

CHAPTER I

The Road to Court, 1606–1628

I

The Hamiltons were one of the oldest noble families in early modern Scotland. Their ancestry extended back at least to Sir Walter Fitzgilbert (1294–1346), known as Walter, son of Gilbert, who accrued lands in Kinneil, Larbert and Auldcathy after transferring allegiance from Edward I (1239–1307) to Robert the Bruce (1274–1329) following the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.¹ The family's rise began in earnest with Sir James Hamilton of Cadzow (c.1410 or 15–79), county Lanark, who was a privy councillor to James II in 1440 and was created a hereditary lord of parliament on 3 July 1445 under the title James, 1st Lord Hamilton.² He was prominent in public life and by his first marriage was connected to the earls of Strathearn and through them to the Douglasses.³ It was, however, the first Lord Hamilton's second marriage that had lasting significance for his family, for in 1474 he married Lady Mary Stewart, widow of the disgraced Thomas Boyd, earl of Arran (d.1474), daughter of James II and sister of the reigning James III. By this marriage, the Hamiltons inherited not only the earldom of Arran, but were acknowledged next in line to

¹ George Hamilton, *A History of the House of Hamilton* (Edinburgh 1933), p.3. Oxford DNB, 'Hamilton Family', <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54222> (accessed, 10.06.2022). In this account of the background to the Hamilton family, I have benefited from reading the following works, Sir James Balfour Paul, ed., *The Scots Peerage* (9 vols. Edinburgh, 1904–14), iv, 339–383; G.E. C[okayne], *The Complete Peerage* (New edition, ed. V. Gibbs et al., 14 Vols., London, 1910–59), i, 219–224; ii, 254–265; John Spottiswood, *The History of the Church of Scotland, beginning the Year of our Lord 203, and continued to the end of the Reign of King James VI* (Edinburgh, 1655); David Calderwood, *The True History of the Church of Scotland from the beginning of the Reformation, unto the end of the Reigne of King James VI* (Edinburgh, 1671).

² G. E. C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 254.

³ He married in February 1440 Eupheme, widow of Archibald, fifth earl of Douglas, first daughter of Sir Patrick Graham by Eupheme, suo jure countess of Strathearn, *Ibid*, 255. Oxford DNB, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54222> 'Hamilton Family' (accessed, 10.06.2022).

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the Scottish throne after the royal Stewarts.⁴ The Hamiltons became cousins and blood relations to the Stewart royal family, being either heirs to the crown or next heirs after a single royal child down to 1597. In that year, the birth of James VI's second child, Elizabeth, put her and her brother, Henry (born in February 1594), between the Hamiltons and the Scottish crown.⁵ For over a hundred and thirty years the Hamiltons stood poised to ascend the throne of Scotland, and this left a lasting impression on the family and on early modern Scottish society. The noble surname Hamilton and 'Scottish crown' became linked, for good or ill, as a compliment or as a criticism.

That proximity to the Scottish crown ensured that the Hamiltons were entangled in the complex drama of sixteenth century regency politics, which reached a high point between 1543 and 1554 when the 3rd earl of Arran and duke of Chatelherault was regent of Scotland, second person of the realm and heir presumptive to the crown.⁶ Chatelherault opposed Mary's marriage in 1565 to Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley (1545–1567), but later became the chief spokesman of the Marian party in Scotland.⁷ On a similarly high profile, Chatelherault's eldest son, James, 3rd earl of Arran, was put forward at different times as a prospective husband for Queen Elizabeth of England and Queen Mary of Scotland. As a result, perhaps, he was later declared insane and incarcerated in a number of Hamilton residences until his death in 1609.⁸

Two of Chatelherault's other sons, Lord John (1539/40–1604), the head of the family due to his elder brother's insanity, and Lord Claud (1546–1621), were also involved in the political upheavals of the second half of the sixteenth century. As well as being adherents to the cause of Mary, the Hamilton brothers were involved in a long-running feud with the Douglas family, and were subsequently implicated in the murder of Regent Moray in 1570 and Regent Lennox in 1571. Under pressure from all sides, the brothers were forced into exile and the Hamilton estates were forfeited in 1579.⁹ The brothers were back in Scotland by 1584 and the estates were restored a year later.¹⁰ On his return to Scotland, Lord John slowly re-built the Hamilton estates under the approving eye of James VI, and in recognition of his loyalty to the king he was created marquis of Hamilton, earl of Arran and Lord Aven in 1599.¹¹

Whilst Lord John was a staunch Protestant, his brother, Lord Claud, converted to Catholicism in the early 1580s.¹² Lord Claud enjoyed an independent land base from his brother from the age of ten, through the intercession of his uncle, John Hamilton, archbishop of St Andrews (1512–1571), the lucrative abbacy of Paisley was conferred on him in 1587 and turned into a temporal lordship. Claud was an even more committed Marian than his brother and on his return from exile in 1584, he became joint head of the Scottish Catholic party with his nephew, George Gordon, 6th earl and later first marquis of Huntly (1562–1636). In the last few years of the 1580s, the revelations of the Babington Plot, the execution of Mary and the destruction of the Spanish Armada ruined Lord Claud's political career and he eventually succumbed to the madness that afflicted his eldest brother.¹³

⁴ G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 254–255; Oxford DNB, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54222> 'Hamilton Family' (accessed, 10.06.2022).

⁵ James VI's first child, Henry, was born on 19 February 1594.

⁶ Spottiswood, *History of the Church*, books ii–iv; Calderwood, *True History*, pp.2–471, esp. pp.11–12, 29, 46–59, 185–186, 245; Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 366–373; G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 221; Oxford DNB, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54222> 'Hamilton Family' (accessed, 10.06.2022).

⁷ Spottiswood, *History of the Church*, books ii–iv, *passim*, esp. iii, 135–141.

⁸ G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 222.

⁹ Calderwood, *True History*, pp.46–59, 185–186.

¹⁰ Claud appears to have returned to Scotland at an earlier date.

¹¹ Brown, *Bloodfeud*, p.221; G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 257–258; Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 370–372.

¹² Calderwood, *True History*, p.245; Oxford DNB, <https://doi-org.lonlib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12057> 'Lord Claud Hamilton – first Lord Paisley'.

