

CHAPTER 3

The Protestant Cause, Patronage and Religion, 1632–1649

Hamilton returned to England in late 1632 to find the face of the court changed. The campaign to launch Britain into the European conflict between 1629–32 was now over. The policy of financial independence from parliament and political isolation both at home and abroad was firmly in train. Hamilton's German campaign was the last government-backed military expedition until the First Bishops' war in 1639. For Professor Kevin Sharpe and Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon three centuries earlier, the Personal Rule was a period of surprising calm in both court and country.¹ Sharpe also emphasised the lack of political faction and 'the peace prevailing at court'.² While war raged in Europe, Britain remained comparatively peaceful.

This is a reasonably accurate picture and is suggested in other work.³ Yet the king's decision not to call a parliament in the winter of 1631–2 to finance a military commitment in Europe does not mean that thereafter foreign policy was a redundant issue.⁴ Granted, a course in foreign policy was well and truly set, but some of those who harboured alternative views survived at court, and their survival is something that still requires explanation.

Hamilton is one of the most neglected of these figures. With a few others in the government he kept alive the idea of a Protestant military foreign policy to restore the Palatine. In that respect he was alienated from most of the court, and the king. The marquis's interest in foreign affairs was evident from his correspondence with his brother-in-law Basil, Lord Feilding. Moreover, the

¹ K.M. Sharpe, 'The Personal Rule of Charles I', in H. Tomlinson ed., *Before The English Civil War*. (London 1983), pp.53–78, esp.pp.53, 75, 78. See also Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992).

² K.M. Sharpe, 'The Image of Virtue: the court and household of Charles I, 1625–42' in D. Starkey, ed., *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*. (London 1987) p.225.

³ For Example, Conrad Russell, *Unrevolutionary England* (London 1990), Introduction and *passim*. For a different view, R. Cust and A. Hughes, ed., *Conflict In Early Stuart England* (London and New York, 1989) Introduction and *passim*. See also Cust, *Charles I: a political life* (Harlow, 2007), Ch.3.

⁴ Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule*, *passim*, esp.pp.275–291.

How to cite this book chapter:

Scally, J. 2024. *The Polar Star: James, First Duke of Hamilton (1606–1649)*. Pp. 43–65. London: Ubiquity Press.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/bcx.d>. License: CC BY-NC 4.0

enormous amount of material relating to foreign affairs that has survived in the Hamilton papers suggests that this was one of the marquis's greatest interests. Not until 1636, however, do we see evidence of his direct involvement in government foreign policy, and even then it was when he made an unofficial approach to Sweden.

This chapter contains three sections. The first section mainly looks at Hamilton's continued links with the Palatine family and with Sweden. It also extends the themes from the previous chapter and explores his patronage of those who had been associated with the German expedition. Using this and other evidence an attempt is made to reconstruct the public image Hamilton projected during the Personal Rule. The second section examines his direct involvement in the foreign policy initiatives of 1636–8 when the prospect of Britain entering an anti-Habsburg coalition seemed more likely. The third section attempts the difficult task of reconstructing Hamilton's religion. In the course of the final section, an argument is presented, which will be further developed in the next chapter, about the fluid nature of his social, political and religious world. In short, it will be shown that Hamilton's views on foreign policy did not always restrict his political alliances or patronage to like-minded individuals, but that he collaborated with individuals across the political and religious spectrum.

I

We have seen how Hamilton's enthusiasm for the German campaign was eroded to the extent that he reversed his counsel to Charles I and recommended a tactical withdrawal of support for Gustavus Adolphus.⁵ By doing so he contributed to the policy of isolation that marked the Personal Rule, as it gave Charles another reason to be wary of financing land armies. However, this did not mean that Hamilton's commitment to the Palatine cause had diminished. His altered counsel to Charles was because Gustavus could not be trusted to honour a contract. This was based on the king of Sweden's poor treatment of Hamilton's army, and on Gustavus's refusal to return the Palatine territories to Frederick when the opportunity arose. Ironically, the king of Sweden's death at the battle of Lutzen on 6 November 1632, about ten days after Hamilton arrived back in London, removed the main cause of his change of heart.⁶

It is no surprise then, that over one third of the surviving correspondence in the Hamilton papers from late 1632 to 1637 relates directly to Palatine or foreign issues.⁷ With Dorchester dead and Roe shunned at court Hamilton was one of the few remaining ministers in Charles's government, outside the queen's circle, who still supported the Palatine cause.⁸ Two arguments will form the basis of this section. First, Hamilton acted as the principal broker for Elizabeth and her son Charles Lewis (Louis) at court. Second, in the absence of any embassy in London, Hamilton exercised a virtual monopoly over the interests of Sweden.⁹ The formation by Axel Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor, of the Heilbronn League in April 1633, dedicated to continuing the war in Germany against the House of Austria (Philip IV and Ferdinand II), continued to weld a military solution to the Palatine with the exploits of Sweden, especially as Charles opted to sit on the

⁵ See chapter 2 pp.33–38; 40.

⁶ *HMC., Hamilton*, 81–2 (Alexander Leslie to Hamilton, 26 November 1632). For Hamilton's arrival in London, *CSPV*, 1632–6, 19.

⁷ I derive these figures from my notes on the main Hamilton catalogue at the NRS. I have noted over 120 entries for the Palatine and foreign affairs, December 1632 to May 1638. This is roughly equal to the correspondence related to the Venetian and Turin embassies of Basil, Lord Feilding, 1635–June 1638.

⁸ Hamilton had connections with the queen's circle, see below and Chapter 4, sections II & III. For those who supported a Protestant foreign policy in alliance with France, R. M. Smuts, 'The Puritan followers of Henrietta Maria in the 1630s', *English Historical Review*, vol. 93, January 1978, pp.26–45 esp.p.27.

