether Catholic clientage figured into factional alliances at the center, particularly in periods of crisis.

This dissertation presents a different view of Catholic life than most of the historical scholarship has done. Typically, scholars are focused on the conflicts that plagued relations

between Catholics, Protestants and Calvinists. But I am asking different questions and utilizing different sources in an attempt to answer those questions. Throughout this dissertation I have endeavored to investigate how the process of patronage worked, to explore how Catholics secured and maintained the patrons and patronage they received and the clients to whom they were benefactors. By asking how patronage functioned, I have examined relationships from a different vantage point, one that asks how these relationships remained, for the most part, harmonious ones and how Catholics were able to use those relationships to achieve specific ends. Conflict certainly existed, but that conflict was often not at its heart a religious issue, as the forest office disputes in Northamptonshire have demonstrated. Men who agreed on religious matters argued. Sometimes their families feuded through multiple generations, as happened with the Hastings and Grey families in Leicestershire and the Brudenell and Bussy families in Northamptonshire. But the episodes of harmony between people diametrically opposed on religious matters suggest that by the early seventeenth century, if not in the waning years of the sixteenth century, England was moving toward acceptance of religious plurality and that many English people prized familial, social and community harmony over an atmosphere of dispute or chaos.

<b>Appendix I:</b>					
<b>Imprisonments of Sir Thomas Tresham</b>					
<u>Committed</u>	<u>Released</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Keeper</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Time Incarc.</u>
Aug 10/19 1581	Jan or Feb 1582/3	Fleet		Campion	18 mos
Jan or Feb 1582/3	unclear	House arrest at Hogsden Allowed liberty to walk abroad in Hogsden and Shoreditch parishes			
End Michaelmas 1587	July 1588	Buckden (B. of Lincoln res.)	B. Lincoln	Spanish threat	9 mos
July 1588	Sept/Oct 1588 <sup>1</sup>	Bishop's palace at Ely (bishopric vacant at the time)		R. Arkinstall	Armada 3 mos
March 1589/90	April 1590	Ely		Spanish threats	1 mo
April 1590	??	His own house at Hogsden while tending to Lord Vaux's affairs			
Early 1592/3	Early 1592/3	Imprisonment reprieved through Earl of Essex, allowed to go to Rushton		Spanish threats	
Feb 1594	July 1594	Fleet		??	5 mos
Dec 1596	unclear (still there Summer 1597)	Ely	Dean of Ely?	Spanish threats	~10 mos
By summer 1599	early 1600	Fleet		refusal to pay Muriel Vaux Fulcis's full marriage portion. This was his last imprisonment.	~8 mos
Total time in prison: 4.5 years					
Remainder on house arrest					

<sup>1</sup> See LPL, Fairhurst Papers 2004, f. 43r.

**Appendix II: *Libri Pacis*, 1573-1632**  
**Lists of JPs for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire**

**Leicestershire 1573**

TNA SP 12/93, f. 19v  
Nicholas Bacon miles lord  
custos  
William lord Burghley thesaurar  
Anglie  
John Marchro Winton  
Henry earl Huntingdon lord  
president council [north]  
Henry lord Cromwell  
Robert Catlin miles capitalis  
Jestice ad pleta  
James Dier [Dyer] miles  
capitalis Justice de barre  
Edward Saunders miles capita  
baro Scij  
Nicholas Barham servieus Mr ad  
legem  
George Hastings miles  
George Turpin miles  
Francis Hastings  
Francis Cave  
Adrian Stokes  
Brian Cave  
Nicholas Beaumont  
Francis Smithe  
George Sherard  
Henry Poole  
Henry Skipwith  
Thomas Ashbie  
[top f. 20r]  
Thomas Heselrigge  
Maurice Barkley  
John Harrington  
Thomas Cave  
Leonard Damet  
Francis Browne  
George Purevey

