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Henry Savile and the Elizabethan Court

Alexandra Gajda

Associate Professor and John Walsh Fellow and Tutor in History,
Jesus College, Department of History, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
alexandra.gajda@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Abstract

This essay examines Henry Savile's relationship with the Elizabethan and Jacobean court and the political culture of the period in which he lived. Particular attention is paid to the controversies surrounding Savile's alleged connection to Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of Essex and the court politics of the 1590s, and variant interpretations scholars have made of the political significance of his historical scholarship. Savile's Elizabethan literary remains demonstrate his persistent interest in the association between militarism and the arts of civil government, and the frequently problematic relationship of virtuous soldiers and statesmen to princely rulers. These concerns were shared by leading Elizabethan soldiers and statesmen, from the earl of Leicester, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, to the earl of Essex, and may have influenced the latter's growing alienation from queen and court in the late 1590s. A broader comparison of Savile's career with those of contemporary Merton scholars, however, confirms that he rejected the public careers pursued by other friends and colleagues. Savile's political connections seem to have served his scholarly ambitions rather than the other way around, and after the rebellion of the earl of Essex he seems to have retreated from life at court.

Keywords

Tacitus – Tacitism – court – Elizabeth I – Robert Devereux – 2nd earl of Essex – William Cecil – Lord Burghley

For John Aubrey,¹ Henry Savile's courtly graces were almost as striking as his intellectual fame: 'an extraordinary handsome and beautifull man', possessed of a superlative complexion, 'Queen Elizabeth favoured him much', appointing him to read 'Greeke and Politiques to her'. Royal approbation rendered his oppressive rule of the fellows of Merton irresistible: 'he was so great a favourite to the Queen, that there was no dealing with him'.² Anthony Wood continues this story of princely admiration: knighted by King James, Savile, mourning the death of his only son, declined his monarch's keen offers of advancement 'either in Church or State'.³ Nor was Savile's continental fame limited to scholars. Amongst the most prized possessions detailed in his will were rich gifts from foreign rulers (recipients of his edition of Chrysostom): 'one gould Chayne and a Medall given unto me by the States of the Lowe Countries', 'a Bason and Ewer with twoe standing potts all double guilt' from the Elector Palatine, 'abowte fortie poundes and an hundred Ausbourg [ie Augsburg] Crownes sent unto me by that Commonwealthe' and a 'gould Chayne with a Medall' from the 'Seignerie of Venice'.⁴

In Ben Jonson's brilliant epigram for Savile, he imagines his subject in a very different sort of relationship with the court. No ingratiating favourite, Jonson's Savile embodies the stoic self-control of the ideal statesman 'That liv'st from hope, from fear, from faction free' (18). Indeed, Jonson suggests that Savile, whose unsurpassed learning should qualify him to rule, has emulated Sallust's conscious withdrawal from public life:

Whose knowledge claimeth at the helm to stand,
But wisely thrust not forth a forward hand
No more than Sallust in the Roman state! (21–23)

Shunning the dangers of the court this Savile, in scholarly retreat, epitomizes Cicero's ideal historian:

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- 1 I would like to thank Jan Waszink for stimulating exchanges about Savile and Malcolm Smuts, Paul Hammer, Susan Brigden and Blair Worden for comments on drafts of this paper. Peter Davidson, Sarah Knight, Áron Orbán, Thomas Roebuck, Jane Stevenson and Luca Zenobi have given invaluable assistance with manuscripts.
 - 2 John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (London, 1949), 267.
 - 3 Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 2 vols (London, 1691), 1: 396.
 - 4 T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], PROB 11/139/389. Savile had asked his son-in-law Sir Dudley Carleton to procure the Venetian medal: TNA, SP 14/72, fol. 212r, Savile to Carleton, April 1613; SP 14/77, fol. 145r, Savile to Carleton, 14 August 1614.

... a man can speak of the intents,
The counsels, actions, orders, and events,
Of state, and censure them ... (31–33)⁵

Jonson's Savile is a Tacitus and a Sallust for modern times, endowed with the moral authority to write history.⁶

For many modern scholars Savile's warm relationship with his royal patrons has provoked less interest than the correspondences that the Jonsonian images conjure up, namely his entanglement with the dramatic court politics of the 1590s, his associations with the ill-fated Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and the political significance of his historical scholarship. In the aftermath of Essex's farcically anticlimactic rising of 1601, Savile's study at Eton was searched and his servants interrogated. His former student and constant friend, Henry Neville, was imprisoned and fined for misprision of treason, and Savile's protégée Henry Cuffe, who had left the academic cloister to serve Essex as secretary in 1595, died on the scaffold, scandalously protesting his sentence as a traitor.⁷ Was this the occasion that Savile was tempted—and declined—to 'thrust' out a 'forward hand'?

The nature of Savile's relationship with court politics has shaped various interpretations of his seminal translation of Tacitus's *Histories* and *Agricola* published in 1591, and his original composition that prefaces that work, *The Ende of Nero and the Beginning of Galba*. Following David Womersley's pioneering article, scholars have debated how to locate the edition—with its additional textual apparatus (dedications to queen and reader, annotations on the text, and separate discourse on Roman warfare)—within a particular political context, shaped by Savile's relationship with courtly patrons and the international

5 Ben Jonson, 'To Sir Henry Savile', *Epigrams*, ed. Colin Burrow in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, eds David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols (Cambridge, 2012), 5: 161–3. Jonson paraphrases Cicero's famous conception of the role of history, *De Oratore*, 2.15.62–3. The editors plausibly suggest that the epigram may have been written for an aborted reprint of Savile's 1591 edition of Tacitus. I am indebted to Blair Worden for discussion of this verse.

6 In the lines 'Although to write be lesser than to do,/It is the next deed, and a great one too.' (25–6), Jonson invokes Sallust, *The War with Cataline*, 3.1–2: '*Pulchrum est bene facere rei publicae, etiam bene dicere haud absurdum est* (It is glorious to serve the republic well with deeds, even to do so with words is not at all worthless)'.

7 For Neville's and Cuffe's roles in Essex's rising see P. E. J. Hammer, 'Cuffe [Cuff], Henry, 1562/3–1601', *ODNB*; Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford, 2012), 56–60.

politics of the early 1590s.⁸ Savile has been described as drawn into a wider network of scholarly advisors and secretaries of the earl of Essex (including, of course, Henry Cuffe), which stridently sought to fashion the earl's public image as both a military hero and a cerebral privy councilor, whose advocacy of the political utility of reading history, particularly the works of Tacitus, established his credentials for statesmanship.⁹ Savile's edition of Tacitus was first associated with this 'Essex connection' by Ben Jonson himself, who notoriously attributed to Essex authorship of the anonymous preface 'A. B. To the Reader', added to the printed edition of the translation in 1591.¹⁰ Finally, attempts have been made to define what these lessons of history—'patternes either to followe or to flye' in the words of the anonymous preface—might have meant for Essex and his contemporaries, as they put into operation their claims to understand the world of late Elizabethan politics through historical paradigms.¹¹

In important recent articles, Jan Waszink, Mordechai Feingold, and John-Mark Philo have queried the nature of Savile's assumed relationship with Essex, arguing that he occupied other patronage networks and assumed different political and scholarly preoccupations to those described by historians focusing on the earl and his circle. As scholars have observed, Essex—and those who heaped praise on him—impressed a militarist and chivalric accent on traditional humanist conceptions of active citizenship.¹² For Waszink, Savile's Tacitism

8 David Womersley, 'Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts', *Review of English Studies* 42 (1991), 313–342; Paulina Kewes, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus and the Politics of Roman History in Late Elizabethan England', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74 (2011), 515–51; Jan Waszink, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus and the English Role on the Continent: Leicester, Hotman, Lipsius', *History of European Ideas* 42 (2016), 303–319; Mordechai Feingold, 'Scholarship and Politics: Henry Savile's Tacitus and the Essex Connection', *The Review of English Studies* 67 (2016), 855–874. John-Mark Philo has recently attributed a set of Latin and Italian translations of Savile's commentaries on Tacitus in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana to the collaborative endeavours of Henry Cuffe and Gian Vincenzo Pinelli during Cuffe's sojourn in Padua in 1597–8: John-Mark Philo, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus in Italy', *Renaissance Studies* 32 (2018), 687–707.

9 P. E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge, 1999), 87, 196, 295, 302–3, 335–6, 401; idem., 'The Uses of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585–1601', *English Historical Review* 109 (1994), 26–51. These interpretations draw on the seminal article by Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 30–78.

10 *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, eds Bevington et al., 5: 377.

11 Gajda, *The Earl of Essex*, 216–254; Blair Worden, 'Historians and Poets', in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. Paulina Kewes (San Marino CA, 2006), 69–90.