⁹ *CSPV*, 1632–6, 80.

fence.¹⁰ As Elizabeth reminded Hamilton, 'what good is done for ... Sweden will redound to my children's benefit'.¹¹

By continuing to sponsor the Palatine interest Hamilton endorsed a particular political credo: closer association or confederation with those states opposed to the House of Austria – the Netherlands, Sweden and France. Hamilton was not alone, however, even though his views went against the tide of opinion at court, at least until late 1635. In May 1636, the Venetian ambassador reported that, while at court Charles Lewis, the prince Palatine, confided in Hamilton and the earls of Pembroke and Holland, 'the only ones he believes to favour his party'.¹² To this group we could also add Hamilton's close friend George, Lord Goring, master of the horse to Henrietta Maria, as well as some of the Puritan followers in the queen's circle.¹³

The tide of opinion in foreign policy between 1632–6 was held by what A. J. Loomie has called the 'Spanish Faction'.¹⁴ The leader and driving force of the group was the lord treasurer, Richard, Baron Weston and from 1632 1st earl of Portland. We saw in the last chapter how his relationship with Hamilton was soured over the plot allegations of 1631, but seemed to improve, publicly at least, as both men worked to heal the rift.¹⁵ Yet they were never close and did not correspond after Hamilton returned from Germany. Portland's ally, predictably enough, was Francis, Lord Cottington, chancellor of the Exchequer and master of the Court of Wards.¹⁶ The other two principal members were Thomas, Viscount Wentworth, president of the Council of the North and lord deputy of Ireland after 1633, and Sir Francis Windebank, who became secretary of state in June 1632, a few months after Dorchester's death.¹⁷ At least twice during the Personal Rule Weston, Cottington and Windebank had secret talks with Juan de Neocolalde, the Spanish ambassador, about an alliance with Spain, and all three received gifts for their support.¹⁸ Prior to his embassy to the emperor in 1636 and subsequent *volte face*, Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel and Surrey, the earl marshal, could also be labelled 'pro-Habsburg and anti-French'.¹⁹

While it can be misleading to allocate political credentials to groups within the Caroline court, the touchstone in this case has been the attitude of politicians towards the projected restoration of the Palatinate. The group to which Hamilton belonged were all firm Protestants and with varying degrees of commitment kept alive the possibility of a military solution against the House of Austria (Philip IV and Ferdinand II) in alliance with any or all three of the following: Sweden, the United Provinces and France. Yet their task was a difficult one. Not only had they to work against Charles's hankering for a Habsburg alliance, but also his aversion to calling a parliament, on which their confessional foreign policy depended.²⁰ Nevertheless, Hamilton trimmed his sails and, as we

¹⁰ Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, 132–44. The second goal of the League was 'the restoration of the Protestant estates' in Germany, *Ibid*, 135.

¹¹ *HMC*, *Hamilton*, 189–90 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 30 March [N.D]) original is NRS, GD 406/1/112.

¹² *CSPV*, 1632–36, 565 (Correr to Doge, 23 May 1636).

¹³ *HMC*, *Hamilton Supplementary*, 26–7 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 1 February 1633) original NRS, GD 406/1/121. See also Goring's correspondence with Hamilton during the German campaign, chapter 2 p.65 & note 251; Smuts, 'Puritan Followers', p.27.

¹⁴ A.J. Loomie, 'The Spanish Faction at the court of Charles I, 1630–38', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. 59, 139 (1986) pp.37–49.

¹⁵ Chapter 2 pp.30–31; NRS, GD 406/1/268 (Will. Murray to Hamilton, 29 March 1632).

¹⁶ Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p.37. See also M. J. Havran, *Caroline Courtier: The life of Lord Cottington* (London 1979), *passim*.

¹⁷ Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p.37. For more on these two see, H.F. Kearney, *Strafford In Ireland, 1633–41* (Manchester, 1959 and Cambridge 1989); P. Haskell, 'Sir Francis Windebank and the Personal Rule of Charles I' (unpublished University of Southampton PhD 1978). According to Loomie, these four were supported by William Monson, one of the vice-admirals and Robert Bertie, earl of Lindsay, lord admiral after Portland's death, Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p.37.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.40, 38 and *passim*; Haskell, 'Windebank' esp. pp.153–5.

¹⁹ Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p. 37.

²⁰ S. L. Adams, 'Spain or the Netherlands? The Dilemmas of Early Stuart Foreign Policy' in H. Tomlinson, ed., *Before the English Civil War* (London, 1983), esp. pp.89–90, 93, 100–101.

shall see, explored options which took account of the king's inclinations and his own experiences in Germany.

The group of which Weston was the most influential member were all crypto-Catholics except the absentee Wentworth, and were in a stronger position.²¹ The treasurer managed to steer a hispanophile policy until his death in March 1635, a task made easier by Charles's own predilection for such a course.²² They believed that the Palatinate could be restored through negotiation or alliance with Spain and the emperor. This was reflected in the Weston group's second series of secret talks with Necolalde in early 1634.²³ Weston proposed either a league between the Habsburgs and Britain against Sweden, the Netherlands and France, contingent upon the restoration of the Palatinate, or, on a more moderate scale, a Spanish subsidy to finance a British fleet against the Dutch navy. Both plans, like that of 1632, got no further than the drawing board, but what is important is that this was the king's preferred route. Only when the prospect of a Habsburg-friendly solution was wrecked in 1636 did Charles consider the options favoured by the Protestant interventionists.

At this stage it should be stressed that the king's disinclination to follow an expensive military option to force his nephew's claim does not mean that he had abandoned his cause. The king had ten paintings hanging in his bedchamber: three on religious subjects, one classical, one each of Henrietta Maria, his brother prince Henry, his sister Elizabeth, her husband Frederick of Bohemia the elector palatine, another of the palatine children, and finally a life-size painting of Buckingham and his family in pride of place above the chimney.²⁴ These paintings provide a vivid illustration of the priorities of Charles I, and indeed show the prominence of the palatine family in particular. To see the king as an uninterested spectator of his exiled relations' plight is as inaccurate as viewing Hamilton as a devoted interventionist no matter the cost. Both men fell somewhere in-between and locating Hamilton's position is one of the aims of this chapter.

In order to analyse Hamilton's role within this context we must first look at his relations with the Palatines and Sweden. While the hispanophile mood prevailed at court, Hamilton's activities were low key. Yet Elizabeth's regular correspondence with him shows that he was involved in nearly every initiative to squeeze support from her younger brother.²⁵ Only a few weeks after his return from Germany, Elizabeth solicited Hamilton's intervention with Charles for the monthly allowance to the king of Sweden to be transferred to her husband.²⁶ When General Patrick Ruthven was sent to England to procure a levy in March 1634 Elizabeth referred him to Hamilton, remarking despairingly that he was the only one of Charles's councillors whom she trusted.²⁷ In 1635, when her son Charles Lewis came to court to offer his service to Charles, Elizabeth committed him to Hamilton's care.²⁸ Two years later, during the pro-French phase at court, Elizabeth recommended Ruthven to Hamilton's patronage as the general was carrying an

²¹ Weston died a Catholic, Gardiner, *History of England*, vii, 378; M.C. Alexander, *Charles I's Lord Treasurer*, pp.29–30, 63, 141, 162, 172, 189, 218. Cottington, when ill, declared himself a Catholic, Gardiner, *England*, viii, 140, 136; Havran, *Cottington*, pp.13–14, 77–78, 86, 112–13, 119–20, 126–31, 177–8. For Windebank, Haskell, 'Windebank', p.105 and chapter viii, pp.362–389. Wentworth took no part in the secret talks with Spain in 1634 being preoccupied with Ireland, Kearney, *Strafford*.

²² Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', pp.40, 42.

²³ The Weston group's (Weston and Cottington) first series of secret talks with Necolalde were in 1632 and concerned another anti-Dutch initiative, in this case employing an English land force, Loomie, 'Faction', p.39.

²⁴ O. Millar, *Van der Doort's Catalogue of Charles I's Pictures* (Walpole Society, vol.37, Glasgow 1960), pp.35–36.

²⁵ For example, NRS, GD 406/1/122, 132, 118, 134, 130.

²⁶ NRS, GD 406/1/122 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 19/29 November 1632) noted in *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 26.

²⁷ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 36 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 10/20 March [1634/5]). For more on Elizabeth's despair of getting help from Charles at this time, see the Nethersole affair, January 1634, SP 16/258/37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 73; *CSPD*, 1633–4, 400.

²⁸ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 193 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 8 October [1635]).

offer of a league from Sweden.²⁹ In the same year, she enlisted Hamilton to procure financial aid for her son who had resolved to take over the Landgrave of Hesse's army after his death in early October 1637.³⁰

Similarly, few of Elizabeth's agents or supporters went to the Stuart court without being recommended to Hamilton.³¹ Sir Francis Nethersole, Colonel G. J. Peblis, William Curtius and Sir Richard Cave were referred to Hamilton or instructed to give him information she would not commit to paper.³² In particular, Peblis and Curtius (Vane's former secretary during his embassy to Gustavus)³³ both maintained regular contact with Hamilton to keep him informed of events abroad.³⁴ Elizabeth also used Hamilton to ensure a warm welcome at court for her allies. For example, when the two sons of George, duke of Brunswick-Luneberg, came to court, Elizabeth asked Hamilton to see that they were 'extreme well used' as their father was 'now of our side,' having defected from the Imperialists to Sweden.³⁵

Elizabeth's son, Charles Lewis, the prince Palatine, also used Hamilton's influence to promote his interests, especially after he came of age and visited the court between November 1635 and June 1637.³⁶ In preparing the ground for the visit Elizabeth unequivocally charged Hamilton to take her son under his wing:

[H]e is young and therefore may commit manie faults which makes me to intreatt your care of him and that you will give him your best counsall and advise in his actions and affairs ... I pray do not flatter him but chide him when he doeth not well.³⁷

Hamilton duly obliged and, along with Holland and Pembroke, counselled the prince during his stay at court.³⁸ In a letter to Sir Thomas Roe on 13 July 1637, written a few weeks after his return to the Hague, Charles Lewis admitted that he was not 'loath' to be out of England. The prince singled Hamilton out for special attention but in a way that was double-edged: 'I pray continue to make much of my Lord Marquis & write me worde if my frends are as forward in my businesse

²⁹ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 42 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 20/30 July [1637]).

³⁰ NRS, GD 406/1/130 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, December [1637]). On the Landgrave's death, *HMC., Denbigh*, v, 52.

³¹ See for example, NRS, [Hamilton Catalogue] GD 406/1/122, 121, 119, 127, 143, 144, 139, 111, 113.

³² Nethersole and Peblis instructed to give Hamilton more information, NRS, GD 406/1/122. Curtius commended to Hamilton, NRS, GD 406/1/119. Thanks Hamilton for helping Curtius, *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 190. Sir Richard Cave will tell Hamilton all, *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 193.

³³ *CSPV., 1632–36*, 6, 9. Curtius apparently remained as Charles's agent in the Swedish army, T. Birch, ed., *The Court and Times of Charles I* (2 vols., London, 1848), ii, 191, 212. He may have later been employed as an agent for the Palatine at the British court, *CSPV., 1636–39*, 600.

³⁴ For Curtius, *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 33 (Curtius to Hamilton, 14 November 1633); *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 35–6 (Curtius to Hamilton, 3 March 1633/4); *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 89–90 (Curtius to Hamilton, 15/25 May, 1634). For Peblis, who was sent to England by the elector Palatine in the last few months of 1634, *CSPV., 1632–36*, 22; NRS, GD 406/1/9370 (Peblis to Hamilton, 20/30 April 1633); GD 406/1/9371 (Peblis to Hamilton, 18 September 1633); *HMC., Hamilton*, 84–5(65) (Peblis to Hamilton, 30 October 1633); *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 87–9 (Peblis to Hamilton, 31 March 1634)).

³⁵ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 190 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 18/8 April [1633–6]). Duke George fought for the Emperor, 1626–30, then for Sweden, 1630–35, and again 1639–41, Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, p.321.

³⁶ Charles Lewis first sought Hamilton's favour a few months after his father's death. He was sixteen and described Hamilton as 'one who intyrelly loved' his father, *HMC., Hamilton*, 82–3(63) (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 4 January 1632/3). Charles Lewis and his brother, prince Rupert, arrived at court on 21 November 1635 and left June 1637, Gardiner, *England*, viii, 99, 219.

³⁷ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 193 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 8 October [1635]).

³⁸ *CSPV., 1632–6*, 565 (Correr to Doge, 23 May 1636). I am thinking of those who supported the elector Palatine at court rather than those people, like Roe, who had no place there. For the close relationship between the elector and Hamilton's ally, the earl of Holland, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox mss CR 2017/C5/22 (Edward Hyde to Basil, Lord Feilding, 10 December 1635).

in my absence as when I am with them.³⁹ There is a suggestion that Hamilton's commitment was in doubt, but it may have been that while supporting the Palatine's cause, he was unwilling to commit himself as far as the young prince would have wished. Nevertheless, on the same day, the prince wrote to Hamilton expressing his infinite obligations and asking his 'thoughts' on the French treaty 'wch are of more consideration to me then any'.⁴⁰

For the next few years they kept up a regular correspondence, similar in content and objectives to that which Hamilton held with the prince's mother. Hamilton was used by the prince to test the king's opinion on his policy, to request the king's aid and assist the prince's clients.⁴¹ Hamilton advised Charles Lewis that unofficially the king approved of his going to the late landgrave of Hesse's army.⁴² In August 1637, a few months before the landgrave's death, it was through Hamilton's intercession as the 'fittest' minister that the prince hoped to secure land forces from Charles, enabling him to join with the Swedes in Germany.⁴³ When Charles eventually decided to assist his nephew, apparently with an initial sum of £20,000 and munitions,⁴⁴ the prince attributed it to the 'fruits' of Hamilton's 'good offices'.⁴⁵

Hamilton's offices on behalf of the Palatines were paralleled by his mediation for Sweden. His old employers engaged his services in a similar manner. When the chancellor of Sweden's son, Johan Oxenstierna, arrived at court early in March 1633, he was introduced to the king by Hamilton.⁴⁶ A year later he returned as ambassador extraordinary to solicit aid for the Heilbronn League and permission to levy troops.⁴⁷ Axel Oxenstierna had written to Hamilton a few months earlier asking him to smooth the way with Charles for the levy and to assist lord general Ruthven in the recruitment.⁴⁸ However, the chancellor's son received little satisfaction at court.⁴⁹ The intended levy was restricted to Scotland, then obstructed by the earl of Stirling after he was bribed by Necolalde.⁵⁰ It is difficult to discover how much effort Hamilton put into aiding the young Swedish ambassador, but, whatever he did, it was not enough to counter the Weston group.⁵¹ Nevertheless,

³⁹ TNA, SP 16/363/117 (Charles Lewis to Sir Thomas Roe, 13/23 July 1637).