**Leicestershire 1577**

SP 12/121, f. 20v  
Nicholas Bacon  
William Id Burghley  
Henry earl Huntingdon  
Henry Id Cromwell  
James Dyer miles Cap Justic de  
Banco  
Francis Wyndham serviens ad  
legem clerkus  
George Hastings miles  
Francis Hastings  
George Turpyn miles  
Francis Cave  
Adrian Stokes  
Brian Cave  
Nicholas Beamond  
Francis Smythe  
George Sherrard  
Henry Poole  
21r  
Henry Skipwith  
Thomas Asheby  
Thomas Haselrigge  
Maurice Barkeley  
John Harrington  
Thomas Cave  
Leonard Dannett  
Francis Browne  
Thomas Skevington  
George Purevey

**Leicestershire 1580**

SP 12/121, f. 26r  
Thomas Bromley miles  
William Id Burghley Id treasurer  
Anglie  
Henry Id Huntingdon Id  
president  
Henry Id Cromwell  
Christopher Hatton miles  
James Dyer miles cap[tis] Justic  
Thomas Meade p[re]mis Justic  
ad pleta  
26v  
George Hastings miles  
Francis Hastings miles  
George Turpyn miles  
Francis Cave  
Adrian Stokes  
Brian Cave  
Rich[arde] Beomonde  
Francis Smithe  
Henry Poole  
Henry Skipwith  
Thomas Ashbey  
27r  
Maurice Barkley  
John Harrington  
Thomas Cave  
Edward Lee  
Leonard Demett  
William Cave  
Francis Browne  
Thomas Skevington  
George Villiers  
Andrew Novell  
George Purvey

**Leicestershire 1582**

Lansdowne vol. 35 f. 134v  
 Francis Smith  
 Edward Aston  
 Henry Poole  
 Henry Skipwith  
 Thomas Ashbie  
 Maurice Barkley  
 John Harrington  
 Francis Beamond  
 Thomas Cave  
 Edward Lea  
 Leonard Dannett  
 Andrew Nowell  
 William Caree  
 Francis Browne  
 Thomas Skevington  
 George Villiers  
 Edward Turville  
 Anthony Faunt

**Leicestershire 1608**

SP 14/33, f. 36r  
 Thomas duc Ellesmere  
 Cancellar Angl  
 Robert comes Salisbury  
 Thesaurer Angl  
 Thomas comes Dorset Thesaurer  
 Angl [stricken]  
 Henr comes North'ton costos  
 privat sigilli  
 Regerne comes Rotel [Rutland]  
 Henricus comes Huntingdon  
 Henricus duc Grey  
 Petrus Warburton mil unno  
 Justic & banco ad assises  
 Thomas Foster mil alter Justice  
 & banco ad assises  
 Walterus Hasting Ar  
 John Grey mil (Id Grey's son &  
 heir)  
 Thomas Compton mil  
 Henricus Harrington mil  
 Willm Skipwith mil  
 f. 36v  
 Henricus Hasting mil  
 Thomas Cave mil  
 Willm Turpin mil  
 Basilme Brooke mil  
 Thomas Beaumont Junior mil  
 Thomas Humfrey mil  
 Willm Smyth mil  
 Wolstaune Dixey mil  
 Samuel Flemyng sacre theology  
 Docr  
 Johes Chippingdale legume dcor  
 Willue Cave  
 Henricus Cave  
 Matheus Saunders  
 Edrue Turville  
 Willue Rowell  
 Henricus Smyth  
 Thomas Grey  
 f. 37r  
 Barthue Layton