12 Gajda, *Earl of Essex*, 216–223.

followed the 'newer' humanism of Justus Lipsius as defined by Richard Tuck, which concerned itself with the *prudentia* of the princely ruler and reason of state, the political conduct which might require rulers to suspend conventional ethical and legal norms to establish strong government over a stable realm. The early patronage of the earl of Leicester, through whom Savile (and his brother Thomas) may have become acquainted with Lipsius, was the most vital relationship for understanding Savile's political outlook in the early 1590s.¹³

Feingold instead emphasises Savile's connections with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, but he also follows Aubrey's direction in arguing that Savile's major political relationship in the 1580s and 1590s was with the queen, whose intervention secured him the provostship of Eton in May 1596, and to whom the edition of Tacitus and his edition of medieval chronicles—*Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam praecipui ...* (1596)—were dedicated.¹⁴ John-Mark Philo's recent extraordinary discovery of Elizabeth I's own translation of the first book of the *Annals* suggests that Savile, as her tutor in Greek, may have well nurtured the queen's own study of Tacitus.¹⁵ One might develop this theme into Savile's post-Elizabethan career, pointing to King James's alleged enthusiasm for Savile's promotion, and the works Savile produced with royal encouragement in the early seventeenth century, his 'Historicall Collections' on James's proposed union of the British Isles, his contributions to the Authorized Version of the Bible and, at one remove, even his edition of Thomas Bradwardine's treatise against the Pelagians, published at the behest of George Abbott, archbishop of Canterbury, in 1618.¹⁶ Finally, as Robert Goulding has shown, the pioneering achievements of Savile's earlier career were in *mathematical* rather than *civil* history; his literary and theological interests never suppressed his life-long aim to resurrect and transform the study of mathematics in England.¹⁷

In light of these controversies, this essay attempts a reassessment of Savile's relationship with the Elizabethan and Jacobean court and the political culture of the period in which he lived. A fresh assessment of the 'Essex connection'

13 Waszink, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus'; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (Cambridge, 1993). Both Henry and Thomas Savile's notes appear on the Bodleian manuscript of the printer's copy of the translation, Bod[leian] L[ibrary], MS Eng. Hist. d. 240, discussed by John-Mark Philo in his contribution to this special issue.

14 Feingold, 'Essex Connection'.

15 John-Mark Philo, 'Elizabeth I's Translation of Tacitus: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 683', *Review of English Studies* 71 (2020), 44–73.

16 Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei, contra Pelagium, et De virtute causarum, ad suos Mertonenses, libri tres*, ed. Henry Savile (Oxford, 1618).

17 R. D. Goulding, 'Savile, Sir Henry, 1549–1522', *ODNB*; idem., *Defending Hypatia: Ramus, Savile, and the Renaissance Rediscovery of Mathematical History* (Dordrecht, 2010).

and the court politics of the 1590s is important to this story, but this essay assesses Savile's career in wider chronological, social, and political perspectives. A comparison of his career with those of contemporary Merton scholars confirms that Savile rejected a path to public life broached by other friends and colleagues: his courtly connections seem to have served his scholarly ambitions rather than the other way round.

Nevertheless, a reappraisal of a variety of Savile's remains does demonstrate distinct political inflections within his scholarly interests from the mid-1570s, when the earl of Leicester appears to have been a significant patron, and during the later reign of Elizabeth. As he came of age during the post-reformation wars of religion, the themes of military endeavour and organisation were a preoccupation of Savile's literary remains—his extant speeches, commentaries on classical authors, and the information he gathered on foreign states while touring the continent. So too was the topos of the relationship of leading soldiers and statesmen to princely rulers, the honour due to both, and the tensions that might emerge between rulers and their ambitious and virtuous subjects. These were concerns acutely germane to two generations of Elizabethan statesman, reflecting the militarization of late Elizabethan society in the war against Spain and the more endemic conditions of conflict in Ireland, as well more abstract anxieties about the character of military leadership under a female monarch, whose gender prohibited her own active participation in feats of arms. Savile's political reflections mirror the political concerns of his range of courtly patrons, of the queen, *and* her greater subjects.

It is also important to distinguish between Savile's own perspectives on court, camp, and polity (as far as they can be determined) and the impact they might have had on those who read and interpreted his more accessible publications. In other words, how Savile read his Tacitus, how the queen read her Tacitus, and Essex read (Savile's?) Tacitus are distinct enquiries. Furthermore, Savile's non-mathematical writings are fragmented and ambiguous: it would be wrong to ascribe to him consistency or coherence as a writer within any one particular tradition of political thought. In his printed dedicatory epistles to the queen, Savile laments that the English—possessed of such a glorious history—lack a great historian for their own time.¹⁸ For all Jonson's flattering exhortation, this was a mantle Savile conspicuously shunned.

18 'To Her Most Sacred Majesty', in *The ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba. Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The Life of Agricola* (Oxford, 1591), sig. ¶ 2v; 'Serenissimae Potentissimaeque Principi Elizabethae, Angliae, Francia, & Hiberniae Reginae, &c.', in *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores*, ¶ iir-v. Feingold notes that Savile's name is not on the title page of the Tacitus, merely appended to the dedication; the same is true of the *Scriptores*

I

Fellowship of an Oxford or Cambridge college launched public careers for numerous Elizabethan scholars, including many of Savile's immediate contemporaries, colleagues, and friends at Merton. Both of Savile's predecessors as warden of Merton, John Man (warden 1562–1569) and Thomas Bickley (warden 1569–1586), achieved high office in church and state: Man was appointed dean of Gloucester (1566) on his selection as resident ambassador to Spain between 1566–1568; Bickley resigned as warden in 1586 at his consecration as bishop of Chichester.¹⁹

For Savile's peers at Merton, fellowship of the college enabled advancement to various types of public employment. Expertise in languages made scholars peculiarly useful as diplomats and secretaries, and the earl of Leicester, chancellor of Oxford from 1564, provided the essential patronage link between Merton fellows and the royal court. Arthur Atye, elected fellow in the same year as Savile, studied civil law and had accompanied Man on his embassy to Madrid. His employment as Leicester's secretary from around 1580 overlapped with a long turn as public orator of the university (1572–1582), and principal of St Alban Hall (1568–1581). Notably proficient in Spanish, Atye performed political translations for Anthony Bacon and the earl of Essex in the mid-1590s.²⁰ Knighted just before his death in 1604, he named Savile, his erstwhile colleague and life-long friend, an overseer of his will.²¹ Most famous was the career of Thomas Bodley, with whom Savile is more intimately linked. Bodley may also have come to the notice of Leicester during his period as junior proctor, when he deputized as public orator for Atye; like Atye, his own diplomatic career commenced during his fellowship of Merton. Given leave to travel on the continent between 1576–1580

and does not undermine the notion that Savile was responsible for the publication of either work (see discussions by Philo and Roebuck of each work respectively in this special issue).

19 G. H. Martin and J. R. L. Highfield, *A History of Merton College, Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), 155–7; John M. Fletcher, ed., *Registrum Annalium Collegii Mertonensis, 1567–1603* (Oxford, 1976), 12–13, 19–21.

20 Alexandra Gajda, 'The State of Christendom: History, Political Thought and the Essex Circle', *Historical Research* 81 (2008), 423–446.

21 <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/atye-sir-arthur-1542-1604>; Fletcher, *Registrum*, 15. For Atye's translations for Essex see Gustav Ungerer, *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England. The Correspondence of Antonio Pérez's Exile*, 2 vols (1974–1976), 2: 254–5; Gajda, *Earl of Essex*, 80–82 and n. 70, 86–89. His will is TNA, PROB 11/105/65.

(Savile moved into his chamber), Bodley performed diplomatic business for the French ambassador while on tour and was appointed gentleman usher to Elizabeth in 1583: Leicester and Walsingham were his major patrons on the privy council. Bodley's first formal mission to Denmark and Brunswick, between April and July 1585, occurred before he formally renounced his fellowship – *uxoratus* – in 1587.²²

More broadly, Bodley's travels proceeded along a path popularized for English gentlemen by Philip Sidney, whereby aspiring gentlemen viewed continental travel as a means of furthering their political education through the development of languages, political and academic contacts, and the observational study of other states and societies. Such skills were deemed useful to further careers as courtiers, diplomats, and statesmen.²³ Strikingly, three manuscript copies name Henry Savile as the author of the first of three famous letters of travel advice to the earl of Rutland written in 1595, which were most commonly attributed to the earl of Essex, and scribally circulated to enhance Essex's reputation as a mentor to a new generation of nobles.²⁴

Did Savile's travel on the continent between 1578 and 1585 suggest that he shared the political ambitions of his contemporaries? His sometime companions—George Carew, Henry Neville, and Philip Sidney's younger brother, Robert—were certainly travelling for the public and courtly advantages that a cosmopolitan education could bring. Philip Sidney's famous educational instruction to his brother Robert on the utility of travel recommends the tutelage of Savile—'an excellent Man'—on a tour explicitly intended to advance his career: 'if yow list passe good exercises betwixt yow and Mr Neuell, there

22 W. H. Clennell, 'Bodley, Sir Thomas (1545–1613)', *ODNB*; Fletcher, *Registrum*, 88, 91, 180, 217.

23 Lisa Jardine and William H. Sherman, 'Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in late Elizabethan England', in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), 102–24; P. E. J. Hammer, 'Letters of Travel Advice from the Earl of Essex to the Earl of Rutland: Some Comments', *Philological Quarterly* 74 (1995), 317–325.