¹³ Calderwood, *True History*, pp.245–255; Donaldson, *James V–James VII*, 77, 83, 220, 165–166, 173, 180, 185–187, also chapters 7, 9, 10; Oxford DNB, <https://doi-org.lonlib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12057> 'Lord Claud Hamilton – first Lord Paisley' (accessed, 10.06.2022).

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Hamiltons, with their numerous cadet branches, owned land not only in their traditional territorial strongholds in the west of Scotland of Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and the Isle of Arran, but also West Lothian and Kinneil, near Bo'ness. The total number of their estates has been estimated at over two hundred, extending as far north as Corse in Aberdeenshire and as far south as Sanquhar in Dumfriesshire.¹⁴ Land and nobility were axiomatic, and the rise of the Hamilton family was accompanied by a corresponding increase in landholding. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a definite split in the Hamilton family occurred, and a powerful Catholic cadet branch emerged with the eldest son of Lord Claud Hamilton at its head. James, master of Paisley (1575–1618), was made baron of Abercorn in 1603 and was elevated to the title, earl of Abercorn, Lord Paisley, Hamilton, Mountcastell and Kilpatrick in 1606.¹⁵ Contrary to the professed policy of Protestant plantation in Ireland, James VI and I made generous grants of Irish land to Abercorn, which the earl and his successors used to build up a substantial Catholic enclave in Strabane, County Tyrone, Ulster.¹⁶ He was also appointed a gentleman of the Bedchamber by James VI and was much in his favour throughout his life. The 1st earl of Abercorn died in 1618, leaving behind five sons and four daughters. The eldest son, James, succeeded to the titles as 2nd earl of Abercorn (c.1604–c.1670). He consolidated the Irish estate, as well as inheriting further land in Paisley. In 1634, he resigned the Irish title of Baron Hamilton of Strabane to his younger brother, Claud. The third eldest son of the 1st earl, Sir William Hamilton, became a gentleman of Queen Henrietta Maria's Bedchamber and was her representative at the Papal court in Rome.¹⁷ The fourth son, Sir George Hamilton, owned land in Dunalong in Tyrone and Nenagh in Tipperary, and was the brother-in-law of James Butler, 12th earl of Ormond (1610–1688).¹⁸

No matter how tempting it is to follow the fortunes of the Abercorns, it is with the main branch of the Hamilton family that we are concerned, and that line was continued by the 1st marquis of Hamilton's second eldest, but only surviving, son who was born in 1589, under the title, James Hamilton, Lord Aven. On 30 January 1603, Lord Aven married Lady Anna Cunningham, daughter of James, earl of Glencairn and a year later he succeeded to the titles (12 April 1604) as 2nd marquis of Hamilton.¹⁹ James continued the favour he had shown to the first marquis and in May 1608, erected the dissolved lands of the abbey of Aberbrothwick into a temporal lordship in the second marquis's favour, under the title Lord Aberbrothwick.²⁰ Exactly a year later, and at long last, the insane, and unmarried, 3rd earl of Arran finally died in 1609, and the titles of earl of Arran, Lord Hamilton and sheriff of Lanark officially passed to the second marquis. He was made

¹⁴ The pattern of Hamilton landholding and patronage is admirably reconstructed in, Elaine Finnie 'The House of Hamilton: patronage, politics and the church in the Reformation period', *Innes Review*, 36 (1985), pp.3–28, esp. pp.4–9.

¹⁵ 'James Hamilton, First Earl of Abercorn' <https://doi-org.lonlib.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12084> (accessed, 16.06.2022).

¹⁶ Abercorn's eldest son was created Baron Strabane in 1617. S.C.L., WW., Strafford MSS, vol.4/fols.94–5 (Charles I to Lord Deputy Wentworth, 5 June 1637); *Ibid*, 4/95–97 (Petition [of Claud, Baron Strabane and Sir George Hamilton] to Charles I, [May–June ? 1637]). See also, *Ibid*, vol.3/137v (Lord Treasurer Portland to Lord Deputy Wentworth, [October 1634]); Innerleithen, Traquair MSS, 3/41 (Charles I to Privy Council [Scotland]).

¹⁷ TNA, Signet Office Docquet Books [hereafter, S.O.], 3/8 unfol., January, 1624; *HMC Cowper*, ii, 161; *DNB*, xxiv, 176–177.

¹⁸ For Sir George Hamilton's Irish lands and his assistance in Ireland to James, third marquis of Hamilton, see chapter 5, section v; Sheffield City Library, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS, 4/95–97 (Petition [of Claud, Baron Strabane and Sir George Hamilton] to Charles I, [May–June ? 1637]).

¹⁹ *HMC Hamilton*, 55 (115) (Marriage contract, 30 January 1603); Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 373–374; G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 258–259.

²⁰ The first marquis had already been granted a charter of Arbroath on 11 November, 1600. The Aberbrothwick charter made the holder a lord of parliament, but the second marquis was already a lord of parliament and this title may have been constituted in that form so that it could be passed to a son, G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 258; Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 373–374. The Arbroath charter may also have been one of the many sweeteners James made to the Scottish nobility in the wake of the re-introduction of diocesan episcopacy in the parliament of 1606, M. Lee jnr, *Government by Pen* (Urbana, Illinois, 1980), p.63.

a Scottish privy councillor on 14 January 1613, and was content to live in Scotland, presiding over the consolidation of the Hamilton patrimony.²¹

All that changed, however, on the occasion of James VI and I's 'salmon-like' visit to Scotland in the summer of 1617.²² Neil Cuddy has argued, plausibly, that the fall of James's Scottish favourite Robert Carr, 1st earl of Somerset, in the autumn of 1615, left the king without a Scottish favourite to counterbalance his English favourite, George Villiers, 1st earl of Buckingham.²³ So when James arrived in Scotland, he was on the look-out for a Scottish companion to restore the ethnic balance to his household. If that was indeed the case, then the 2nd marquis of Hamilton was well qualified to perform that function. Yet he was also of the blood royal and James may have recognised the need to keep the head of the Hamiltons close to him, just as he had done with his other blood relation, Ludovic Stuart, 2nd duke of Lennox.²⁴ James exerted his considerable charm on the second marquis during his visit, and spent three of his last nights in Scotland at Hamilton Palace.²⁵ The king was delighted when the marquis agreed to return to court with him. His satisfaction had not lessened nine months later, when he chivvied Lord Treasurer Mar to personally see to the speedy payment of a precept for £3,000 sterling granted to his new favourite, 'I knowe well the present wantis in my estate thaire, but I ame so fullie satisfied, and so muche rejoiced at the conquest I have made in drawing this man to wayte upon me, now that I knowe him as he doeth me, that I assure my selfe his service will repaye my liberalitie with a double interest.'²⁶