⁴⁰ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 41–2 (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 13/23 July 1637). For the prince's acknowledgment of the favour Hamilton showed him in England, GD 406/1/9280 (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 10 August/31 July 1637). Sir Richard Cave was instructed to keep Hamilton informed of the elector's affairs and to pass information from Hamilton etc., GD 406/1/9283. Edward Hyde reported that on leaving England the elector received a pension of £12,000 and Rupert one of £2,400, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox mss, CR 2017/C2/201 (Hyde to Lord Feilding, 1 June [1637]).

⁴¹ For aid to the prince's clients, NRS, GD 406/1/9281, 9282, 9283.

⁴² NRA(S) 2177, p.266, Bundle 1404 ([Draft] Hamilton to Charles I, 12/19 October [1637]).

⁴³ NRS, GD 406/1/9280 (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 10 August/31 July 1637) printed *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 42–3.

⁴⁴ *CSPV., 1636–9*, 400 (Zonca to Doge 23 April 1638). Gustinian, the Venetian ambassador at the Hague, reported the arrival of this aid in the second week of June, that is, the money, 10,000 pounds of powder, ten pieces of artillery and several officers, *Ibid.*, 422 (Gustinian to Doge, 12 June 1638). It was reported in early September that Charles had sent another £20,000 to the prince Palatine, *Ibid.*, 471.

⁴⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/9283 (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 5 April 1638) printed *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 44–5.

⁴⁶ Johan Oxenstierna seems to have been on an unofficial visit to sound out what the king intended for the cause in Germany. Nothing concrete was offered and he left for France under a cloud in the first week of April, *CSPV., 1632–6*, 80, 92.

⁴⁷ *CSPD., 1633–4*, 427–8 (Durie to Roe 22 January 1633/4); *Ibid.*, 517 (Durie to Roe, 10 March 1633/4). For the purpose of his visit, Gardiner, *England*, vii, 354; Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p.41.

⁴⁸ *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 34–5 (Axel Oxenstierna to Hamilton, 22 November 1633).

⁴⁹ *CSPV., 1632–36*, 219–20, 221.

⁵⁰ The ambassador's commission was queried, Gardiner, *England*, vii, 354. Necolalde's bribes to officials limited the chances of success: the Scottish secretary, the earl of Stirling, was paid £250 to obstruct the Scottish levy, Loomie, 'Spanish Faction', p.41. The British levy was refused but the council apparently agreed to a limited recruitment in Scotland, *CSPV., 1632–6*, 219. Ruthven told Durie that levies were granted, *CSPD., 1633–4*, 554 (Durie to Roe, 16 April 1634).

⁵¹ It was reported in France that Oxenstierna would get more satisfaction if the current attack on Weston by Laud and Coventry succeeded, *CSPV., 1632–36*, 225. For the attack on the Treasurer, Gardiner, *England*, vii, 355–6, 362, 364.

the ambassador thanked him for his offers of assistance in glowing terms, 'Car il n'y a Seigneur en ceste Court d'Angleterre lequell je cherisse plus pour son affection vers la bonne cause et generosite de faire des actions loables que vous'.⁵²

Despite the disappointment over Oxenstierna's embassy the Swedes continued to solicit Hamilton's aid. They made further requests for assistance with levies in Scotland: through Regent Gabriel Oxenstierna and Sir Alexander Forbes in 1635 and Sir Alexander Leslie and Sir Robert Monro in 1636.⁵³ When Eleazor Borthwick, a Scottish minister in Swedish service, was sent to London in October 1634 to prepare the way for a new Swedish embassy he was referred to Hamilton.⁵⁴ Similarly, Sweden's ambassador, Sir John Skytte, and agent Sir Michael Blom, who followed shortly after Borthwick, were recommended to Hamilton.⁵⁵ Skytte in particular seems to have held Hamilton in high regard, and the Swedish council unashamedly courted his goodwill.⁵⁶ In 1635 they presented Hamilton with six brass canon (which were later turned against the Covenanters), and responded quickly to suits he sponsored at the Swedish court.⁵⁷

As well as acting in the interests of the Palatine family and Sweden, Hamilton received requests for his patronage in other areas. A facet of his public image after 1632 was that of war veteran, which was cultivated through paintings such as Hamilton in armour by Van Dyck.⁵⁸ In a letter of March 1637 Lord Feilding told Hamilton that he had been approached by some Scots officers employed by the king of Spain in Milan, who believed Charles was about to declare war on Philip IV and wished to be the first to offer their service. He continued,

your lops will finde their names in the enclosed paper wch I thought most convenient to use your lop as the fittest instrument to acquaint the King with, because as your lop hath a great interest in that nation, so you are a great patron of those who follow the military proffession.⁵⁹

Both assertions reveal a lot about Hamilton's public deportment. His 'great interest' in Scotland will be explored later, so here we shall confine ourselves to the second point. It has already been noted how Hamilton assisted Sweden in their recruitment of mercenaries in Scotland, and this

⁵² NRS, GD 406/1/9263 (Johan Oxenstierna to Hamilton, 28 August 1634), 'For there is not a Lord in this English Court whom I cherish more for his affection towards the good cause and magnanimity in doing praiseworthy actions, than you'. The translation is with the letter, though it is not contemporary. Hamilton's ability to help Oxenstierna may have been limited by his periods away from court organising the Scottish taxation, see chapter 5, section iv.

⁵³ Terry, *Life and Campaigns of Alexander Leslie, first earl of Leven*, pp.33–4 (Leslie to Hamilton, 16 April 1636).

⁵⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/9617 (Privy Council of Queen Christina to Hamilton, 26 October 1634) briefly noted *HMC., Hamilton*, 83(1).