**Leicestershire 1632**

SP 16/212, f. 33v  
 Thomas Id Coventry  
 Richard Id Weston  
 Henry earl Manchester  
 Francis earl Rotel~  
 Henry earl Huntingdon  
 34r  
 Robert earl Essex  
 Henry earl Stanford  
 John Vicecomes Purbeck  
 John bishop Lincoln  
 Ferdinand Id Hastings  
 John Coke mil unno princip  
 Secretary  
 Richard Hutton mil Justice of  
 the bar  
 George Croke mil Justice of the  
 bar  
 Henry Shirley Baronett  
 Arthur Haselrigge Baronett  
 Henry Skipwith mil et Baronett  
 Henry Hastings mil  
 Thomas Merrey mil  
 William Faunt mil  
 Wolston Dixie mil  
 Wiliam Robert mil  
 34v  
 Richard Roberte mil  
 John Lambe mil unns Magrop  
 Canc  
 John Bale mil  
 John Skeffington mil  
 Thomas Hartopp mil  
 Erasmus de le Fountayne mil  
 Thomas Gerrard mil  
 Roger Durham sacre Theolog.  
 Doctor  
 William Robinson sacre  
 Theolog. Doctor  
 Thomas Sheldon  
 George Ashebe  
 Roger Smith  
 Thomas Babington  
 William Halford  
 Nathaniel Lacy  
 Thomas Calcott de Cathorpe  
 35r  
 Richard [?] Langham



**Northamptonshire 1573**

TNA SP 12/93, f. 20v  
Nicholas Bacon miles  
William lord Burghley  
Francis earl Bedford  
Robert earl Leicester  
Edward Apus[?] de burgo  
William Vaux lord Harrowden  
Wialter Mildmaye miles  
[f. 21r]  
James Dier miles  
Edward Sanders miles  
Nicholas Barham sermous  
ar[minge]  
Thomas Cecil ar[minge]  
Christopher Hatton Captain  
Valdcte Garde Mr[?]  
John Spencer miles  
William Fitzwillians miles  
Robert Cave [lane/] miles  
Humphrey Stafford miles  
Edmund Brudenell miles  
Richard Knightley miles  
Edward Montague miles  
Thomas Wattes  
Edmund Elmes  
Thomas Spencer  
Francis Saunders  
Thomas Brooke  
George Carleton  
George Line  
Christopher Yelverton  
Edward Melye  
John Osborne

**Northamptonshire 1577**

SP 12/121, f. 21r  
Nicholas Bacon miles  
William ld Burghley  
Francis earl Bedford  
Robert earl Leicester  
Edmund Epus de Burgo s—  
Peter [----]  
William ld Sandes  
William Vaux ld Harrowden  
Walter Mildmay miles  
James dyer miles  
Francis Wyndham  
Thomas Cecyll miles  
Christopher Hatton  
John Spencer miles  
William Fitzwilliam miles  
Robert Lane miles  
Edmund Brudenell miles  
Edward Mountague miles  
Thomas Wattes  
Edmund Elmes  
Edward Watson  
Edward Onley  
Francis Saunders  
Christopher Yelverton  
Thomas Brooke  
James Ellis Legn~ doctor et  
Cancellar Epi Petri Burgens~  
George Carleton  
21v  
George Lyn  
John Wake  
Michael Harecourte  
John Isham  
John Osborne

**Northamptonshire 1580**

SP 12/145, f. 28v  
Thomas Bromley  
William lord Burley  
Francis earl Bedford  
Robert earl Leicester  
[ illeg ?]  
Edward ld North  
William ld Sandes  
William Vaux ld Harrowden  
Lodovicus ld Mordaunt  
Henry ld Compton  
Christopher Hatton miles  
Walter Mildmay  
James Dyer  
Thomas Cecil miles  
John Spencer miles  
William Fitzwillian miles  
Robert Lane miles  
Edus {Edmund} Brudenell  
miles  
Richard Knightley miles  
Edward Mountague miles  
Anthony Mildmaye  
29r  
William Chauncey [stricken]  
Thomas Wattes  
Ed[??] Elm[??]  
Edward Watson  
Edward Onley  
William Chauncey  
Christopher Yelverton  
Bartholomew Tate  
George Carleton [stricken]  
Thomas Becke  
John Wake  
Reginald Bray  
James Ell[ite]  
George Carleton  
George Lynne  
Thomas Andrewes  
Muchael Harecourt  
John Isam [Isham]  
John Osbourne  
William Chaeke