II

Of course, the second marquis's rise at court never kept pace with that of Buckingham for, like everyone else, there was some dependence on the Villiers network. As soon as he stepped on to English soil on 4 August 1617, he was sworn onto the English Privy Council, and rumours preceded him on his journey south that he was 'the gallantest of both the nations.'²⁷ Only months after his arrival, he was tipped to become master of the horse, if Buckingham resigned the place to be made lord admiral of England. The wily Villiers prudently stayed put. In August 1618, he was linked to the lord chamberlain of the household's place if, in this case, William Herbert, 3rd earl of Pembroke relinquished that office to be made lord treasurer of England.²⁸ Despite missing out on a major office, the second marquis became increasingly prominent at court. He acted in court masques alongside Buckingham and quickly became a confidante of Prince Charles, a shy and awkward young man in his late teens.²⁹ On 16 June 1619, he was created earl of Cambridge in the

²¹ James may have requested Hamilton's attendance at court prior to his visit in 1617, Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 374.

²² This was James's only visit to Scotland, despite promising to return at least every three years in his farewell speech 'in the great kirk of Edinburgh' on 3 April 1603, Calderwood, *True History*, p.472. James used the analogy of the salmon to describe his instinct to come home. The king's visit lasted for 83 days, *HMC Mar and Kellie*, 80.

²³ Neil Cuddy, 'Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603–1625', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 3rd Series*, (January, 1990), pp.107–124, esp.p.120; Neil Cuddy, 'The King's Chambers: the Bedchamber of James I in Administration and Politics, 1603–1625' (Oxford DPhil, 1987), chapter 5.

²⁴ James may also have seen the second marquis as a potential troublemaker, for on 8 June, Hamilton, along with the earls of Mar and Glencairn, although they obeyed the King's order to attend the English service in the chapel royal, declined to communicate kneeling, Calderwood, *True History*, pp.674–675.

²⁵ *HMC Mar and Kellie*, 80. The king stayed at Hamilton Palace between 28 July and 31 July.

²⁶ *HMC Mar and Kellie*, 84 (James to Mar, 16 May 1618).

²⁷ N. E. M. McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), ii, 98 (John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 27 August 1617); G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 258–259. The second marquis quickly became a favourite amongst the ladies of the court, McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 101.

²⁸ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 118, 168.

²⁹ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 127–128; D. Laing, ed., *Correspondence of Sir Robert Kerr, First earl of Ancrum and his son, William, Third earl of Lothian*. (2 vols, Edinburgh 1875), i, 8–9.

English peerage, a title reserved for princes of the blood.³⁰ Political alliances naturally followed, and he was associated in this respect with William Herbert, 3rd earl of Pembroke (1580–1630), lord chamberlain of the household, and Lucy Harington, countess of Bedford (1580–1627), a childhood friend of Elizabeth of Bohemia, the electress Palatine.³¹ An accurate measure of the marquis's growing importance was demonstrated by James's serious illness in April 1619. As he lay on what he believed was his death-bed, the king recommended to his heir a select few noblemen, 'but especially the Marquis of Buckingham and Hamilton'.³²

Even so, it was not all plain sailing between James's Scottish and English favourites. The two clashed when Buckingham took personal offence at Hamilton's complaint in January 1620 that the ancient nobility was being debased by new advancements and the selling of honours.³³ Public protestations of 'amitie and friendship' quickly followed the spat, though it may be significant that a matter of weeks later the second marquis was sworn a gentleman of the king's Bedchamber, 'without the privitie ... of the Lord of Buckingham'.³⁴ The scratchiness between Buckingham and Hamilton continued under the surface. In a later episode Buckingham had apparently been willing to relinquish the office of master of the horse to Hamilton if he was made lord admiral, but changed his mind; and it is likely that Hamilton retained some ill-feeling over his son's marriage to Mary Feilding.³⁵ That may explain why it took the marquis until 1624 before he received a senior court office. Nevertheless, the marquis was in a good and secure position and felt sufficiently confident to call his son and heir, James Hamilton, earl of Arran, to court towards the end of 1620.³⁶

Born on 19 June 1606, the fourteen year old earl of Arran arrived in London on 12 December 1620, and from that date until June of the following year, he was gradually introduced at court.³⁷ Arran was accompanied by his governor, Mr James Baillie, about six personal servants including Sir John Hamilton of Lettrick and Sir John Hamilton of Grange, a few pages and five footmen.³⁸ The young earl's accounts for this important period show that increasing amounts of money were spent on clothes such as ruffs, leghose, silks, velvet and gold lace, as he became more visible at court. Arran regularly played tennis, attended plays, bought books, viewed the lions in the Tower,

³⁰ G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 259; Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 374. The first holder was William the Lion, king of Scotland (early 13th C) and the last before the 2nd marquis was Edward IV (1442–1483), Thrush, *The House of Lords, 1604–1629*, iii, 10.

³¹ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 127–128, 157, 245, 250. The countess of Bedford's husband, the third earl, was an invalid and so she exercised the powerful interest on his behalf, S.L. Adams, 'Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624' in Sharpe, *Faction and Parliament*. (Oxford, 1978), pp.142–143. There was also talk of a marriage between the second marquis's eldest son, the earl of Arran, and the countess of Bedford's niece, McClure, ed., *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 184. For Pembroke, *Ibid*, ii, 257, 302; *HMC 10th Report*, 386, 391; R. Lockyer, *The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592–1628* (Singapore, 1981), p.36. On the more general issue of selling honours, Cust, *Charles I and the Aristocracy* (Cambridge, 2013), pp.2–6, 23.

³² McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 227. James also recommended to his heir, the duke of Lennox, earl of Pembroke, earl of Arundel, Viscount Fenton and Viscount Haddington: three Scotsmen and two Englishmen. For the 2nd marquis's prominent position at court functions (marriages, christenings, feasts etc) and conveying of ambassadors to royal audiences, *Ibid*, ii, 210, 212, 279, 282, 339, 455–6. At Queen Anne's funeral in May 1619, Hamilton and Lennox supported the chief mourner, the countess of Arundel, *Ibid*, ii, 237.