⁵⁵ *HMC., Hamilton*, 83(2) (Privy Council of Sweden to Hamilton, 29 October 1634); *NRA(S)* 2177, Bundle 1404, p.267 (Jacques Comte de la Gardie to Hamilton, 7 November 1634). For Blom, *HMC., Hamilton*, 83(3) (Axel Oxenstierna to Hamilton, 12 November 1634).

⁵⁶ *HMC., Hamilton*, 83(4) (Swedish Privy Council to Hamilton, 9 July 1635); NRS, GD 406/1/9624 (Skytte to Hamilton, 20 August 1635). For Elizabeth's comment that all the Swedish ambassadors think they have a special relationship to Hamilton, GD 406/1/112. For the Swedes later praising of Hamilton's efforts, *NRA(S)* 2177, B-1404, p. 262 (Privy Council of Sweden to Hamilton, 1 September 1637).

⁵⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/9623 (Privy Council of Sweden to Hamilton, 31 July 1635); *HMC., Hamilton*, 83(4); GD 406/1/9261 (Skytte to Hamilton, 28 June 1636); S. R. Gardiner, *Hamilton Papers*, (Camden Society, 1880), 16 (Hamilton to Charles I, 24 June 1638).

⁵⁸ Having seen active service Hamilton, unlike Wentworth and Charles I, was justified in having his portrait in armour. The full length portrait of Hamilton in armour by Van Dyck was purchased cheaply by the prince of Liechtenstein from the duke of Hamilton, 'The Independent', 5 July 1991. For the portrait in the 'Princely Collection', Portrait of James Hamilton, Third Marquess of Hamilton | LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna (liechtensteincollections.at) (accessed, 19.10.2023).

⁵⁹ NRS, GD 406/1/9572 (Lord Feilding to Hamilton, 17/27 March 1636/7). The list can be found at GD 406/1/9572/2 and contains 9 names including Sergeant Major John Urrei [Hurry?] and Captain Nathaniell Gordon. Hamilton duly presented the names to Charles who was impressed but had 'youse of no sogers nor offiseres', W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox mss, CR 2017/C1/97 (Hamilton to Lord Feilding, 25 January 1637/8).

was a service which he also provided for France, especially in relation to the Scottish regiment there. Indeed Colonel Sir John Hepburne, in a letter of January 1633, asked for Hamilton's permission to enter French service.⁶⁰ Shortly after, Hepburne was made colonel of a special guard of 2,000 Scots for Louis XIII and three months later arrived in London with French commissions to levy 3,000 Scots.⁶¹ In 1634 and 1635 (France declared war on Spain in May) Hamilton was importuned by the king of France to secure permission for more levies in Scotland.⁶²

During the organisation of his military expedition in 1631 Hamilton had promised, 'he that will hazard with me now in this business, it shall be a tie to me and my posterity to hazard my fortune and estate with him and his.'⁶³ The words were spoken to Lord Reay who chose to see conspiracy rather than the promise of a close bond. Reay missed the point, but others did not. In the last chapter we saw that Hamilton, throughout the thirties, continued to correspond with and patronise some of his officers, notably Sir Alexander Leslie, Sir Alexander Hamilton, Sir James Ramsay and Sir Jacob Astley.⁶⁴ But it was not only Hamilton's senior officers who enjoyed his continued favour. William Davies, who had also served in Germany, came home to find certain of his lands in Pembrokeshire appropriated by a local magnate, Sir Thomas Cannon. His petition for the restitution of his lands, subsequent upon a legal trial was delivered to the king by Hamilton.⁶⁵ In June 1634 Hamilton's clients, Thomas Dalmahoy and Sir James Leslie, were granted a patent to issue licenses in Scotland for the sale of tobacco under one stone in weight.⁶⁶ Dalmahoy was part of Hamilton's retinue in Germany and a Captain Leslie is mentioned in the expedition's accounts.⁶⁷

More interestingly, in March 1637, we find Hamilton procuring a lease of several lands and tenements in the city and county of Worcester for Thomas Dalmahoy, David Ramsay and Colonel Sir Archibald Douglas, all of whom were involved in the expedition.⁶⁸ The inclusion of Ramsay in the lease is surprising. We left him in the late Summer of 1632 discredited at court and reportedly banished from the kingdom.⁶⁹ The king had warned Hamilton on two separate occasions to have nothing more to do with this 'pest'.⁷⁰ Yet Hamilton managed to draw him back into royal favour. A few months before the Worcester lease was passed Hamilton secured Ramsay the custody of the mentally incapacitated Anne Mustard's estate from the king, and he appears to have been back in his place as a gentleman of the privy chamber.⁷¹ By May 1637 Ramsay was transacting business at Hamilton's behest.⁷² Around the same time he was granted the reversion of Sir James Pitt's office

⁶⁰ NRS, GD 406/1/254 (Hepburne to Hamilton, 23 January 1633). Hepburne had replaced Leslie as Gustavus's commander in Hamilton's army at the end of 1632 and accompanied Hamilton from the king of Sweden's camp when he left Germany in September 1632, probably going as far as Paris, see chapter 2 p.41.

⁶¹ *CSPV*, 1632–6, 92 and note.

⁶² *HMC*, *Hamilton*, 91(74) (Louis XIII to Hamilton, 10 October 1634). See also GD 406/1/8389 (George, Lord Seton to Hamilton, 7 October 1634); GD 406/1/9613 (Louis XIII to Hamilton, 29 August 1635).

⁶³ Cobbett, *A Complete Collection of State Trials*, iii, 451 (Reay's Relation).

⁶⁴ Chapter 2, pp.25–26.

⁶⁵ TNA, SP 16/233/59 (Petition of William Davies to the King, 14 March 1632/3).

⁶⁶ *RPCS*, 2nd Series, 1633–5, 271–3. For the difficulty enforcing the patent, MacInnes 'Covenanting Movement, 1625–41' (PhD Glasgow 1987), ii, pp.1–2 note 5.

⁶⁷ *H.M.C.*, *Hamilton Supplementary*, 183–184.

⁶⁸ TNA, SO 3/11, unfol., March 1636/7. Colonel Douglas was dead, but the lease was in trust for his sister, Elizabeth, in consideration of her surrender of his pension of 2,000 merks. For Douglas see chapter 2 pp.27; Ramsay, chapter 2 esp. section III.

⁶⁹ Ramsay was reportedly banished the kingdom with £500 in his purse, Birch, *Court and Times*, ii, 181. See also chapter 2, *passim*.

⁷⁰ Chapter 2, p.33.

⁷¹ *HMC*, *Cowper*, ii, 147 (Hamilton to Sir John Coke, 10 November 1636); NRS, GD 406/1/371 (Alexander Cottington to Hamilton, 8 May 1637). In the letter to Coke, see note above, Hamilton described Ramsay as a gentleman of the privy chamber.