24 Savile is the attributed author of the copy at B[ritish] L[ibrary], Egerton MS 2262, fols 1r–4v; the letter is attributed to 'H.S.' on copies in the Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a. 180, fols 18v–24v and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office, Stratford-upon-Avon, MS ER 93/1, fols [5]r–[1]v. The most recent scrutiny of these texts, by Alan Stewart, concludes that the first of the letters was almost certainly composed by Francis Bacon, and all three were meant to be circulated in Essex's name: 'Letters of Advice to the Earl of Rutland (1595)', in *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Vol. 1: Early Writings, 1584–1596*, ed. Alan Stewart (Oxford, 2012), 607–674.

is greate expectation of yow both'.²⁵ Diplomacy played a dominant role in the subsequent careers of both Neville and Carew.²⁶

Savile, however, did not follow in the footsteps of his Mertonian colleagues or travelling companions, becoming neither a secretary nor a diplomat. In the words of Robert Goulding, Savile's tour appears to have had 'an altogether more serious purpose', i.e., a scholarly and scientific end.²⁷ Thanks to the intricate reconstructions of Feingold and R. B. Todd, we have an itinerary of Savile's visits to the libraries, academic institutions and scholars of Germany, Bohemia, Italy, and Poland. At Vienna in July 1581, Carew and Savile jointly copied a manuscript of the astronomer Geminus.²⁸

But if his predominant interests were mathematical and scientific, matters of state and court were not an alien concern to Savile before the 1590s. In his variations delivered in college (a requirement of Merton scholars after incepting MA) one of Savile's topics was in political philosophy: 'Democratia est optimus status reipublicae (democracy is the best state of commonwealth)'.²⁹ And as with his fellow Mertonians, Savile was certainly known to Leicester prior to his departure for the continent. It seems likely that Leicester, strenuously concerned to tighten his control of the university's governance, would have approved Savile's appointment as junior proctor in 1575, which office he held until 1577, a position which would have placed Savile in regular contact with the notoriously interventionist chancellor.³⁰ Meanwhile, Leicester made several direct interventions in the life of Savile's college. In 1585, after Savile's return from the continent, Leicester appears to have pressured the reluctant Merton scholars to supplement the salary of his protégé Alberico Gentili, the

25 R. B. Todd, 'Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), 439–444; Mordechai Feingold, *The Mathematician's Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1984), 124–133; A. L. Rowse, *Raleigh and the Throckmortons* (London, 1962), 84, 88; Roger Kuin, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, 2 vols (Oxford, 2012), 2: 1006. Sidney may have known Savile when he studied at Christ Church, Oxford, between 1568 and 1571. Sir Henry Sidney had written to his son Robert on 25 March 1579, with glowing praise of the 'syngular Vertues' of both Neville and Savile: A. Collins, ed., *Letters and Memorials of State*, 2 vols (London, 1746), 1: 246.

26 Mark Greengrass, 'Neville, Sir Henry (1561/2–1615)', *ODNB*; W. J. Jones, 'Carew, Sir George, c. 1556–1612', *ODNB*.

27 Goulding, 'Savile, Sir Henry'.

28 Todd, 'Henry and Thomas Savile', 400.

29 Fletcher, *Registrum*, 50. The variations were delivered on 28 February 1573.

30 Penry Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford: State, Church and University', in *The History of the University of Oxford. Volume III. The Collegiate University*, ed. James McConica (Oxford, 1986), 397–440.

exiled Protestant civilian, who had been appointed professor of Roman law in March 1581.³¹ Thomas Savile, by this point also a fellow of Merton, wrote admiringly of Gentili to William Camden, and was intimate with Leicester's client Jean Hotman, also resident in Oxford in the early 1580s.³²

The Bodleian Library contains two of the elder Savile's orations delivered in the year he was appointed proctor, which are humanist and philosophical in subject matter and style and assume some of the preoccupations of his later classical scholarship. One, delivered on 19 March 1576, argued for the proposition that events come about by chance and fortune—'Aliquid fieri casu & fortuna'—a response to Merton fellow Thomas Tatum's MA variations opposing that thesis.³³ A slightly earlier oration, delivered on 11 July 1575, is titled 'Res bellicas ciuilibus antefendas esse (martial affairs should be preferred before civil matters)'. The occasion for the delivery of the oration is obscure, the heading of the text gnomically describing the speech as delivered 'In concilijs', 'in council'.³⁴ That this body included statesmen and lawyers as well as scholars is suggested by Savile's description of himself as a mere academic, with no practical experience of war, in contrast to his audience of men engaged in the perfection of knowledge through their employment in the law, at the royal court, and with ancient books.³⁵

From an elaborate mesh of quotations and extracts from classical authors—Pliny the Younger, Plutarch, Homer, Seneca, Plautus, Terence, and Virgil—Savile argues *contrary* to the famous Ciceronian maxim 'cedant arma togae: concedat laurea linguae (let arms give way to the toga, yield laurels to speech)' (Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1, 22), asserting that military prowess is more essential than the arts of civil government in upholding and bringing glory to the commonwealth. In the first portion of the oration Savile weaves together examples of the honour bestowed in the ancient world on military virtue,

31 Fletcher, *Registrum*, 168–9, 177.

32 Thomas Savile to William Camden, 15 July [1580?] and 14 August 1581, in *V. Cl. Gulielmi Camdeni et Illustrium Virorum ad G. Camdenum Epistolae*, ed. Thomas Smith (London, 1691), 8, 17; Waszink, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus'.

33 Bod[leian Library] MS e. Mus 55, fols 71r–72v: see the record of Tatum's variation on the subject, 'Nihil fit fortuna neque casu': Fletcher, *Registrum*, 71, also dated 19 March 1575.

34 Bod. MS e. Mus 55, fols 67r–69r. The speech is taken from a collection of documents owned by Robert Clay, and which includes materials relating both to the earl of Essex and to Savile.

35 'Illud etiam perincomode accidit, quod mihi pro imperatoria virtute pro omnique re militari homini accademico, qui numquam hostem, numquam castra vidissem, dicendum sit, apud eos quorum omne curriculum in doctrina in foro, in curia, in his nostris interioribus literis elaboratum est ...', Bod. MS e. Mus 55, fol. 67r.

citing Themistocles' desire to emulate the fame of Achilles rather than that of Homer, and Demosthenes's preference to swear an oath on the lives of the dead combatants of Marathon instead of those of Socrates or Plato. Savile then proceeds to elaborate a more abstract account of the role of the military in a thriving state, critically describing ancient Athens and modern Venice as *civitates* weakened through their obsessive veneration of civic politics over the arts of war: 'All civil engagements, all our most distinguished studies, lie under the protection and tutelage of military virtue'.³⁶

This ironic display of erudition to advance the preeminence of militarism over rhetoric culminates in Savile's affirmation of the necessary interdependence of camp and court: like a skilfully-built house, whose structural soundness depends on the placement of every stone, 'the commonwealth in which civil and military aspects are blended by temperance and expertise, easily maintains its influence'.³⁷ It is the duty, though, of the magistrate (*senator*) and the philosopher to allow the achievement of the soldier to be properly honoured: the public glory bestowed on military achievement in the triumphs, ovations, and crownings of the Roman republic should be emulated in every state.

Savile's treatment of militarism displays rhetorical skill and wit rather than conceptual originality. But he would revisit these themes—the role of fortune in human affairs, the relationship between practitioners of martial and philosophical/political arts in the commonwealth, and the correct acknowledgment of military honour—in his later oratory and writings. The stock of authors employed in the speech on militarism does not include Roman historians, but Savile's citations from Virgil prefigure a chapter of reflections on the *Aeneid* in his highly idiosyncratic 'Historicall Collections' on the Jacobean union in 1604, where the epic poem is treated as a factual source for Rome's early history.³⁸ If we wish to speculate on contemporary resonance, praise of military men would have done little to displease the chancellor of the university, whose ambition to lead the queen into the Netherlands conflict—in the defence of Protestant liberty at home as well as abroad—would emerge publicly the following year.

36 'Latentque omnes urbanae res et haec nostra praeclara studia in praesidio ac tutela bellicae virtutis', *ibid.*, fol. 68r-v.

37 'sic Respublica ex militaris urbanaeque rei temperatione modicè et scienter confusa sua momenta facile sustinet ...', *ibid.*, fol. 69r.

38 'Chapter 9 'A form of union gathered out of Virgil' and Chapter 10, 'Five principall points observed out of these verses in Virgil', in Savile, 'Historicall Collections', in *The Jacobean Union: Six Tracts of 1604*, eds Bruce R. Galloway and Brian P. Levack (Edinburgh, 1985), 198–200.