³³ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 286. The earl of Arundel was also involved in the argument over the debasement of the ancient peerage, almost certainly on Hamilton's side. For more on possible tensions between Hamilton and Buckingham, Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English politics and the coming of war, 1621–1624* (Cambridge 1989), p.130.

³⁴ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 286, 297.

³⁵ Thrush, ed., *The House of Lords, 1604–29*, iii, 1–11.

³⁶ The Arran title was conferred in 1609 after the death of the 3rd earl of Arran.

³⁷ The young earl's movements are reconstructed from the account books of his governor, Dr James Baillie, Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD 90/73/F1/25/books 1–17. For Arran's arrival in London, *Ibid*, F1/25/7, entry for 12 December. The first things Arran did on arrival was to go to Westminster church, look at 'the monumentis' and visit a barber.

³⁸ This is a rough estimate from the accounts.

and visited the parliament.³⁹ He was also present at the jousts for Accession Day on 24 March 1621 during which Hamilton and Buckingham broke each other's lances five times.⁴⁰ The breakthrough for Arran came at the end of May, for the accounts show that 'twa giftes' amounting to £5,017.12 Scots was paid to him.⁴¹ Within a few short months, the young earl had passed through the decisive barrier between those who were paying to be at court and those who were being paid to be at court.

In July 1621, Arran went up to Exeter College, Oxford and his father returned to Scotland as royal commissioner to the parliament.⁴² It was the second marquis's greatest political victory that he was able to have the Five Articles of Perth, approved by the general assembly in Perth in August 1618, ratified in the parliament in the summer of 1621.⁴³ This was the second prong of James's ecclesiastical policy, the first being the introduction of diocesan episcopacy in 1606. Even from David Calderwood's hostile account, it is clear that the marquis got the Articles ratified in parliament by a combination of shrewd political management and intimidation.⁴⁴ The royal commissioner had also promised the parliament that if they consented to the Five Articles 'they should never be urged with mo[r]e Ceremonies'.⁴⁵ While Calderwood lamented that by the ratification of the Articles 'Gods Worship through her sides had received a deadly wound', a grateful and immensely relieved James rewarded his Scottish favourite with £10,000 sterling.⁴⁶

The second marquis's triumph in Scotland endeared him further to the ageing king, and matters relating to Scotland which came to court increasingly passed through his hands.⁴⁷ In English affairs too, the marquis enjoyed a more prominent role in court, council and parliament.⁴⁸ He was Protestant, anti-Spanish, pro-Palatine and was associated, both at court and in the parliaments of 1621 and 1624, with the political grouping centred around the 3rd earl of Pembroke, Archbishop Abbot and the countess of Bedford.⁴⁹ Even more important than this, however, he continued to enjoy a close relationship with Prince Charles, now a young man in his early twenties, both as a political ally and as a fellow connoisseur of the visual arts.⁵⁰ Honours continued to accrue. In April 1623, he was installed as a knight of the Garter and the following year, on the sudden death of the 3rd duke of Lennox, he was made lord steward of the household, the highest and most

³⁹ Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD 90/73/F1/25/5, the accounts show that the earl bought a new pair of white spurs for Accession Day. The books were 'comings [cumplings?] historie' and 'ye historie of america'.

⁴⁰ For the tournament, Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London, 1987), p.208; Thrush, *House of Lords 1604–29*, iii, 12.

⁴¹ Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD 90/73/F1/25/17. The accounts show that £788 sterling was spent in Arran's retinue between 22 November 1620 and 6 June 1621, Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD 90/73/F1/30/1.

⁴² I take the dates of Arran's entry into Exeter College from Rubinstein as she got the dates from the librarian at the college, H.L. Rubinstein, *Captain Luckless: James, First Duke of Hamilton, 1606–1649* (New Jersey, 1976), p.11. Typical of the nobility, Arran stayed at Oxford for six months, returning to court on 14 December.

⁴³ The articles are printed in, G. Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents* (Edinburgh, 1970), pp.184–185. For a discussion of Jacobean religious policy in Scotland, Donaldson, *James V–James VII*, pp.197–211, esp.pp.208–211; David Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland: the history of an idea, 1560–1638* (Edinburgh, 1986); Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590–1638* (Oxford, 2000).

⁴⁴ Calderwood, *True History*, pp.764–784, esp. pp.776–777. James also exerted considerable pressure from London, *HMC Mar & Kellie*, 96–97 (James to Mar, 13 July 1621).

⁴⁵ Calderwood, *True History*, p.775.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 778; *HMC Mar & Kellie*, 108 (James to Mar, 1 April 1622); *Ibid*, 111 (James to Mar, 20 April 1622).

⁴⁷ Lee, *Government by Pen*, pp.211–213. The second marquis's greatest opponent in the Scottish administration was Lord Treasurer Mar and his son, the earl of Kellie, in the king's bedchamber, *HMC Mar & Kellie*, 114, 115, 183; Laing, *Ancram and Lothian*, i, 32.

⁴⁸ For two examples of the marquis's growing importance in court and council, McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 438, 474–475.

⁴⁹ Adams, 'Foreign Policy', pp.142–143; Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, pp.84, 103–4, 130.

⁵⁰ Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621–1629* (London 1979), pp.113, 153. For the second marquis and the princes's art collecting activities, see chapter 4, section iv.

prestigious office in the court.⁵¹ The marquis also made some colonial investments, principally in the Bermuda company and the New England Venturers, and was a director of the Virginia Company.⁵²

The second marquis was unenthusiastic about the prospect of Prince Charles's marriage to the infanta of Spain in 1623. In fact, while Charles was in Madrid, he wrote to assure him that he would not do anything 'that shall cause honest men to blush for him'.⁵³ When Charles returned from Madrid without his bride in October 1623, disillusioned and angry at his treatment by the Spanish, the marquis took a cautious line and abstained from voting in the Committee for Foreign Affairs on whether to break off the marriage negotiations.⁵⁴ Perhaps more important for our purposes, the second marquis's son, the earl of Arran, who had lasted a mere six months at Oxford and was back at court by the end of 1621, had followed the prince and Buckingham to Madrid in 1623 in the company of his father-in-law, William Feilding, 1st earl of Denbigh.⁵⁵ In June of the previous year, Arran, not yet sixteen, had married, in the king's presence, Buckingham's niece, nine year-old Mary Feilding, daughter of William, Viscount Feilding, soon to be created earl of Denbigh.⁵⁶ It was yet another major dynastic coup for Buckingham to marry the son of James's principal Scottish courtier and blood relation into a little known Warwickshire family. The match was certainly uneven and Arran resented it for the rest of his life.⁵⁷