⁷² NRS, GD 406/1/11872 (Ramsay to Hamilton, 30 May 1637).

as a philazer in the Court of Common Pleas.⁷³ Hamilton's patronage of his "verie good frind" and "antient acquaintance" continued, and even in March 1642, when he had other things on his mind, he found time to write a long letter to Sir John Banks on Ramsay's behalf.⁷⁴

As suggested above, Hamilton projected an image of the soldier-statesman imbued with the values of the Protestant-Palatine cause. The extent of his contacts in Europe was amongst the best and most extensive at the Stuart court. It was Hamilton who was expected to promote the Palatine cause in the Scottish parliament in 1633, to ensure that it would exhibit the same support as its English counterpart in 1629.⁷⁵ When Oxenstierna called the crucial meeting of the Protestant states of the Empire at Frankfurt in 1634 it was rumoured that the king would send Hamilton as his representative.⁷⁶ From a different perspective, Hugh Ross had held various commissions since 1626 to organise the exchange and repatriation of British prisoners of war in Europe. It was to Hamilton that he turned in 1638 to secure payment of his charges and arrears.⁷⁷

The irrepressible John Dury (yet another Scot who sought Hamilton's favour) never gave up hope that Hamilton would become his patron with the king.⁷⁸ In early 1634, on receiving news of the Frankfurt convention, Dury went to inform the two secretaries, Hamilton, then Laud.⁷⁹ During the interview Hamilton promised to speak to the king on his behalf, but Dury took the initiative a few months later and tried to get Hamilton to secure him a preferment.⁸⁰ Dury tried a different approach in March 1640 by going through Hamilton's secretary, Francis Vernon, in an attempt to secure the marquis's intercession with the king.⁸¹

Probably more revealing is a letter from one Thomas Hopley of 3 March 1637. Hamilton had given the writer an "audience" the previous evening in which a proposition to aid Sweden "wth paid soulders" was discussed. In the letter Hopley went on to promise a scheme by which the king could do this "w[i]thout calling a p[ar]liam[e]nt, w[i]thout taking one penny from his subiectes yea by givinge unto them." As a result of his audience Hopley felt compelled, and sufficiently confident, to declare:

I see that you are the man whome God will use as his happy & glorious instrument. 1/ for the blessed uniting of the heartes of Kinge & people unto him, & each unto other. 2/ for restoring & making more illustrious the palatine then ever any of his Ancestors were.

⁷³ NRS, GD 406/1/1604 (Hamilton to Sir John Banks, 26 March 1642). The grant was for '[philizer] for London and diverse other shires'. Philazers, prothonotaries and exigenders were all offices in the Court of Common Pleas. On 22 January 1641, the clerks of Common Pleas petitioned against Ramsay and ten others (including a John Hamilton) for selling these offices at 'unreasonable and excessive prices', *L. J.*, iv, 139.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/120 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 21/31 May [1633]).

⁷⁶ TNA, SP 16/263/51 (John Dury to Roe, 27 March 1634) printed in Gunnar Westin, *Negotiations about Church Unity 1625–1634* (Uppsala 1932), pp. 285–6. Hamilton had copies of the articles to be discussed at the convention, *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 35 and was kept informed about its progress, *Ibid.*, 89–90. Anstruther was in fact sent, SP 16/263/73. For the meeting, Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 140, 157; *CSPV*, 1632–6, 222–3.

⁷⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/504 (Hugh Ross to Hamilton, 23 May 1638). Ross claimed that he had redeemed 4,577 prisoners and was asking £6,451 for charges and arrears. He held commissions from the English Privy Council, the duke of Buckingham and Charles I.

⁷⁸ See for example the following two letters with 6 years between them, NRS, GD 406/1/9251 (Dury to Hamilton, 29 March 1634); Sheffield University Library, Hartlib MS 2/2/fol.5r (Dury to Hartlib, 14 March 1640). I owe the second reference to Anthony Milton.

⁷⁹ *CSPD.*, 1633–4, 427 (Dury to Roe, 22 January 1633/4) printed in Westin, *Church Unity*, 278–80.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; NRS, GD 406/1/9251.

⁸¹ G.H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius. Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers*. (Liverpool, 1947), p.203; Sheffield University Library, Hartlib MS 2/2/fol.4r (Dury to Hartlib, 8/18 March 1640), *Ibid.*, 2/2/fol.5r (Dury to Hartlib, 14 March 1640), *Ibid.*, 2/2/fol.8r–v (Dury to Hartlib, 20 March 1640). I owe all these references to the kindness of Anthony Milton.

3/ for humblinge the proud house of Austria, & making it to suffer & to doe what justice doth require.⁸²

Like some of the other evidence presented here, this reveals Hopley's perception of Hamilton. Hopley wrote his letter less than a day after an audience, making the content even more significant. Without doubt, Hopley, Dury and the others, were responding to Hamilton's public actions and the image he projected. It was this that prompted a confidant in Madrid to relate, "your honour suffers hier sum qt in opinion".⁸³ Relating a conversation in the presence of Philip IV, the writer quoted the Conde Duque of Olivares' impression of Hamilton:

he had alwayes caryed a particular inclinacion to the Conde de Arren [ie Hamilton] desde que estuvo a ca con el principe y que le pesava mucho que signiisse factiones contrarias al Rey de Espana.⁸⁴

Hamilton protested:

who so ever they wer thatt geaive the Conde Ducque informationne, that I followed factiones contrarias all Rey de Espanie has doune itt out of malis and spleen to me.⁸⁵

That, and a claim that he was only following the king's intentions, was his reply. It was clearly a charge he found difficult to deny.

II

It has been argued that between his return from Germany and late 1635 Hamilton's activities in foreign affairs were restricted by the prevailing political climate at court. He promoted the Palatine cause through his offices with the king like an unofficial ambassador and charge d'affaires. He did what was possible under the circumstances. Beyond that, it is difficult to assess how far he was willing to commit himself. It is to these problems that we now turn in the politics of 1635–7 when the king contemplated a more active way forward to secure the rights of the elector Palatine and his family.

In terms of the course of Caroline foreign policy the year 1635 was a watershed. In that year Weston died, France went to war with Spain, Sweden's war effort began to totter and the prince Palatine came to the British court.⁸⁶ Yet the situation did not change overnight. The shift away from Spain was made reluctantly by the king and never completely.⁸⁷ For the next two and a half years attempts were made to negotiate an alliance in Europe against Spain. In 1636 a revived queen's party began pushing for an alliance with France.⁸⁸ That group overlapped with Elizabeth's supporters at court and made common cause for an alliance with France, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. They came close to succeeding and a draft of the Anglo-French treaty was sent

⁸² NRS, GD 406/1/332 (Thomas Hopley to Hamilton, 3 March 1637).