**Northamptonshire 1582**

Lansdowne vol. 35 f. 134v  
 Thomas Marmyon  
 Bartholomew Tate  
 John Wake  
 Reginald Bray  
 George Carleton  
 Thomas Mulshoe  
 George Lyme  
 Thomas Andrewes  
 Michael Harecourt  
 Michael Lewi-e  
 Thomas Kirton  
 William Clarke  
 Francis Barnard

**Northamptonshire 1608**

SP 14/33, f. 44v  
 Thomas duc Ellesmere  
 Robtus comes Salesbury  
 Thomas comes Dorset [stricken]  
 Henr comes North'ton  
 Thomas comes Exome [Id It]  
 Thomas Epue de burgo sci petri  
 [bish. Peterborough]  
 Edwarde duc Zouch  
 Henricus duc Mordant  
 Willue duc Compton  
 Willue duc Russell  
 Thomas duc Gerrard  
 Robtus duc Spencer  
 Johnue duc Stanhope  
 vicecamerar hosp  
 Edrue Coke mil capitalis Justice  
 de banco  
 Petrus Warb'ton mil unno  
 Justice de banco ad Assises  
 Thomas ffoster mil alter Justic  
 & banco ad Assise  
 Christoferne Yelverton mil unno  
 Justic ad pleta  
 Ricus Cecill Ar  
 f. 45r  
 Edmundue Carie mil  
 Antonie Mildmay mil  
 Edrue Griffin mil  
 Ricue Knightly mil  
 Georgius ffarmor mil  
 Arthur Throckmorton mil  
 Willue Lane mil  
 Robtue Osborne mil  
 Willue ffitzwilliams mil  
 Edrue Watson mil  
 Robtue Wingfield mil  
 Walterue Mountague mil  
 Ewsebiue Isham mil

Ewsebiue Andrewe mil  
 Ricue Chetwood mil  
 Johes Needham mil  
 Tobias Chauncy mil  
 Willue Samwell mil  
 f. 45v  
 Edw Onely mil  
 Henricus Lonbill mil  
 Willm Tate mil  
 Henricus Hickman unno  
 Magrore[s] Canc  
 Willm Pritherough legume dcor  
 Johes Wake  
 Thomas Mulsho [stricken]  
 Ffrauncisme Morgan  
 Rogerne Dale  
 Thomas Barnaby  
 Jacobus Puckering  
 Johes ffreeman  
 Arthurus Brooke  
 Thomas Tresham  
 Willue Saunders de hadden  
 Tobias Houghton  
 Willue Belcher  
 Johes Rand

**Northamptonshire 1632**

SP 16/212, f. 43v  
 Thomas Id Coventry  
 Richard Id Weston  
 Henry earl Manchester  
 Francis earl Rotel  
 William earl Salisbury  
 William earl Exon (Exeter?)  
 John earl Bridgwater President  
 Wales  
 Robert earl Warwick  
 John earl Bristol  
 Mildmay earl W'moreland  
 John earl Peterburgh  
 William Id Spencer [end f. 43v]  
 Edward Id Mountague  
 George Id Goringe  
 Thomas Edmonds mil mil  
 Thesaur hospice Re  
 Francis Crane mil Canc  
 nobilissim ordinis Garter  
 Nicholas Hutton [Hatton?] mil  
 unns Juctic de Bauro  
 George Croke mil unns Justic ad  
 plita  
 Francis Harvy mil unns Justic de  
 Bauro  
 Richard Cecill mil  
 Barnabus Bryan mil  
 Edmind Cary mil

Roland St John mil  
 Erasmus Driden Baronett  
 Lodovicus Watson mil et  
 Baronett  
 John Hewett Baronett  
 John Isham mil et Baronett  
 Christopher Hatton mil [end f.  
 44r]  
 Thomas Crewe mil unns S~view  
 Re ad leg  
 Milo Fleetwood mil Receptor  
 Cur Wardop  
 Hatton Farmer mil  
 Richard Chetwood mil  
 Edr~us Only mil  
 Robert Bannistrie mil  
 Thomas Brooke mil  
 Thomas Tresham mil  
 Thomas Cave mil  
 John Tonstall mil  
 William Willmer mil  
 William Fleetwood mil  
 Richard Samwell mil  
 John Lambe mil unns Magrop  
 Canc  
 John Danvers mil  
 Robert Wingfield mil [end f.  
 44v]  
 Sanuel Clerke sacre Theolog  
 Doctor  
 Robert Sibthorpe sacre Theolog  
 Doctor  
 Richard Knightley  
 William Lane  
 Francis Nicholls  
 Charles Edmondes  
 John Crewe  
 Richard Cartwright  
 John Worley  
 Arthur Goodday  
 Francis Downes  
 Cuthbert Ogle  
 Anthony Palmer  
 Thomas Jennison  
 William Downall  
 John Sawyer [end f. 45r]