Ironically, it was Arran's marriage into Buckingham's burgeoning family network that secured his invitation to Madrid and the second major breakthrough in his court career.⁵⁸ For it was on the Spanish trip that Arran and Prince Charles became friends, as only a few months after his return, Arran was sworn a gentleman of the prince's Bedchamber in January 1624.⁵⁹ Though it is difficult to prove, Buckingham's comprehensive influence over the prince may also have played a part in his nephew Arran's promotion, perhaps as compensation for the young earl's marriage.⁶⁰ The second marquis's promotion as lord steward of the household, a few months later, may also have been tied to the uneven marriage. Yet the evidence additionally suggests that the second marquis had been planning the marriage of his son to Ann Chichester, the niece of Lucy, countess of Bedford and when this fell through in May 1621, Buckingham seized the initiative and put forward his niece Mary with the king's support.⁶¹

Marriage shenanigans aside, by the summer of 1624 then, the marquis of Hamilton and the earl of Arran, father and son, occupied important positions at court. The father was closely bound to

⁵¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Ashmole 1132, fol.121a; McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 479, 487; *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 193 (Kellie to Mar, 22 February 1623/4); G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 259.

⁵² T.K. Rabb, *Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575–1630* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967), p.305.

⁵³ *CSPV*, 1623–25, 28 (Valaresso to Doge, 2 June 1623). Charles probably meant accepting the marriage on dishonourable terms and converting to Catholicism.

⁵⁴ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 542 (Chamberlain to Carleton, 31 January 1623/4). For a detailed examination of the shift in policy following Charles and Buckingham's return from Madrid, Thomas Cogswell, 'England and the Spanish Match' in Cust and Hughes, eds., *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (London and New York, 1989), pp.107–130; Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, *passim*.

⁵⁵ *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 156–157 (Kellie to Mar, 14 March 1622/3).

⁵⁶ Viscount Feilding was married to Buckingham's only sister, and he was created earl of Denbigh a few months after the Arran marriage. For the marriage, *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 122–123 (Kellie to Mar, 20 June 1622); McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 441 (Chamberlain to Carleton, 22 June 1622).

⁵⁷ Hamilton alluded to being forced into a marriage against his will in the last full letter he wrote before his execution, NRS, GD 406/1/2369 (Hamilton to Lanark, 8 March 1649).

⁵⁸ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox MSS, CR 1017/C1/56 (Second marquis of Hamilton to first earl of Denbigh, [April–June 1623]); *Ibid*, CR 1017/C1/57 (Hamilton to Denbigh, [April–June 1623]).

⁵⁹ *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 189 (Kellie to Mar, 14 January 1623/4).

⁶⁰ The link between Arran's promotion and his marriage, was made explicit by the earl of Kellie, 'my Lord of Arrane is made of the Prince his beddchalmere, and one wold make me believe that it wold be the beste part of his portione with his wyffe.' *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 189.

⁶¹ Thrush, *The House of Lords, 1604–1629*, iii, (James Hamilton 1606–49), 12–13.

the reigning monarch, the son similarly attached to the heir. There was little reason to doubt that things could only get better.

III

On Ash Wednesday, 2nd March 1625, the marquis of Hamilton, aged thirty-five, died of a fever at Whitehall. His son had fallen ill himself on his way back from a visit to Scotland, 'and culd but with great paine come to London the verye nycht before his father dyed'.⁶² A few nights later, a torchlit procession of four hundred coaches escorted the lord steward of the household's body to his residence, Fisher's Folly in Bishopsgate, and from thence it was conveyed to Scotland for burial.⁶³ Just over three weeks later, on 27 March, James VI and I died and his son ascended the throne as Charles I. Freed from the restraining hand of James, Charles and Buckingham hastened their expensive foreign policy aspirations and prepared for war with Spain. In May of the same year, Charles married Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII of France. The eighteen-year-old 3rd marquis of Hamilton was part of the duke of Buckingham's magnificent retinue, which went to Paris to escort the new king's bride home.⁶⁴ Hamilton also accompanied the duke to the Netherlands in October, together with the earl of Holland, Sir Henry Mildmay and Sir George Goring, to solicit an alliance against Spain.⁶⁵ In London, Hamilton led the Scottish contingent, along with the 4th duke of Lennox, at James's funeral on 7 May 1625, and carried the sword at Charles's English coronation in February 1626.⁶⁶ The young marquis was also an assiduous attender at parliament from May 1625 to June 1626, sitting in the House of Lords as 2nd earl of Cambridge.⁶⁷ Yet below the surface of these public appearances, Hamilton's position at court was becoming increasingly difficult, perhaps even untenable.

First and foremost, Hamilton's father had left debts of about £31,000 sterling mostly owed in Scotland.⁶⁸ To cover this debt, Hamilton had only received from the royal bounty confirmation of his father's annual pension of £2,500 sterling from the customs and a few one-off cash grants procured by Buckingham.⁶⁹ Wardship was waived, but with the condition of the estate it was not as great a royal concession as it might have been.⁷⁰ Hamilton was probably sworn a gentleman of

⁶² *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 222 (Kellie to Mar, 2 March 1624/5).

⁶³ McClure, *Letters of Chamberlain*, ii, 604–605 (Chamberlain to Carleton, 12 March 1624/5); *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 223 (Kellie to Mar, 9 March 1624/5). The poet, John Donne composed a verse on the marquis's demise, 'An Hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton' printed in Laing, *Ancram and Lothian*, ii, 512–513. A eulogy on the second marquis was also written, in Latin, by Adam Moesterus, printed in W. Fraser, ed., *Memorials of the Earls of Haddington* 2 vols (Edinburgh 1889), ii, 98–102.

⁶⁴ Buckingham stood proxy for Charles at the ceremony in Paris. Hamilton is on a list, dated March [1625], of lords who were to attend Buckingham to Paris, Hardwicke, (P. Yorke) earl of, *Miscellaneous State Papers, from 1501 to 1726* 2 vols (London, 1778), i, 571–572.