⁸³ NRS, GD 406/1/317 (Hugo Sempilio to Hamilton, 10 October 1635).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ The quote is from Hamilton Catalogue, volume i, p.365 in the National Records of Scotland. The original is listed as NRS GD 406/1/9534 ([Draft] Hamilton to [], ND [1635]), but it has been miscallandered or mislaid: NRS GD 406/1/9534 is actually a scrap of paper with comments in Hamilton's hand about the recall of the French ambassador. The letter is described in *NRA(S)* 2177, p.266.

⁸⁶ Sweden's defeat at the battle of Nordlingen on 6 September 1634 was not their only problem, Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, pp.132–144, esp. p.141.

⁸⁷ Adams, 'Spain or the Netherlands?', pp.100–1; Gardiner, *England*, viii, 217–8.

⁸⁸ Smuts, 'Puritan Followers', pp.35–7. Laud apparently lent some support.

to the conference at Hamburg in the late summer of 1637.⁸⁹ In the end, the grand anti-Habsburg alliance failed to materialise amidst squabbles over maritime superiority and scepticism about French, but especially English, sincerity. Despite the silence from the limited work on these negotiations, Hamilton was involved and it is that which we hope to track.⁹⁰

In a letter to his brother-in-law in Venice on 8 December 1636, Hamilton anticipated the consequences of the failure of the earl of Arundel's last ditch embassy to the emperor for a resolution on the Palatinate:

Itt is probabill thatt att my lo[rd] Marshals returne ... ther will be new resolutiouns takine in the affaires of the pallatinatt for his lo[rdship] is parted from the empriours Court without reseving anie satisfaction in thoes affaires ... bot what will be the way for the effecting of our ends is as yeitt un knoen to me, by way of tretie ther is small hopes left, we may Conjectur whatt will be the nixtt, bot itt is a mater of no small consiquens the being ingaged in a ware, yeitt this I ame most Confident of, his Matie will shoe the woordill [world] the extraordinarie Cayre he hes of his nepheu and thatt cause.⁹¹

Hamilton made two important points here. First, at this early stage it was “un knoen” to him if a policy had been decided, implying that he was not involved in the consultations. Hamilton was not a member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs until October 1639, though that in itself is not evidence that he was not consulted.⁹² Second, he appeared to welcome the possibility of a war. The first point was clarified further in mid-January of the following year in his next letter to Feilding:

Upone my lo[rd] Marshall[’s] returne much tyme uas spent in privatt consall, and att last a resolution takine to assist the Suaides and joyne with the joynteh [junto], but upon uhatt conditiones is not yeitt publickly knoen. A generall accomodation is the end and the restoring of the Pallatine who, in person is lykly to undertake sume actione (by seea) this sumer.⁹³

Five weeks later, and Hamilton's approval of the turn of affairs becomes evident:

The tymes are lykly to change and ue begine to think of putting ourselves in action ... The conjunctive of affaires is shuch thatt his Mati can not be loong now in suspens for ue expect dayly ane absolut conclusioun with Franse or eales Ther resolution to the Contrarie. Frome Sued[en] (wher befor this sertainly his Matti agent is arrived) ue expeck propositicans will be med for the continuing of the ware in Germanie, and if they be not altogider unrasona-bill itt is lykly they will be imbrased heire.⁹⁴

Hamilton expressed similar approval at the prospect of his friend, George, Lord Goring, being sent as ambassador to Holland.⁹⁵ The negotiations, especially with Sweden, depended firstly on an agreement being reached with France, and Hamilton was perturbed by the delay, which he interestingly attributed to French fears that Charles intended “nothing bot the making more

⁸⁹ NRS GD 406/1/9280 (Charles Lewis to Hamilton, 10/21 August 1637).

⁹⁰ Smuts, ‘Puritan Followers’, pp.38–41; Loomie, ‘Spanish Faction’, pp.43–48; Gardiner, *England*, vii, 210–222.

⁹¹ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/64 (Hamilton to Lord Feilding, 18/8 December 1636). For Feilding's answer against a war, NRS, GD 406/1/9555 (Feilding to Hamilton, 6 February/27 January 1636/7).

⁹² See for example Haskell, ‘Sir Francis Windebank’. (PhD Southampton 1978), pp.106–7.

⁹³ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/65 (Hamilton to Feilding, 28/18 January 1636/7).

⁹⁴ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/67 (Hamilton to Feilding, 24 February 1636/7).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* See also W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/70. Hamilton told Feilding that Elizabeth had promised ‘great matters’ in Holland's ‘name’, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/67.

advantagous conditions with Spain & Germany”.⁹⁶ By this Hamilton presumably meant that France thought Charles, as previously, only flirted with the idea of an alliance to scare the Habsburgs into dealing for the Palatinate.

Given that, the easiest way to understand what was intended is provided in a letter written by Charles I on 28 February 1637:

Upon Arundell's Return I have perceived that directly, which heretofore I have much feared, to wit, the Impossibility of restoring my sister and Nephews by fair means, at least without threatening. This has made me fall in with France in a strict defensive League:(the treaties are not yet ratified by France, but I make no question of their ratifying of them) and if we and the confederates, (viz. Denmark, Swede and the States) can agree both how and what to ask, upon refusal ... we are jointly to proclaim the House of Austria with all their Adherents, our Enemies. But I have professed, that all my Warfare must be by Sea and not by Land ... I am resolved not to meddle with Land Armies.⁹⁷

Amongst other things, Charles's confident assertion that France would ratify the treaty is worth noting. Wentworth, the recipient of the letter, took this to mean a declaration of war on the Habsburgs and quickly despatched a lengthy paper advising against such a course.⁹⁸ In his reply, Charles told his lord deputy of Ireland:

Ye mistake the Question, for it is not, whether I should declare a war to the House of Austria or not, but whether I shall join with my Friends to demand of the House of Austria my nephew's Restitution, and so hazard (upon Refusal) a declaration of War?⁹⁹

Charles was more inclined to threaten war than to wage it, and believed that the “hazard” of a war would only involve the use of naval power.¹⁰⁰ Land armies meant a parliament and a naval war meant Ship Money. Yet Charles may also have been thinking of Hamilton's experiences in Germany. At that time he had been unwilling to commit further land forces (on Hamilton's advice) during Vane's treaty negotiations with the king of Sweden.¹⁰¹

Charles seemed reluctant wholly to commit himself after sitting on the fence for so long and staring hopefully at Madrid. It was this reluctance, which France (and Sweden) sensed, that contributed to the delay and lack of candour. Equally, the approaches to Sweden must also be seen as an attempt to stop them making peace to the detriment of the Palatines. Despite the setbacks, Hamilton was able to report to Feilding in mid-June that the treaty with France was agreed and “condesended to by booth”, with the final ratification at Hamburg to allow Sweden time to join the “Leeag”. In concluding, Hamilton perhaps exhibited a lingering suspicion that both Charles and Louis lacked sincerity: “I shall say no more bot thatt I pray god all be performed thatt is undertakin and the suces proufe ansuerabull to my wisshes”.¹⁰²

It remains unclear whether Hamilton was consulted during the crucial weeks after Arundel's return from the emperor. The limited evidence suggests that he was not one of the inner circle of advisers when the decision was taken to canvass France and Sweden about a league. But this is based only on two pieces of evidence. First, he was not a member of the Committee for Foreign

⁹⁶ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/71 (Hamilton to Feilding, 21 April 1637).