**Warwickshire 1573**

TNA SP 12/93, f. 29v  
Nicholas Bacon  
William ld Burghley  
Henry earl Huntingdon  
Ambrose earl Warwick  
Robert earl Leicester  
Thomas bishop Coventry et  
Lichfield  
Henry ld Compton  
James Dier miles [etc]  
Edward Sanders miles [etc]  
Nicholas Barkham  
Anthony Cooke miles  
John Throckmorton miles  
Justice Cestr-  
William Wigston miles  
Thomas Lucy miles  
Fulke Greville miles  
William Devereau miles  
John Huband miles  
Basil Fielding  
Henry Knowles  
Simon Arderne [Arden?]  
Francis Willoughby  
Clement Throckmorton  
George Digby  
Robert Middlemore  
Edward Egleamby [Ingleby?]  
William Boughton  
Anthony Shuckburge  
[f. 30r]  
Humphrey [P]etoe  
Leonard Damet  
Edward Holt  
John Shuckburgh  
Edward Boughton  
Thomas Dabridgcort

**Warwickshire 1577**

SP 12/121, f. 33r  
Nicholas Bacon  
William ld Burghley  
Henry earl Huntingdon  
Ambrose earl Warwick  
Robert earl Leicester  
Thomas bishop Coventry and  
Lichfield  
Henry ld Barkeley  
Henry ld Compton  
James Dyer miles Capitall Justic  
etc  
Francis Wyndham [etc]  
33v  
John Throckmorton miles Justic  
Cestr  
William Wigstone miles  
Thomas Lucye miles  
Fulke Greville miles  
William Devereux miles  
John Huband miles  
John Conwayne miles  
Francis Willoughby miles  
Basil Fieldinge  
Henry Knolles  
Simon Arderne [Arden?]  
George digbye  
Edward Egleambye  
Edmund Anderson  
William Boughton  
Anthony Shuckbourghe  
Humphrey Petoo  
Edward Arden [Arderne]  
Leonard Dannett  
Edward Holte  
Thomas Dabridgecourte  
Humphrey Ferrers  
John Shuckburghe  
Edward Boughton  
Arthur Gregorye  
John Higforde

**Warwickshire 1580**

SP 12/145, f. 43v  
Thomas Bromley  
William ld Burghley  
Henry earl Huntingdon ld  
president  
Ambrose earl Warwick M[aste]r  
ordnac s[ur]vay  
Robert earl Leicester M[astr]e  
Equo-  
Henry ld Berkley  
44r  
Henry D||s Compton  
Christopher Hatton miles  
vicecamer~  
James Dyer miles [etc]  
Thomas Meade unno Justic de  
lawe  
John Throckmarton miles Justic  
Ceste  
Thomas Lucye miles  
Fulke Greville miles  
William Deveraux miles  
John Huband miles  
John Conwayne miles  
Francis Willoughby miles  
Ed||- Anderson v[?] serviens S---  
ad legem  
Basil Fieldinge  
Henry Knollys  
Simon Arderne  
George Digbey  
Edward Eagleamby  
William Boughton  
Anthony Shuckborough  
Humphrey Petoe  
Leonard Dannett  
Edward Holte  
Thomas Dabridgcourt  
Humphrey Ferrers  
44v  
John Shuckborough  
Edward Boughton  
Thomas Leighe  
Bartholomew Tate  
Anthony Gregory  
Edward Fysher  
Clemet Fysher de Packington  
Thomas Knottesfoard  
John Higford  
Nicholas Buck