Matters of state formed part of Savile's concerns during his continental tour, even if his chief aims as a traveller were the recovery of mathematical manuscripts. Tutelage of his ambitious companions presumably demanded such engagement. Philip Sidney commended Savile's expertise in mathematics to his brother Robert, but his educational advice assumes Savile's role as a tutor in his brother's *political* education: for 'Politick Matters' Robert is to record his observations from important authors in a '*Table of Remembrance*', which 'Mr Sauell will with ease helpe yow to sett downe'.³⁹

Travel itself was intended to furnish young men with the same knowledge of 'Politick Matters' as they might find in works of history. As Anthony Grafton has observed, the *ars peregrinandi* and *ars historica* were sibling genres of scholarly advice literature, both commending the prudential knowledge that could be obtained from studying different societies across space and time.⁴⁰ Savile's surviving commonplace-book, begun during his sojourn in Venice in 1581 and perhaps completed after his return to England, is itself an example of a compilation of the type of observational knowledge that Philip Sidney was enjoining on his younger brother.⁴¹ Drawing extensively on Venetian *relazioni*, Savile had intended to take a series of notes on the Persian and Ottoman Empires, of Tartary and Muscovy, Denmark, Sweden, and Poland-Lithuania, ranging over their political institutions, military organization and diplomacy, their religion, geography, laws, and social customs. The volume is unevenly filled, and pages intended for the Scandinavian kingdoms are blank, while the densest series of notes covers the Persians, Ottomans, and the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania. Savile, who studied for six months in Wrocław with the Hungarian scholar Andreas Dudith, pays particular attention to the recent transformation of Poland-Lithuania into an elective and limited monarchy, describing the nobility's control over the *sejm* and the kingdom's toleration of plural Christianities.⁴²

The whole is characteristic of a traveller with ambitions for political knowledge. George Carew, who was Savile's travelling companion, wrote his own discourses on foreign states, also consciously modelling them on Venetian

39 Kuin, *Correspondence*, 2: 1008.

40 Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2012), 200.

41 M[erton] C[ollege] L[ibrary], MS Q.1.10; J. R. L. Highfield, 'An Autograph Manuscript Commonplace Book of Sir Henry Savile', *Bodleian Library Record* 7 (1963), 73–83. The commonplace book is largely in Italian, but Savile occasionally slips into English, Latin, French and Greek.

42 The sections on Persia are at 8r–12r; on the Ottomans, 13r–23v; Poland, 31r–37v: for Savile's sources see Highfield, 'Autograph Manuscript', 75–8.

relations.⁴³ It is also tempting to imagine the topical relevance of Savile's researches for English policy-makers: the detailed notes on the structure and ceremonial of the court and the military powers and alliances of the Safavids and Ottomans might be thought to have obvious utility for a crown which dispatched its first formal embassy to the Ottoman sultan in November 1582. The transformation of Poland-Lithuania into an elective monarchy was of more than passing interest to the English, who were thinking ingeniously about constitutional experiments involving parliament to solve their own potential succession crisis. Decades later, Savile would return to analyse the incorporation of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth as a species of constitutional fusion in his 1604 tract on the Jacobean Union.⁴⁴ The relations also reflect suggestively on the relationship between personal monarchy and state power: the Safavid and Ottoman rulers are described as effeminate unwarlike tyrants, sheltered by concubines and eunuchs in the depths of corrupt and exotic courts—critiques which would have resonated with appraisals of Elizabeth's rule, which frequently assumed a gendered perspective.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Savile's observations do not suggest that these weak individual monarchs hindered the existence of powerful states. The naval and military organization of each empire (including, of course, the famous 'gianizzeri'—janissaries—of the Ottomans) is described in considerable depth, as are the fiscal structures that underpinned military power in each realm.⁴⁶

Whatever the purpose of the commonplace book, it is clear that Savile's connections with leading English statesmen bore him considerable advantage. His appointment as warden of Merton in 1585 came with strong endorsement from the highest authorities: the college register records the intercession of William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary. The privy council's intervention in the appointment of heads of house—even in contravention of the statutory electoral processes of individual colleges—was a very common event in Elizabethan Oxford, reflecting the crown's concern to stamp

43 G. Carew, 'A Relation of the State of France', *An Historical View of the Negotiations Between the Courts of England, France, and Brussels, from the Year 1592 to 1617*, ed. T. Birch (London, 1749), 413–529.

44 Sebastian Sobceki, 'John Peyton's A Relation of the State of Polonia and the Accession of King James I, 1598–1603', *The English Historical Review* 129 (2014), 1079–1097; Savile, 'Historicall Collections', 218–222.

45 From a huge literature see in particular A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558–1585* (Cambridge, 1999); Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016).

46 MCL, MS Q.1.10, fols 17r–v; 18v–19v.

out popery in the reformed university.⁴⁷ Even so, the heavyweight endorsement of Savile was particularly assertive, and presumably also reflected 'her majestyes inclination'.⁴⁸

Wood writes that on his return from the continent and before election as warden, Savile was appointed the queen's tutor in Greek.⁴⁹ The college register and the direction of his correspondence from the late 1580s onwards indicate that Savile was frequently absent from Oxford, spending much of his time in London (he had lodgings at Westminster) and, after his election as provost in 1596, at Eton. The nature of Savile's duties as Elizabeth's 'tutor' (if he enjoyed such a formal title) are rather opaque, but he paid tribute to their shared interests in philosophy and history.⁵⁰ Flattering the queen in an oration in 1592, Savile knowingly jokes that in her wise interpretation of Plato and Aristotle, Elizabeth herself is the 'divine' tutor in philosophy to her subjects. The dedication of his Tacitus edition explains that this venture to publish was inspired by the queen's own great esteem for the Roman historian, Elizabeth's 'admirable compositions' and 'more rare and excellent translations of Histories', which we now know included her own translation of book one of the *Annals*.⁵¹

II

The only extended image we have of Savile in the company of the court or his prince, however, comes not from Whitehall or any of the royal palaces, but from the visit of the court to Oxford, on Elizabeth's second progress to the university in September 1592.⁵² Leading Merton scholars dominated the public ceremonial and entertainments: Henry Cuffe, then regius professor of Greek,

47 Williams, 'Elizabethan Oxford', 397–440.

48 Fletcher, *Registrum*, 187–196.

49 Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 1: 395.

50 After the Essex rising, Savile's servant was quizzed about whether her master styled himself 'the Queenes scholler': CP 104/26 II.

51 Sarah Knight, trans., 'Speech Delivered at Oxford, in the Year 1592, on 23 September, in the Presence of Queen Elizabeth' in *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources. Vol. 3, 1579–1595*, eds Jayne Elizabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, Gabriel Heaton, Elizabeth Clarke, Sarah Knight and Faith Eales (Oxford, 2015), 656; Savile 'To Her Most Sacred Majesty', in *The ende of Nero*, sig. ¶ 2r; Philo, 'Elizabeth I's Translation of Tacitus'.

52 All previous texts of this event have been superseded by the edition of Sarah Knight, 'Queen Elizabeth's Second Visit to the University of Oxford, 22–28 September 1592' in *Nichols's Progresses ... Vol. 3*, eds Archer et al., 622–679.

made an oration to Elizabeth at Carfax, while the Merton fellow and *praelector grammaticus* George Carleton (cousin of Savile's future son-in-law Dudley Carleton) may have delivered a laudatory poem, *Carmen Panegyricum*, to the queen.⁵³ On 23 September Thomas Savile, as senior proctor, presided over the debates in St Mary's church, where Thomas Smith, the university orator, an intimate of Savile and Essex's chief secretary propounded on the themes 'An anima sit in se praestantior anima alterius' (whether the mind of one man be superior to the mind of another), and 'An ob mundi senectam homines minus sunt heroici nunc quam olim (whether, on account of the age of the world, men today are less heroic than they once were)'.⁵⁴ Henry Savile determined these disputations, concluding with an oration of his own to Elizabeth. On 25 September, Merton hosted a great dinner for sixty men, privy councillors, and other nobles who had come to Oxford in Elizabeth's train, and who were treated to more disputations on political philosophy. With Thomas Savile moderating, Cuffe propounded on the Machiavellian proposition 'An dissentiones Ciuium sint reipublicae vtilis (whether civil disturbances might be useful to the commonwealth)'.⁵⁵

The main purpose of the queen's visit may have been to sooth tensions over the recent elevation of Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, whose election as chancellor she had supported against the ambitions of the earl of Essex to succeed to the post. Savile and the Merton scholars do not appear to have supported Essex's abortive candidacy for the chancellorship, and it is unclear whether or not the earl himself was present at the Oxford visit.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, England's recent military history was a leitmotif of the academic celebrations, as was

53 Ibid., 655–664.

54 See the main eye-witness account of Philip Stringer in Knight, ed., 'Queen Elizabeth's Second Visit to the University of Oxford', 630–639. In a letter of Antonio Pérez to Smith he describes meeting Savile as a particular joy because of his friendship with Smith: 'Sabellum tuum saluere jubeo millies & amplius & quia tuus amicus est': Ungerer, *Spaniard*, 1: 186.

55 Stringer's account is corroborated by that in the Merton Register: Fletcher, *Registrum*, 228.

56 Essex is not named as present in any of the eye-witness narrative accounts of the visit, and he was not amongst the lists of nobles created MA on 27 November, although some of his clients, Sir John Wingfield, and Sir Thomas Coningsby, were: see Knight, ed., 'List of Those Awarded the MA Degree on 27 September 1592', in *Nichols's Progresses ... Vol. 3*, eds Archer et al., 674–5. However, the title of John Harington's epigram on the lecture of John Rainolds at the queen's visit is entitled 'Of learning nothing at a Lecture, vpon occasion of Dr. Reynolds at Oxford, afore my Lord of Essex, and diuers Ladies and Courtiers, at the Queenes last beeing there ...', which implies that Essex was present for at least some of the events: Norman Egbert McLure, ed., *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington* (New York, 1977), 152–153. I am indebted to Paul Hammer for this reference.

commendation of the earl's recent chivalric exploits leading English troops in Northern France. If Sarah Knight has correctly dated George Carleton's *Carmen Panegyricum* to this occasion, too, the visit inspired Carleton to compose a poem lavishing praise on Elizabeth as the saviour of Christendom, and the 'sword of Devereux' as her particular instrument of conquest.⁵⁷ (Carleton seems to have planned to write an epic poem on Essex's life: the first book of his *Devoraxeidōs*, mercifully unfinished, was published with the *Carmen Panegyricum* on the accession of James in 1603, and dedicated to Sir Henry Neville.⁵⁸) And at the Merton dinner, before the privy councillors removed to a private meeting, Thomas Savile acclaimed leading dignitaries: the lord treasurer, the lord admiral and lord chamberlain, and 'lastly fell into Comendacion of the Earl of Essex his honorable valiant service in the Low Countreys in Portugall & in France ...'.⁵⁹ This was a striking concentration of praise on Essex, who did not yet hold a position on the privy council or any major office of state.