⁶⁵ *HMC Mar & Kellie Supplementary*, 234–235 (Kellie to Mar, 22 October 1625).

⁶⁶ *RPCS 2nd Series*, 1625–27, p.xii. The fourteen-year-old duke of Lennox would have had precedence over Hamilton, but the two young noblemen probably walked side by side in the funeral procession. For Charles's coronation, Gilbert Burnet, *The Memoires of the Lives and Actions of James and William Dukes of Hamilton and Castle-Herald* (Oxford, 1673, repr. 1852), p.3, hereafter Burnet, *Lives of the Hamiltons* (1852).

⁶⁷ *L. J.*, iii, 432–682. Hamilton attended 74 out of a possible 112 meetings between 18 June 1625 and 15 June 1626. He took the oath of allegiance on 23 June 1625, *Ibid*, 440. He appears to have regularly attended in the company of his father-in-law, the earl of Denbigh, and James Hay, first earl of Carlisle: the first married to Buckingham's sister, and the second one of Buckingham's enemies.

⁶⁸ Hamilton MSS, Lennoxlove, TD 90/93/F1/42/4. The figures were for Martinmas 1626, Scotland, £24,843 and England, £6,082.

⁶⁹ TNA., SO3/8 unfol., November 1626. This pension appears to have been in arrears by £4,750 by May 1628; *Ibid*, unfol., May 1628. The one-off payments were recorded thus, TNA., SO3/8 unfol., May 1627, for £1,596; *Ibid*, August 1627, for £404.

⁷⁰ *RPCS 2nd series*, 1625–27, 16–17.

the Bedchamber in 1625, or was transferred in from the prince's bedchamber, though no formal record of appointments has survived.⁷¹ But his debt may have dissuaded him from continuing in the position until his financial position was alleviated.⁷² Second, there may have been continued friction between Hamilton and Buckingham over his marriage in 1622 to Mary Feilding, the earl of Denbigh's daughter and Buckingham's niece. Even though Mary had recently reached puberty, Hamilton had shown no inclination to consummate the marriage.⁷³ Exiling himself from court would have solved that problem. Although it is difficult to prove, it may well be the case that the young man was troubled by the accusations made by James's former physician, Dr George Eglisam (fl. 1612–1642), stated in a pamphlet published in the Spanish Netherlands in 1626, that the king and Hamilton's father had been poisoned by Buckingham.⁷⁴ Eglisam had close connections with the Hamiltons and had been raised with the second marquis. He was also a crypto Catholic, which fuelled the rumours that the second marquis had made a deathbed conversion to Rome.⁷⁵ Hamilton would certainly have known Eglisam well and may have been very unsettled by the accusations and rumours circulating around court on top of the shock of his father's unexpected death.⁷⁶

With considerable debts, an unhappy marriage and a bad feeling about how his father died, Hamilton retired from court and went to Scotland a few days after the dissolution of the parliament in June 1626.⁷⁷ Neither Charles nor Buckingham were happy with his decision to retire from court, but any efforts at easing the young marquis's financial plight were hamstrung by the war with Spain, and deteriorating relations with France.⁷⁸

At the same time, Charles's intended revocation scheme in Scotland created a welter of ill feeling that made Hamilton's homecoming uncomfortable.⁷⁹ Traditionally, an act of revocation gave a Scottish king the right to revoke all grants from the royal patrimony during a minority that were deemed unfair or illegal. By contrast Charles, who had never ruled in minority, looked set to question all royal grants extending back to the Scottish Reformation in 1560. Although Hamilton was deeply unhappy with the scheme, he neither openly countenanced the resistance to it, nor led the way in making a complete submission to the Committee for Surrenders and Teinds, as the king had suggested.⁸⁰ In February 1627 Hamilton was made a member of the Commission for

⁷¹ But see the language used in, NRS, GD 406/1/8187 (Hamilton to [Buckingham], 16 March 1627/[8?]).

⁷² The position of gentleman of the Bedchamber carried no fees, so that chronic debt and little prospect of royal bounty (given the impending war with Spain) would have made it a difficult position to carry out with honour. Hamilton's position as gentleman of the Bedchamber is discussed at greater length in chapter 4, pp.76–77.

⁷³ Thrush, *The House of Lords, 1604–1629*, iii, (James Hamilton 1606–49), 12–13; Burnet suggests Hamilton had 'secret considerations' for not consummating the marriage, Burnet, *Lives* (1852), 516–517.

⁷⁴ George Eglisam, *The forerunner of revenge upon the Duke of Buckingham, for the poysoning of the most potent King James ... and the Lord Marquis of Hamilton*. (Netherlands: [s.n.], 1626; see also Alastair Bellany & Thomas Cogswell, *The Murder of King James I* (New Haven, 2015), esp. pp.113–136.

⁷⁵ Bellany & Cogswell, *Murder of King James*, pp.128–133.

⁷⁶ In his pamphlet accusing Buckingham of murder, Eglisam alludes to his close affinity with the Hamiltons and with the second marquis in particular. On the publication and reception of *Forerunner* which was printed by the rightly famous Plantin Moretus press in the Spanish Netherlands, Bellany & Cogswell, *Murder of King James*, pp.137–187.

⁷⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/74 (George Carr to dowager marchioness of Hamilton, 22 June 1626).

⁷⁸ L.J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge, 1989), chapter 2, *passim*; S.R. Gardiner, *History of England, 1603–42* 12 vols in 10 (London, 1883–4), vi, *passim*; Christopher Thompson, 'Court politics and Parliamentary Conflict in 1625' in Cust and Hughes, *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, pp.168–189.

⁷⁹ A.I. MacInnes, 'The Origins and Organisation of the Covenanting Movement, 1625–41.' (unpublished PhD dissertation, 2 vols. University of Glasgow, 1987), i, chapters iv–viii; see also the summarised version in Allan I. MacInnes, *Charles I and the making of the Covenanting Movement* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp.49–101.

⁸⁰ NRS, GD 406/1/18 (Charles I to Hamilton, 22 December 1626); NRS, GD 406/1/8187 (Hamilton to Buckingham, 16 March 1627). Most of the correspondence concerning Hamilton and the revocation scheme does not appear to have survived, perhaps deliberately, but what has survived convinces me that Hamilton was not in the least happy with it. See for example, NRS, GD 406/1/8280 (Hamilton to Charles I, [after 6 December 1627]; NRS, GD 406/1/91 (Will Murray to Hamilton, 5 March 1627/8).