**Warwickshire 1582**

Lansdowne vol 35 f. 137v  
 Henry duc Barkley  
 Henry duc Compton  
 Christopher Hatton miles  
 vicecam~  
 Thomas Lucie miles  
 Fulke Greville miles  
 John Huband miles  
 John Conway miles  
 Francis Willoughby miles  
 Basil Fielding  
 Henry Knollys  
 Simon Arden [Andrew?]  
 George Digby  
 Edward Egliamby  
 William Boughton  
 Anthony Shuckborough  
 Humphrey Peto  
 Leonard Dannett  
 Edward Holt  
 Richard Middlemore  
 Thomas Dabridgecourt  
 Humphrey Ferrers  
 John Shucknorough  
 Edward Boughton  
 Bartholomew Tate  
 Edward Fisher  
 Clement Fisher [ann:de  
 Packington  
 John Higford  
 William Purefoye de carlecott

**Warwickshire 1608**

SP 14/33, f. 62v  
 Thomas duc Ellesmere  
 f. 63r  
 Thomas comes Dorset [stricken]  
 Robtus comes Saesbury  
 Henr comes North'ton  
 Willue Epus Coven' & lich  
 Gervaius Epus Wigorn  
 Henricus duc Berkeley  
 Willus duc Compton  
 Johes duc Harrington  
 Georgius duc Carews  
 Petrus Warburton mil unno  
 Justice de banco  
 Thomas ffoster mil alter Justic  
 de banco  
 Edwardus Dewreny Ar  
 Thomas leigh mil  
 Humfre fferrers mil mort  
 [stricken except for mort]  
 Edwardus Littleton mil  
 Edrus Grevill mil  
 Robtus Digbie mil  
 Willus Goodyer mil  
 Henricus Goodyer mil  
 Thomas Holte mil  
 63v  
 Johus fferrers mil  
 Willus fielding mil  
 Ricus Verney mil  
 Thomas lucy mil  
 Thomas Bewfoe mil  
 Johes Newdigate mil  
 Willus Somervill mil  
 Clemens Throckmorton mil  
 Clemens ffisher mil  
 Henricus Dymock mil  
 Thomas Spencer  
 Basilius fielding  
 Willus Combe  
 Barthus Hales  
 Robtus Burgin  
 Edrus Boughton  
 Johes Hickford  
 Thomas Wright

**Warwickshire 1632**

SP 16/212, f. 63v  
 Thomas Id Coventry  
 Richard Id Weston  
 Henry earl Manchester  
 Robert earl Essex  
 William earl Denbigh  
 Thomas bishop Coventry and  
 Lichfield  
 Henry earl Cary  
 Robert Id Brooke  
 William Id Craven  
 Francis Id Dunsmore  
 Richard Hutton mil unns Justic  
 de Bauro  
 George Croke mil unns Justic ad  
 plita  
 Thomas Leighe mil et Baronett  
 Walter Devoreux mil et Baronett  
 Thomas Puckering mil et  
 Baronett  
 64r  
 Thomas Holte mil et Baronett  
 Robert Fisher mil et Baronett  
 John Ferrers mil  
 Thomas Lucy mil  
 Thomas Bewsoe mil  
 William Browne mil  
 Greville Verney mil  
 Clement Throckmorton mil  
 Robert Lee mil  
 Simon Archer mil  
 Rowland Ward serviens ad  
 legem  
 Robert Arden  
 Basil Fielding  
 William Boughton  
 Thomas Dilke  
 George Devereux  
 64v  
 William Combe  
 Edward Stapleton  
 John Newdigate  
 John Lisle  
 Walter Overbury

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Stowe Manuscript 150

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Cokayne Family Papers  
Finch-Hatton Collection

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Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton DR422  
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Rice of Alderminster and Stratford upon Avon DR86  
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Stonyhurst College, Lancashire  
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Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick, Warwickshire  
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