Savile's extended contribution, his speech before Elizabeth, elaborated on themes he had treated in his 1575 oration on the necessity of military men to the commonwealth. His oration explored 'Rei militaris, & philosophiæ studia posse in republica unà vigere (Whether the study of military matters and philosophy can thrive in one state)' and 'Astrologiam iudiciariam è ciuitate benè moratâ esse exterminandam (Whether judicial astrology should be eradicated from a well-moderated state)'.⁶⁰ It is worth exploring the oration in some depth as it is an original composition, and because scholars have contested the extent to which the martial theme has congruence with Essex's nascent self-fashioning as a man excelling in arms and letters ('rei militaris, & philosophia studia'), or was intended to reflect on *Elizabeth's* achievement.⁶¹ Unlike the method adopted in the 1575 oration, Savile does not structure his argument through literary quotation: instead he theorizes a historical account of the relationship between war and philosophy in the state in a framework that will flatter his royal audience. Describing the three natural ages of the state as

57 Carleton, *Carmen Panegyricum*, ed. and trans., Knight, in *Nichols's Progresses*, Vol. 3., eds Archer et al., 673–4.

58 Carleton, *Heroici Characteres* (Oxford, 1603), sigs. A2r–A3r, 1–9, 18–42.

59 Knight, 'Queen Elizabeth's Second Visit to the University', 636.

60 Knight has published both the Latin original, 'Oratio Habita Oxonij, anno 1592 ... coram Regina Elizabetha', and her own translation in *Nichols's Progresses ... Vol. 3*, eds Archer et al., 640–664, which I draw on here. Savile's commentary on the first book of Tacitus's *Histories* included a long note on astrology: 'Annotations on the First Book of Tacitus' in Savile, ed., *Ende of Nero*, 12 (the annotations are separately paginated, commencing at sig. Aair).

61 Feingold, 'Essex Connection', 869–70; Hammer, *Polarisation*, 302–3, 307–8; Gajda, *Earl of Essex*, 221–2.

analogous to the tripartite human life-cycle, Savile identifies each epoch with the predominance of particular arts. The first age produces the arts of necessity: agriculture, basic architecture, and, especially, the arts of war. In a second age, of peace and 'high-minded' leisure, physical exercise, music, and philosophy thrive; in the third age, of luxury, arts that appeal to the senses will dominate, although all qualities must exist in variant mixtures at different times.

While not a theory of Polybian anacyclosis, Savile unsurprisingly defines the state at its healthiest in its second era, when philosophy and the art of war blossom together, the arts of peace requiring military protection to flourish. Savile suggests that the past few centuries of English history correspond to the golden age of Roman achievement, from the defeat of Hannibal to the death of Augustus: the present queen's actions on sea and land have secured the liberty of Christendom against Spanish tyranny. He is, however, contradictory on whether excellence in arms and philosophy can co-exist in the same *individuals*, as Essex's admirers claimed. On the one hand Plato's tripartite soul, of reason, choler, and desire, inhabits a single body, directing the variant character traits of individual actors. But to combine moral, intellectual, and martial virtues with equal excellence, he argues, is enormously difficult. In particular, martial prowess is unnecessary for a ruler whose business it is to be steeped (as Elizabeth is) in moral and political philosophy. Savile follows Aristotle in arguing that a state is a plurality, where the admixture of individuals (philosophers or soldiers) shape its particular quality.

Savile deftly combines glorification of the masculine military achievement that has seen England withstand Spanish tyranny with a definition of royal prudence compatible with Lipsius's conception of princely authority, where the monarch's role is to exert control over a strong military establishment, rather than to embody martial virtues through the monarch's own actions and the pursuit of personal glory. This recalls his earlier account of the rule of weak Ottoman and Safavid rulers over great empires, as well as his veneration of the essential role of the arts of war in a settled commonwealth. Of course, in an oration in praise of the queen Savile could hardly argue differently, as Elizabeth's gender prohibited her from performing chivalric feats of arms and necessitated the delegation of all military operations to her subjects. And earlier in the oration Savile *does* praise individuals of extraordinary ability—Pericles, Thucydides, Xenophon, and the counsellor Dion, who 'excelled in both roles'—embodying martial and philosophical brilliance in service of their own state. The role of such exceptional individuals under a princely ruler, and the dynamic of that relationship, is not a theme he chooses to dwell upon on this occasion. Instead, Savile skilfully flatters a hybrid audience: his mistress, the queen, her greater subjects, and 'high-minded' university scholars.

The record of the nobles' dinner at Merton also suggests that, despite the death of Leicester, Savile enjoyed connections with the court outside of his personal relationship with Elizabeth. As far as any political aims can be discerned, the greatest demand Savile made on these courtly contacts before Elizabeth's death was invoked in his improbable candidature for the provostship of Eton. Savile sensibly cultivated warm relations with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and his son Robert.⁶² On 17 March 1594, he petitioned Robert Cecil for an undefined office for Thomas Masters, Savile's close ally as subwarden at Merton.⁶³ When he lobbied for the Eton provostship, Savile's plea for intercession flattered Robert that he had 'made speciall choyce of youre selfe and your honourable fathere, as chiefest protectors and patrons of my cause'.⁶⁴ Savile's celebrated expertise on Roman war, made famous through his *View of Certaine Militar Matters*, was invoked by Burghley, for whom he produced another tract on the wages and provisioning of the Roman army.⁶⁵

We must also rehearse Savile's much-vaunted connections to Essex. In his *Apologie ... To Maister Anthonie Bacon*, both an autobiographical document and policy manifesto, scribally circulated in 1600, Essex called 'that most learned and truly honest maister *Sauill*' as 'witnes' to his 'loue of knowledge'.⁶⁶ The quality of this early relationship claimed by Essex, if it were more than a literary conceit, is difficult to test. Francis Bacon recalls Essex seeking Savile's advice on 'his opinion touching poets', but there is no dating of their communication.⁶⁷ Paul Hammer has discovered the first evidence of a direct relationship from 7 August 1590 when Savile, with Thomas Smith and Robert Wright, were named as witnesses to a bond for 10,000 marks between Essex and the queen. Feingold suggests that Essex and his confidantes were attempting to enlist Savile in a complicated manoeuvre intended to regain property surrendered to

62 Paul Hammer has shown that the relationship between Essex and the Cecils was characterized by outward cooperation rather than conflict until around 1598: P. 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, 1995), 65–86.

63 C[ecil] P[apers] 22/66.

64 CP 32/1, Savile to Sir Robert Cecil, 28 April 1595.

65 'Mr Henry Saville's Report of the Wages paid to the ancient Roman Soldiers, their Vittayling, and Apparell', in *A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts ... of the Late Lord Somers*; ed. Walter Scott, 13 vols (1809–15), 1: 555–557. The matter of the wages of the Roman army is discussed in the ancillary materials appended to the 1591 Tacitus, in particular the 'Explication of a place in Polybius', which appears on p. 75 of the commentary.

66 *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex* (1600), sig. Av; this unauthorized edition was reprinted in 1603.

67 Spedding, *Works*, 7: 134.

the queen in discharge of his debts.⁶⁸ If so, then Savile was drawn in: between November 1592 and December 1593, Essex was close enough to Savile to send a gift for the christening of his son via Sir John Wingfield.⁶⁹ Savile was in physical attendance with Essex at Barn Elms, the earl's country seat in Surrey at some point in 1594, when he and Antonio Pérez planned a visit to Oxford; Pérez's admiration of Savile stemmed in part from his perception of his closeness to the earl.⁷⁰ (Pérez made an impression on all who met him: Savile would refer twice to the 'escaped secretary' in his 'Historicall Collections' on the union.⁷¹) Savile turned to William and Robert Cecil for their assistance with his suit for the Eton provostship because Essex's 'affectionate speech' on his behalf was likely to have little effect; Essex wrote himself to Cecil encouraging this process.⁷² Henry Cuffe, whom Savile had elected as fellow at Merton in 1586, and who became Essex's secretary in 1595 *might* have been known to Essex through channels other than Savile's sponsorship, such as his friendship with Henry Wotton, also appointed Essex's secretary in December 1594.⁷³ But when Essex sent Cuffe to Florence via Paris to gather intelligence, Cuffe dispatched his reports of conversations with the grand duke of Tuscany and other foreign news to Essex via Savile, whom he instructed must filter them for presentation to the earl: 'I must continewe my wanted courses of troubling first yor selfe, then, so fare as yow shall thincke fitte, his noble L[ord]ship'. It is striking that Cuffe assumes Savile had a privileged intimacy of access to Essex, and that the earl might expect Savile to present him with intelligence and news.⁷⁴