Surrenders and, at the first meeting in March 1627, he submitted his teinds and feu-mails, though he did not submit 'without reserve'.⁸¹ In December of the same year, Charles told Hamilton that if he made a complete surrender and suffered as a result, then 'wee wilbe careful to supplie your losses in some other way'.⁸² Despite the king's offer, however, Hamilton did not lead the way in surrendering his ecclesiastical patrimony back to the crown. His resistance prompted speculation at court that the young marquis had put himself upon his 'owne wings' and was intent on pursuing his own course.⁸³ Even so, on 3 April 1627 Hamilton was sworn on to the Scottish Privy Council, but he rarely attended at the board, nor did he make much of an effort to show himself at the Commission for Surrenders.⁸⁴ Instead, he retreated to his island of Arran to avoid both his creditors and further involvement in the thorny revocation.

The marquis left Hamilton palace on 5 February and arrived on Arran, an island just off the Ayrshire coast in the west of Scotland, on 11 February 1628.⁸⁵ During a seven month stay, he followed a relatively frugal existence and occupied himself in hunting and fishing, and fitting out and equipping a number of privateers to be used against French shipping.⁸⁶ In the meantime, the efforts to effect Hamilton's return to court continued.⁸⁷ In March 1628, Hamilton's father-in-law, the earl of Denbigh, travelled to Scotland to try to smooth a path back to court for his son-in-law.⁸⁸ Consequently, there were regular rumours at court of his imminent return which Will Murray, a Scottish groom of the Bedchamber, viewed as an opportunity 'not only to retaine friends but to reconcile enemies'.⁸⁹ Perhaps, then, there were things other than Hamilton's financial plight that kept him from returning to court, and what little evidence there is points to his unwillingness to accept his young wife, and an uneasy feeling about the circumstances of his father's death and, of course, the revocation.⁹⁰ Yet Hamilton's dire financial situation continued to be the reason he gave publicly and in correspondence. And that was the reason he gave in March for declining the king's

⁸¹ *RPCS, 2nd Series, 1625–27*, 510, 516, 574 note. That may have been all that Hamilton was required to submit at that time, but his submission was not 'without reserve' like the earls of Mar, Melrose and Angus. There were sixty-eight members of the Commission for Surrenders and Teinds (about 25 nobles, 10 bishops, 23 knights, 10 burgesses), *Ibid.*, p.clxxi, 516 note.

⁸² NRS, GD 406/1/582 (Charles I to Hamilton, 6 December 1627).

⁸³ NRS, GD 406/1/91 (Will Murray to Hamilton, 5 March 1627/8). This is a rather cryptic letter, and it is difficult to be absolutely sure what Murray is referring to, but the timing suggests that it is about the revocation.

⁸⁴ *RPCS, 2nd Series, 1625–27*, 567. The warrant from court appointing Hamilton to the council was dated 3 March. Hamilton attended the council about a dozen times between April 1627 and February 1628, *Ibid.*, 567–637; *RPCS, 2nd Series, 1627–28*, 1–200. Hamilton's attendance at the Commission for Surrenders was even worse than his attendance at the council, *Ibid.*, 330–331.

⁸⁵ Hamilton's activities on Arran have been reconstructed from, Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD/90/73/F1/50 ('The compt book of the Marques [debursed] in Arran 11 February–2 September 1628').

⁸⁶ Hamilton made a voluntary offer to set out and equip some ships for the 'defence of ... his Majesties ancient kingdome of Scotland' which was accepted and he received a commission on 27 May 1628 to fit out no more than five ships for a period of five years, with all prizes and spoils going to the marquis, *RPCS, 2nd Series, 1627–28*, pp.xiii–xv; 324–325; Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD/90/73/F1/50, fol.3. Hamilton may have fitted out a 'great ship and her Pinnacle' by the time he left Arran, NRS, GD 406/1/238 (Falkland to Hamilton, 8 June 1629).

⁸⁷ Buckingham, Charles and Denbigh were involved in these efforts, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox MSS, CR 2017/C1/55 (Hamilton to Denbigh, [n.d. 1627–8]); NRS, GD 406/1/96 (Hamilton to Buckingham, 24 March 1627/8); GD 406/1/97 (Hamilton to Charles, 29 March 1628).

⁸⁸ NRS, GD 406/1/91 (Will Murray to Hamilton, 5 March 1627/8). Hamilton enjoyed a close relationship with his father-in-law and had the saccharine habit of addressing him as 'Joy' in his letters, see for example, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox MSS, CR 2017/C1/55, 53, 52.

⁸⁹ NRS, GD 406/1/90 (Will Murray to Hamilton, 25 February 1627/8).

⁹⁰ The revocation was the only regular topic of conversation apart from Hamilton's debt, NRS, GD 406/1/91, 18, 582, 8280. Lords Eglington and Cassilis corresponded with Hamilton while he was on Arran but the letters have not survived, Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD/90/73/F1/50, fol.8r. The marital problem was a less common topic, but in one letter Charles talked 'of the importunitie of an Hoste of Woemen for the caling of you hither', GD 406/1/151/1 (Charles to Hamilton, 27 March 1628). See also, GD 406/1/8228, 8230.

invitation to attend at court.⁹¹ A debt of £31,000 sterling was a convenient, and large enough, cloak to conceal other reasons for not returning to court.

The assassination of the duke of Buckingham on 23 August 1628 by John Felton swept aside the complicated negotiations to effect Hamilton's return. Only eleven days after Buckingham's death, Hamilton ended his exile on Arran and moved to the mainland to await the king's command.⁹² Sir John Stewart of Traquair brought the king's first message to Hamilton, and this was confirmed by the earl of Denbigh on his second trip to Scotland at the end of September.⁹³ In short, Hamilton was offered Buckingham's post as master of the horse on the condition that he consummated his marriage.⁹⁴ Apparently unperturbed by this proviso, Hamilton arrived at court at the end of October, dutifully engaged with his wife, and was sworn master of the horse on 12 November.⁹⁵

The first year of the post-Buckingham political scene was characterised by diplomatic moves to extricate England from a disastrous foreign policy that found her at war with both Spain and France.⁹⁶ After the failure of the second attempt to relieve the siege of La Rochelle, Charles, through the influence of Secretary Dorchester and Queen Henrietta Maria, quickly came round to the need for peace with France.⁹⁷ On 24 April 1629, the Peace of Susa formally ended the hostilities.⁹⁸ The effort to conclude peace with Spain was complicated by its role as the engine of the Catholic Counter-Reformation and Spanish control of the Palatine territories belonging to Charles's sister, Elizabeth, and brother-in-law, Frederick of Bohemia. The problems began when Frederick accepted the crown of Bohemia in 1619, from which territories he was evicted by the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II, following the battle of the White Mountain outside Prague in November 1620. Frederick, the 'Winter King' and Elizabeth fled to the Hague with their children and the Upper and Lower Palatinate was overrun by Spanish and Imperial forces.⁹⁹ Political opinion was therefore pervaded by the emotive issue of Charles's dispossessed relatives, within the broader compass of the Protestant cause in Europe.