III

The major source of scholarly controversy has been, then, about Essex's *early* relationship with Savile, and the extent to which the edition of Tacitus reflected the earl's priorities and patronage on its publication in 1591. Feingold's

68 TNA, SP 12/233, fols 56r-7v; Feingold, 'Essex Connection', n. 27.

69 HMC Bath, Longleat Manuscripts, *Volume V. Talbot, Dudley & Devereux Papers, 1553-1695*, 255.

70 Ungerer, *Spaniard*, 1: 324-5.

71 Savile, 'Historicall Collections', 203, 234.

72 CP 32/1, Savile to Robert Cecil, 28 April 1595; CP 33/39, Essex to Sir Robert Cecil, 27 July 1595.

73 Feingold, 'Essex Connection', n. 20.

74 CP 52/10, Cuffe to Savile, 4/14 June 1597, Paris. Also see CP 175/2, Cuffe to Savile, 4/14 March 1598; CP 72/26, Cuffe to Savile or in his absence Edward Reynolds, 26 July/5 August 1598, Paris, which instructs the receiver to deliver the newsletter to Essex's secretary, Edward Reynolds if Savile cannot take receipt of the newsletter himself.

discovery of a manuscript copy of the *Ende of Nero* (in this text named the *Fall of Nero*) in the Cecil manuscripts at Hatfield House has caused him to suggest that the lord treasurer rather than Essex might have been the major patron of the work.⁷⁵ And yet Philo's discovery of Elizabeth's translation from the *Annals* implies that Savile's *Histories* and *Life of Agricola* may have been inspired by a 'royal connection'—the queen's own interest in Tacitus.⁷⁶

Both Feingold and Waszink are also strongly sceptical of Ben Jonson's assertion that Essex was the author of the anonymous preface 'A.B. to the Reader', an attribution repeated by Edmund Bolton.⁷⁷ Jonson, who was close to Essex's associates, also connected Essex and Savile when he praised them side-by-side as amongst the best prose writers of their era.⁷⁸ But in 1591, when the Tacitus edition was published, Essex was preoccupied with military campaigning in Northern France.⁷⁹ It is likely that the riddle of the dedication's authorship will remain answerless: the only positive assumption we can make is that Essex's authorship was plausible to Jonson and to Bolton, based on the earl's known associations both with Savile and with Tacitus.

It is similarly difficult to establish that Savile had a single political context in mind when preparing the edition, be it Leicester's Netherlands campaign of

75 CP 139/194; Feingold, 'Essex Connection'. The Cecil manuscripts comprise many papers other than those owned by or directed to William and Robert Cecil, including a large amount of Essex's personal papers, confiscated after his rising. Malcolm Smuts's recent discovery of a further anonymous manuscript edition of Savile's Tacitus in the Folger Shakespeare Library suggests that the Cecil manuscript may be simply one of a number of scribal copies of the edition (including the printer's version in the Bodleian): R. Malcolm Smuts, 'Varieties of Tacitism' (forthcoming). The manuscript is Folger Shakespeare Library, MS Vb 143.

76 Philo, 'Elizabeth I's Translation of Tacitus'.

77 Edmund Bolton, *Hypercritica*, in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Joel Springarn (Oxford, 1908–09), 1: 115.

78 Jonson, *Discoveries*, in *Ben Jonson*, eds Bevington et al., 7: 530. In 1598, Jonson was converted to Catholicism by Thomas Wright, an erstwhile Jesuit whose return to England had been coordinated by Essex, and who performed literary services for the earl; Jonson and Savile were closely acquainted with William Camden. See Theodore A. Stroud, 'Ben Jonson and Father Thomas Wright', *English Literary History* 14 (1947), 274–282; Gajda, *Earl of Essex*, Chapter 3; Blair Worden, 'Ben Jonson among the Historians', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, eds Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (London, 1994), 67–90.

79 No more convincing is the contention of Israel Gollancz, that the author of the preface was Anna Barnes, wife of Joseph Barnes, who published the Oxford edition: that a printer's spouse would write such a piece to be attached to so prestigious a volume and which followed Savile's dedication to the queen seems unlikely: Israel Gollancz, 'Ben Jonson and the Elizabethan Tacitus: Was 'A. B.' the Earl of Essex?', *Times Literary Supplement* (10 May 1916), 355.

1586–1587, or the English war effort in France in the early 1590s.⁸⁰ The anonymous preface certainly exhorts readers of Savile's edition to draw explicit parallels between imperial Rome and contemporary England, between 'their waires ... [and] thine owne peace'. But the pressing themes that the author of the preface discerns in the *Histories*—civil wars, foreign invasion, and weak monarchs (female and infant falling into this latter category in the sixteenth century) dominated by 'euill ministers'—were real or imagined plagues common to the states of post-Reformation Europe, and a product of the confessional conflicts that engulfed the British Isles, France, and the Netherlands.⁸¹

Nor is it desirable to pin Savile down to one particular school of Tacitean interpretation, a 'proto-republican' v/s a 'reason of state' tradition.⁸² The famous impenetrability of Tacitus's own political views can also be ascribed to Savile: modern scholars' competing assessments of his portrait of Julius Vindex, the soldier whose failed rebellion provoked the chain of events resulting in Nero's deposition, emerge from the ambiguity of Savile's historical narrative. For Waszink, Vindex is an exemplum of failed prudence, a rebel whose Machiavellian virtù and honourable motivation were not annexed to a 'realistic assessment of circumstances'.⁸³ This interpretation of Vindex's failed rebellion is also congruent with the condemnation of the resistance of subjects both by the English crown on the grounds of the sanctity of monarchy, and by authors writing in the neo-stoic and reason of state tradition, on the pragmatic grounds that rebellion would always destabilise the state.

And yet Savile describes Vindex's motivations admiringly, and entirely *without* denouncing the principle of armed resistance: with unique selflessness, Vindex rebelled not for 'priuate despaire ... nor to reuenege disgrace or dishonour, not to establish his owne souereignty ... but to redeeme his cuntrey from tyranny and bondage'. Even the greatest prudence might not have saved his life, which ended by 'a strange accident, which *mans wisdom*e could not foresee' (my italics). And Vindex's failure is only at the level of personal tragedy, because his end—the deposition of a tyrant—was ultimately achieved: 'Vindex first stirred the stone, which rowling along tumbled Nero out of his seate'.⁸⁴

80 Waszink, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus'; Kewes, 'Henry Savile's Tacitus'.

81 See in particular Rory Rapple, *Martial Power and Elizabethan Political Culture: Military Men in England and Ireland, 1558–1594* (Cambridge, 2009).

82 The classic distinction between 'red' (republican) and 'black' (reason-of-state) Tacitism was first made by Giuseppe Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il 'Tacitismo'; la 'politica storica' al tempo della Controriforma* (Padova, 1921).

83 Waszink, 'Henry Savile', 313, arguing against the interpretations of Womersley, Kewes and Gajda.

84 Savile, *Ende of Nero*, 6–7.

Similar ambiguity shrouds the interest Savile demonstrates in the scholarly notes of his edition towards the prudence of Augustus Caesar and his successors, and the underhand techniques of constitutional mutation effected by the early emperors as they transformed the Roman republic into the principate. This subject is the particular theme of book one of the *Annals*, Elizabeth's choice of translation, and deeply preoccupied Justus Lipsius in his *Politica*, but again the conclusions Savile draws in his notes do not lend themselves to a straightforwardly absolutist interpretation. In a long annotation on the meaning of the term '*arcana imperii*', Savile reflects on the multiple meanings of the term 'secrete of state', which 'can hardly bee bounded with one definition', but refer to a range of hidden mechanisms used to manipulate political actors, and include a distinct species of such secrets relevant to princely politics, '*arcana domus Augustae*: that is, secretes of court, or of Palace'.⁸⁵ He ruminates on the history of the transformation of the treason laws from those of the 'ancient free common wealth', where *lex maiestatis* 'comprehended onely points of greatest importance in state', to the early principate, where Augustus enforced the law against personal critics (libellers), and 'ielous' Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero levelled accusations of treason against any perceived slight or 'trifles'.⁸⁶ In his 1575 oration, Savile had endorsed honouring military exploits with triumphal honours. Now Augustus's manipulation of the full triumph of the 'free common wealth' is discussed as another example of his statecraft: 'therefore seeking euery way to cut the sinewes of liberty, and yet to retaine a shadow of ancients, hee cunningly conuerted the solemnity of a triumph into *Triumphalia insignia*', where 'onely the Princes themselues, or their Children ... solemnely triumphed'.⁸⁷ But while Savile shares a close interest in the sorts of techniques described as 'mixed prudence' by Lipsius, his own commentary is neutral rather than didactic, his vocabulary even critical of such methods: he emphasises that Augustus's 'cunning' has repressed the 'liberties' of the 'free common wealth'.

Savile's editorial choices also align him with an emergent interest in Tacitus that has a distinctly English archaeology. Nearly all modern scholarship has revolved around readings of Savile's bravura reconstruction of the action and consequences of Vindex's rebellion and Nero's deposition. But his decision to pair the *Histories* with a translation of *Agricola*, the biography of the great Roman general and governor of Britain who flourished and declined under the

85 Savile, 'Annotations on the First Booke of Tacitus', in *Ende of Nero*, 6.

86 *Ibid.*, 23–4.

87 *Ibid.*, 24–5.

tyrant Domitian, links him with an interest in the latter work that has a lineage from Leicester and the Sidneys through to Essex, as well as to the new antiquarian movement, for whom Tacitus's description of Roman Britain was the most important Latin source. *Agricola* was the first work of Tacitus to be published in England, in 1585, in an Italian translation by Giovanni Maria Manelli. The work was dedicated to Robert Sidney, Savile's one-time pupil, who made heavy annotations on his own copy of Lipsius's complete edition of Tacitus's complete works.⁸⁸ Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy of Ireland, appears to have compared his military travails with those of Agricola, while on 3 March 1586, in the midst of his Netherlands campaign, Leicester travelled to Leiden to hear a lecture on *Agricola* by Lipsius himself.⁸⁹

Tacitus's laudatory biography of his father-in-law enshrined themes central to the mental world of Elizabethan soldiers and statesmen, who married the seemingly incompatible ideals of chivalric conduct with the unsparing endorsement of violent oppression in situations of military emergency, especially in Ireland.⁹⁰ Agricola, who had excelled in philosophy as a youth, turned his energies to a brilliantly successful career as a soldier and governor of Britain. Savile's translation couches Tacitus's assessments of his father-in-law's achievements on the frontier of the empire as 'honour and glory ... [and] true felicity, which consisteth in vertue, [in which] he hath fulfilled the measure'. In the great set-piece rhetorical confrontation between the British and Roman leaders, Agricola counters Calgacus's famous speech opposing the tyranny of imperial rule by stirring his own troops with a Machiavellian exhortation that they will reap the rewards of self-preservation *and* glory by defeating the British enemy: 'surety [security] and honour ... commonly dwelling together', his troops should be inspired to risk their lives with the prospect of 'glory, to haue dyed in the vttermost ende of the world and nature'.⁹¹

Agricola's history is framed by Tacitus's meditation on the relationship between court and camp, centre and frontier, and the envious response of the tyrant Domitian to his great general, who has accrued such renown in the far reaches of the empire. As with Germanicus, a prototype, Agricola's military feats are necessarily achieved away from Rome, but it is his distance from the

88 Sidney's heavily annotated edition is in the British Library, BL C.142.e.13.

89 Jan van Dorsten, *Poets, Patrons and Professors: Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists* (Leiden, 1962), 117; Michael G. Brennan, *The Sidneys of Penshurst and the Monarchy, 1500–1700* (Aldershot, 2006), especially 49–51, 94–95.

90 Andrew Hadfield, 'Tacitus and the Reform of Ireland in the 1590s', in *Early Modern Civil Discourses*, ed. Jennifer Richards (Houndsmills, 2003), 115–30.

91 Tacitus, *Life of Agricola*, in Savile, *Ende of Nero*, 258.

court that proves deadly to the general. In one of his longest and most celebrated notes, Savile glosses Domitian's deadly jealousy of Agricola's virtue, which was precipitated by 'Commenders', a species of courtiers, who deliberately inflame the envy of the prince by lauding the virtues of greater subjects. The note explains that the particular qualities which touch the royal nerve most acutely are the traditional virtues: 'militar renowne, magnanimity, patronage of iustice against al oppressions and wrongs, magnificence & other Heroical vertues properly belonging, or chiefly beseeing the Princes person'. If a particularly great-souled subject, such as the paragon Agricola, possesses such an overwhelming concentration of excellence, an 'umbrageous & fearfull Prince' like Domitian will become fatally 'ielous & suspicious'.⁹²

This historical analysis explores an ancient problem familiar to any student of statecraft: how should rulers treat subjects whose exceptional virtue might rival or excel their own? Aristotle's advice to the would-be tyrant is to suppress great-spirited subjects; a 'constitutional' state should establish them as kings.⁹³ Savile explores the theme in his various reflections on 'ieolous' rather than prudent princes. Nero, cowardly and effeminate, has been an extreme manifestation of such a prince, his suppression of virtue contributing to his 'enslavement' of the nobility, and of his tyranny. Galba's reliance on flattering favourites epitomizes his weakness as a ruler. But as Savile's interest in Augustus Caesar suggests, not all such rulers are incompetent and weak: in his annotations on *arcana imperii*, Savile mines the *Annals* to evidence Augustus's wariness of honouring popular nobles, soldiers, and statesmen, lest they disturb order in the state.⁹⁴ Monarchs, then, naturally incline to view virtuous subjects as a threat, even the most prudent and secure of princely rulers.

Savile is, of course, not explicitly drawing any connections to the queen, the patron of his work: these annotations are presented as timeless reflections on the operation of monarchy in any age or place. Nor is there any reason to assume that Savile intended his translation or annotations to encourage disobedient attitudes amongst subjects. Elizabeth, confident that she ruled with virtue and strength, could certainly have read Savile's commentaries without assuming that they reflected on her own court, her own style of government.

And yet these paradigms are entirely congruent with the way numerous Elizabethan military leaders, Irish governors, and the earl of Leicester amongst them, believed that they were traduced by their enemies to the queen while absent from court in the service of the crown. Savile's peculiar emphasis on

92 Savile, 'Annotations on the Life of Agricola', in *Ende of Nero*, 46–7.

93 Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk 3, 1288a; Bk 5, 1311a.

94 See above, p. 53.

Tacitus's representation of royal 'jealousy' is exhibited also by Robert Sidney, whose marginal annotations on his copy of the *Annals* repeatedly mark and comment on the nefarious actions of the 'gelius' prince.⁹⁵ Savile's note on 'Commenders' was the most compelling of his annotations to his earliest readers in Italy: a translation of the annotation entitled 'La Più Capitale Sorte di Nemici, i Laudatori' ('the most capital sort of enemy, commenders'), penned by an English writer, plausibly Henry Cuffe, exists in eight copies in the Ambrosiana manuscripts.⁹⁶ And this preoccupation with the machinations of these creatures of the court, who would exploit the natural jealousy of princes to the detriment of virtuous soldiers, links the political genes of the Sidneys and Dudleys to those of the second earl of Essex.

IV

The clearest aspect of Savile's and Essex's relationship is that it was desired by Essex, who believed his own gravitas was enhanced by their association. Essex's reference to Savile as an educational mentor in his *Apologie* is no passing remark: in this artfully constructed tract, Savile is the only English figure to be given a laudatory identification other than Anthony Bacon, to whom the treatise is purportedly addressed. Furthermore, the tract's autobiographical frame seems consciously to invoke Agricola's biography. Like the Roman general, Essex describes his youthful self as inclined to bookishness, before realizing his vocation as a soldier. Essex, like the famous general, believed himself to be betrayed to his queen by personal enemies at court.⁹⁷

With the dispersal of Essex's personal library after the rising, there is no direct evidence of how he might have engaged with Savile's edition. And, of course, Essex's association with Tacitism was far from synonymous with the 'new humanism' of Justus Lipsius: had he known the *Politica* (published in English translation in 1594) there would have been much Essex disagreed with, not least Lipsius's suspicion of patriotism in subjects, a quality Lipsius viewed as a dangerous passion, and which Essex keenly proclaimed as his chief virtue in the *Apologie*.⁹⁸ Another famed Tacitean scholar, client of Essex, and admirer of Savile, Antonio Pérez, wrote his own Tacitean history of Philip II's

95 Examples of Robert Sidney's notes on princely jealousy can be found at BL C.142.e.13, 8, 13, 16, 21, 24, 31, 73, 91.

96 Philo, 'Henry Savile in Italy', 690 and n. 22.

97 Essex, *Apologie*, sig. Av.

98 Essex, *Apologie*, sig. Ar.

rule which purported radically to *expose* the 'prudential' mechanisms used by tyrannical princes to manacle their subjects in slavish obedience, and to exhort them actively to resist this enslavement. A translation of this tract was commissioned for Essex by that old Mertonian colleague and friend of Savile and servant of Leicester, Arthur Atye.⁹⁹

It is also certain that Essex's understanding of the court and its politics—that he had deadly enemies, who 'commended' him to service in Ireland, and denied him access to the queen, that his active 'heroical' virtues and his popularity with the common people were qualities that inflamed Elizabeth's jealousy against him—were themes prominent in Savile's annotations, as well as in his portraits of Nero and of Galba. Simply put, Essex, flattered by relentless praise of his own advisors, and an astonishing number of literary dedications of his own, came to see himself as a figure whose masculine virtues were too great to be contained by his aging, female monarch. Where a Lipsian reading of Tacitus might describe the curtailing of a nobleman's power and popularity as an act of necessary statecraft or prudence, Essex inclined to describe these actions as the repression of virtue, and a sign of incipient tyranny.¹⁰⁰ These are views that a reading of Savile's annotations on Tacitus could certainly have deepened.