In England, it was an issue between hawks and doves. The hawks, led by Viscount Dorchester and Sir Thomas Roe, included those who desired a concerted attack, ideally in alliance with France and the Netherlands, against Catholic Spain not only to stem the Counter-Reformation, but to restore Charles's relatives.¹⁰⁰ Amongst this group were the earls of Pembroke, Viscounts Conway and Falkland and the recently returned marquis of Hamilton.¹⁰¹ The doves were led by Lord Treasurer Weston, William Laud, Bishop of London and Sir Francis Cottington, who

⁹¹ NRS, GD 406/1/96 (Hamilton to Buckingham, 24 March 1627/8); NRS, GD 406/1/151/1 (Charles I to Hamilton, 27 March 1628); NRS, GD 406/1/97 (Hamilton to Charles, 29 March 1628). The evidence does not allow us to be more specific.

⁹² Lennoxlove, Hamilton MSS, TD/90/73/F1/50, fol.9v. Hamilton probably went to Hamilton Palace.

⁹³ NRS, GD 406/1/152 (Charles to Hamilton, 25 September 1628).

⁹⁴ This was a source of great amusement, and crude puns, at court, *CSPD, Additional 1625–49*, 291 (Lord Henry Percy to earl of Carlisle, 3 September 1628); *Ibid*, 294 (George, Lord Goring to Carlisle, 16 September 1628); *Ibid*, 295–296 (Sir Robert Aiton to [Carlisle], 29 September 1628).

⁹⁵ Patent for Master of Horse dated November 12, 1628, NRS, GD 406/L1/128, also, *CSPD 1627–8*, 371 where the grant for the same office is November 7. For a 'Mills & Boon' description of Hamilton's arrival at court and the king's insistence on the marquis sleeping with his wife, Mary Feilding, Rubinstein, *Captain Luckless*, pp.21–22.

⁹⁶ Gardiner remains an invaluable source for English foreign policy, enhanced by L.J. Reeve. Gardiner, *England*, vi, *passim* esp. pp.345–369; Reeve, *Road*, chapters 2 and 3.

⁹⁷ Dorchester was appointed secretary of state in December 1628, a sign that an active anti-Spanish foreign policy was still a possibility.

⁹⁸ Reeve, *Road*, p.51.

⁹⁹ Reeve, *Road*, pp.9–10. The duke of Bavaria had been given the electoral title with the support of Emperor Ferdinand and Philip IV; but the Spanish were the key to any restoration of the elector Palatine.

¹⁰⁰ In the shorter term, Charles's uncle, Christian of Denmark, was at war with the Empire and his armies had been hammered by Tilly and Wallenstein, so part of an aggressive English foreign policy would have sought to lend his tottering war effort some assistance.

¹⁰¹ For Pembroke, Conway and Dorchester, Reeve, *Road*, p.61. Only a few letters for 1629 have survived in the Hamilton Papers, two from Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland, lord deputy of Ireland. In one Falkland thanks Hamilton for

favoured peace and financial retrenchment at home alongside negotiation with Madrid as the only means to restore Elizabeth and Frederick. By the time parliament reconvened in January 1629, it had not been resolved whether to continue the war with Spain or not, so the king may have taken the issue to parliament with an open mind.¹⁰²

The parliamentary session of January to March 1629 was swamped with issues of domestic religion, crown finance and foreign policy.¹⁰³ Acrimonious exchanges over these issues, especially over tonnage and poundage, allowed Weston and Laud the opportunity to counsel dissolution to an increasingly disillusioned Charles.¹⁰⁴ The infamous incident in the House of Commons on 2 March, where the speaker, Sir John Finch, was held down in the chair while Sir John Elliot read a declaration against evil counsellors, was the final nail in the coffin and the parliament was dissolved when it re-convened on 10 March.¹⁰⁵ In the short term, the dissolution of Charles's third parliament meant that the doves at court had won and the continuation of the war against Spain was now impossible. In the long term, it would be eleven years before another parliament would be called in England, though many people continued to hope, at least until 1632, that a parliament would be called to finance a more active foreign policy.

The twenty-two-year-old marquis of Hamilton attended the upper house, as earl of Cambridge, at fifteen out of the twenty-three meetings of the 1629 session.¹⁰⁶ By all accounts, the Lords were very quiet throughout the session, none more so than the earl of Cambridge. Yet his sympathies lay with the hawks, and he was probably disappointed at the dissolution of the parliament. In fact, his conduct over the next few years showed that he was extremely unhappy that a more active part in the European wars was not being taken. Even after a few months back at court, the young man was willing to pursue objectives that did not chime with those of the king and his chief ministers. He was flying by his own wings, as the ubiquitous Will Murray had noted. Just how determined Hamilton was to pursue his own foreign policy objectives, is the subject of the next chapter.

supporting him at court, NRS, GD 406/1/239 (Falkland to Hamilton, 3 June 1629); GD 406/1/238 (Falkland to Hamilton, 8 June 1629). For a detailed analysis of Hamilton's views on foreign policy, see chapter 2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp.56–57.

¹⁰³ Reeve, *Road*, chapter 3; Christopher Thompson, 'The Divided Leadership of the House of Commons in 1629' in Sharpe, *Faction and Parliament*, pp.245–284; Russell, *Parliaments*, chapter 7.

¹⁰⁴ Reeve, *Road*, pp.81, 88.

¹⁰⁵ Elliot's main target was Weston.

¹⁰⁶ *L. J.*, iv, 5–43.