For Savile himself, associations with Essex's declining career were probably unlooked for. Savile was not of the disposition of Henry Cuffe, whose newsletters reveal he was addicted to the glamour of politics and, it was alleged, read Aristotle's *Politics* in a subversive way to the earls of Southampton and Rutland in Paris.¹⁰¹ After Essex's return from his disastrous campaign in Ireland, when he was stripped of office and placed under house arrest, advisors such as Francis Bacon explicitly retreated from association with Essex; it is probable that Savile did the same.¹⁰² In the summer of 1598, when Cuffe wrote his final extant letters to Savile from Paris, the warden of Merton was successfully exploiting his courtly contacts in a major dispute in the college, where his healthy relationship both with the queen and with John Whitgift secured him victory over a minor internal rebellion.¹⁰³ There is no evidence that he was moving in the circle of disillusioned nobles and gentry who began to gravitate towards the disgraced Essex. In the summer and autumn of 1600,

99 Gajda, 'State of Christendom'.

100 This is the argument of Gajda, *Earl of Essex*, chapter 6.

101 Bod. MS Ashmole 1729, fol. 190r.

102 Cuffe's last letter to Savile from Paris is dated 26 July/5 August 1598: CP 72/26.

103 Merton College Library, MS D.1.23, transcripts made by H. W. Garrod of letters of Savile and other Merton fellows to Archbishop Whitgift, 1598–1601.

when Essex and his advisors began to plot a coup on the court, they discussed Savile's friends, Neville or Bodley, as possible replacements for Secretary Cecil: Savile's name does not surface in any surviving documents relating to these schemes for regime change.

Where Savile's name appears in the records of the rising is in connection with Cuffe, who was partially invited into Essex's confidences at the turn of the new year. While Cuffe rallied Henry Neville's support with stirring rhetoric from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, we only know that he visited Savile at his Westminster lodgings on the evening of Thursday 5 February. Essex's sally into London three days later was unplanned, a panicked reaction to the privy council's discovery of his plotting: Cuffe could only have been acquainting Savile with the general thrust of Essex's intentions. On the morning of the rising, when Essex's friends summoned their supporters across London, Savile moved sharply to the court. The authorities questioned Savile's servant and raided his study at Eton, removing papers deemed relevant 'to the p[re]sent action and persons in question', but Savile was never implicated in treasonable activities.¹⁰⁴

Instead, Savile seems to have acted bravely for his friends, and in high favour with the queen. The following January, Savile's stock with Elizabeth and with Sir Robert Cecil was high enough for him to act as an intermediary for Neville, who sought to negotiate his release from prison.¹⁰⁵ Fulke Greville importuned Cecil to confer with Savile to stay at court as long as possible, so that both men might work for his return from his loathed naval office in Plymouth.¹⁰⁶ Following the moving petition of Ursula, Lady Walsingham, her grandson, Essex's heir, was restored to Savile's 'government', first at Eton and, from 1602, at Merton.¹⁰⁷

V

On James's accession, Savile's stock at court seemed as high as it had ever been. He was named in two lists as a possible 'Commissioner for ecclesiastical causes', and was knighted on 30 September 1604, when James visited Windsor.¹⁰⁸ It seems likely his tract on the union was composed around this occasion, at the

¹⁰⁴ CP 76/72, Dr Robert Bennett and W. Garard to the Privy Council, 15 February 1601; CP 104/26, I and II, Interrogation of Anne Philipson, 15 February, 1601.

¹⁰⁵ CP 84/45, Sir Henry Neville to Sir Robert Cecil, 6 January 1602.

¹⁰⁶ CP 94/93, Sir Fulke Greville to Sir Robert Cecil, July 1602.

¹⁰⁷ CP 180/40, Ursula, Lady Walsingham, to Sir Robert Cecil, 19 March 1601.

¹⁰⁸ CP 185/117; 97/37; Winwood, *Memorials*, ii, 33.

'commandment' of either the king or another statesman.¹⁰⁹ Where James commanded, Savile obliged, correcting the *Triplici nodo. Apologia pro iuramento fidelitatis*, a Latin translation of James's *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* published in 1609, and contributing to the Authorized Version of the Bible.¹¹⁰

Savile seems not, however, to have sought to ingratiate himself with the king, or to re-establish himself as any kind of court favourite. He was seemingly absent from the royal visit to Oxford of 1605, where Christ Church scholars, not Mertonians, dominated the pageantry. His tract on the union is the most systematically rigorous such work, and the only one to take analytical frameworks from the *Aeneid*, but it is highly equivocal in its arguments. Savile sneers at the ancient constitutionalist objections to union based on precedent (the 'wrestling of law and wrangling' of common lawyers), which stymied James's ambitions in the parliament of 1604–1610: his historical argument is based on prudential examination of the constitutional unions of European polities rather than prescription. This forensic analysis, however, offers little endorsement of James's cherished aims, as he concludes that a 'perfect' union of the entirely separate constitutions of England and Scotland is a highly improbable feat. As his editors comment, Savile's disinterested academic treatment 'might not have been exactly what James was looking for'.¹¹¹

Ironically, it is through Savile's extensive correspondence with Sir Dudley Carleton (knighted 1610), who married his step-daughter Anne in 1607, that we have most consistent personal commentary on the politics of the court – from a distance. Ambassador to Venice (1610–1615), Savoy (1615), and the United Provinces (1615–1625, and 1627–1628), Carleton gathered books and manuscripts for Savile, and distributed the Chrysostom edition abroad. In return, Savile, almost permanently resident in Eton, sent snippets of news and gossip.¹¹² He occasionally advised on Carleton's friends and foes at court, urging him to develop greater intimacy with Secretary Winwood, 'your surest and most usefull frende in court', who had been the only man to defend Carleton to the king after he had made an intemperate speech against the king of Spain.¹¹³ After Winwood's death in the autumn of 1617, Savile recommended the earl of

109 Galloway and Levack, 'Introduction', *Jacobean Union*, lxxvi.

110 TNA, SP 14/44, fol. 190r, Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 27 April 1609. Two English editions of the text (February 1608 and April 1609) were surpassed by a final version published in May 1609.

111 Galloway and Levack, *Jacobean Union*, lxxxix, 184–96, 231–235.

112 For the distribution of the Chrysostom edition in Venice, see TNA SP 14/69 fol. 6r, Savile to Carleton, 10 May 1612; SP 14/72 fol. 212r, Savile to Carleton, April 1613.

113 TNA, SP 14/80, fol. 69r, Savile to Carleton, 13 March 1615.

Arundel as the likely champion of Carleton's candidacy for the vacant post of secretary of state.¹¹⁴ But Savile's influence over his son-in-law's career was negligible: Carleton would not realise his ambition to be secretary until 1628, after the deaths of both Savile and King James. Meanwhile, Savile declared himself unable even to help Sir Dudley in his suit to succeed him as provost of Eton.¹¹⁵

Savile's letters to Carleton exhibit a flickering interest in the great affairs of state and religion that comprised the diplomat's daily business. His most explicit intervention in a matter of public moment was his (ignored) recommendation of the orthodox Calvinist John Prideaux, then the rector of Exeter College and later bishop of Worcester, as 'a most fit person' to participate in the Synod of Dort.¹¹⁶ Savile also prophesised the momentous significance of the Bohemian succession crisis in 1618: 'it is a great matter, as happened any in our tyme in the Christia[n] world'. He appears also to have shared his son-in-law's hawkish attitude to intervention, enthusiastically commending the 'resolution and magnanimity' of Maurice, prince of Orange, who had encouraged Frederick V to take the Bohemian crown, in contrast to the 'coldnesse' of James's response.¹¹⁷ Employing language evocative of the Elizabethan (particularly Essexian) militaristic rhetoric of the 1590s, Savile later portended that 'the business ... was like to sett all christendom afire, and open way for ye Turke'.¹¹⁸

As a body, though, the numerous letters exhibit little sustained interest in the worlds of courts and princes or war and government. As Savile observed (in an uncharacteristically rustic idiom), any political news that 'us cou[n]tree folkes' could relay from Windsor was second-hand, and hardly illuminating to a diplomat like Carleton.¹¹⁹ And relations with the king and his offspring—fleetingly referred to when the court visited Eton or Oxford—bore no resemblance to those of the handsome scholar-favourite and Queen Elizabeth. Savile's dour remembrance of Prince Charles's visit to Oxford in 1616 is a marked contrast with Elizabeth's progress some twenty-four years earlier, when he had made his notable oration: 'The prince came hither to Oxon, and toke a dinner in Christchurch at yo[ur] cosins house, but I hope the universities cost, or els it were pitty. For I am sure his trooble was infinit'.¹²⁰ Or, as he wrote wearily to Carleton, 'I am past all humor and age of Ambitio[n]'.¹²¹

114 TNA, SP 14/93, fol. 260r, Savile to Carleton, 29 October 1617.

115 TNA, SP 14/93, fol. 95r, Savile to Carleton, 31 August 1617.

116 TNA, SP 14/98, fol. 117r, Savile to Carleton, 11 August 1618.

117 TNA, SP 14/111, fol. 24r, Savile to Carleton, 12 November 1619.

118 TNA, SP 14/116, fol. 142r, Savile to Carleton, 18 September 1620.

119 TNA, SP 14/103, fol. 125r, Savile to Carleton, 7 November 1618.

120 TNA, SP 14/88, fol. 116r, Savile to Carleton, 3 September 1616.

121 TNA, SP 14/72, fol. 212,? April 1613.