⁹⁷ Knowler, *Earl of Strafford's Letters and Dispatches*, ii, 53 (Charles I to Wentworth, 28 February 1636/7).

⁹⁸ Knowler, *Strafford's Letters*, ii, 59–64 (Wentworth to Charles I, 31 March 1637).

⁹⁹ Knowler, *Strafford's Letters*, ii, 78 (Charles I to Wentworth, 1 June 1637).

¹⁰⁰ Charles often used threats to secure concessions, Conrad Russell, ‘The First Army Plot of 1641’, *Unrevolutionary England, 1603–42* (London, 1990), pp.281–302. I am grateful to Dr David Smith for reminding me of this point.

¹⁰¹ See chapter 2 pp.37–41. Laud was totally against the use of land forces, J. Bliss ed., *The Works of the Most Reverend Father In God, William Laud* (8 vols., Oxford 1860), vii, 319 (Laud to Wentworth, 11 February 1636/7).

¹⁰² W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/81 (Hamilton to Feilding, 26/16 June 1637).

Affairs, though this is less important than it appears as the committee often rubber-stamped decisions already made in private consultations. Second, and more persuasive, Hamilton reported the decision to Feilding in terms which suggested that he was not consulted.¹⁰³

More fully documented is Hamilton's initiative to merge the interests of Sweden with the Palatines through marriage. Given his association with both parties it was likely that he would be the architect of such a move. The plan was to suggest two marriage alliances. The first, and most important, was between the prince elector, Charles Lewis, and Queen Christina, daughter of the late Gustavus Adolphus. The second was between the palgrave of Sweden and Charles Lewis's sister.¹⁰⁴ The points of the marriage proposals had already been worked out by March 1637. It was to be offered as an additional bond to the projected alliance between Britain and Sweden. Included in the contract was a general defensive league between Britain and Sweden as well as an offensive league against the "enemeis of the pallatinat". Assurance was given for British levies for members of the prospective coalition, at "ther awin chairges", and those opposed to the cause would be "debarred". Sweden would also receive naval support with a proposal that the merchants of both countries trade abroad together. It was stressed that the other members of the broader league, France and Holland, would not be prejudiced. As a further inducement Chancellor Oxenstierna would receive the Order of the Garter on completion of the deal.¹⁰⁵

The last part of Hamilton's orders makes it plain that if the offer "be lyked of by the Suads, I am in guad hope that his Matei uilbe moved to give eare to them"¹⁰⁶ In other words, Hamilton was fronting the offer while Charles at least officially kept distant from it. For that reason, it was not part of the official negotiations conducted by Sir William Barclay, General Patrick Ruthven and Colonel Fleetwood.¹⁰⁷ A separate retinue left for Stockholm at the end of March 1637, with gifts of horses to young Queen Christina, the queen mother, the regent Gabriel Oxenstierna and other chief members of the Swedish council.¹⁰⁸ It was led by Eleazor Borthwick, a Scottish minister long associated with Hamilton. In 1648 Marchamont Nedham, a very hostile source, was to claim that Borthwick had submitted a deposition against Robert Meldrum during the plot investigations of 1631.¹⁰⁹ With more certainty, we have already noted that the Swedish Privy Council recommended Borthwick to Hamilton in October 1634.¹¹⁰ From then on, he was probably part of Hamilton's circle though he may still have been employed by Sweden.¹¹¹ Borthwick's mission was conducted with some secrecy and he reported direct to the marquis at court.¹¹² His letters survive and provide the only detailed record of this initiative. Moreover, the correspondence provides an insight into the European status of Britain in the same summer as the introduction of the new liturgy in Scotland.

¹⁰³ See also note 93 and Hamilton's quote on private consultations.

¹⁰⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/9310 (Hamilton to Borthwick, 14 March [1636/7]), the instructions are in Borthwick's hand, 'My Lord Marquesse of hamiltoun gives order in maner following.' noted with omissions and mistakes in *HMC., Hamilton Supplementary*, 39.

¹⁰⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/9310.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* This last paragraph is not in the HMC version.

¹⁰⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/9311.

¹⁰⁸ NRS, GD 406/1/9278, 369.

¹⁰⁹ British Library., E.446 (4), M. Nedham, *The Manifold Practises And Attempts of the Hamiltons, and particularly of the present Duke of Hamilton Now Generall of the Scottish Army To get the Crown of Scotland* (London 1648), p.15.

¹¹⁰ See above; NRS, GD 406/1/9617 ([Copy] Queen Christina to Hamilton, 26 October 1634). This letter states that Borthwick was 'a great frend bothe to the Evangelicall cause and to your honor'.

¹¹¹ For Borthwick's movements between Scotland and Court, 1635–6, T. Thomson, ed., *A Diary of the Public correspondence of Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall, 1633–45*. (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh 1843), pp.27, 40, 44. Borthwick left Edinburgh on 14 March 1637, the same day he drafted the instructions for the embassy, *Ibid.* p.40 and NRS, GD 406/1/9310 suggesting that Hamilton may also have been in Edinburgh. The letters to Hamilton during Borthwick's embassy suggest familiarity, for example, NRS, GD 406/1/369, 373.

¹¹² NRS, GD 406/1/9311. See also, GD 406/1/368, 9278, 369.

Borthwick arrived in Stockholm on 16 April (three days after the official agent, Sir William Barclay) and left sometime in July.¹¹³ He immediately delivered Hamilton's letters to the regent and Sir John Skytte and set about securing an audience for Barclay, who had till then been unsuccessful. In addition, Borthwick revealed that Colonel Sir George Fleetwood, sent by Charles to hinder the Swedes making peace, had been "no good freind to your honr heire in speaking qt he will not stand too".¹¹⁴ It seemed anyone who rocked the boat was doing Hamilton a disservice. A week after his arrival, Borthwick reported that the horses had been gratefully received, but that the propositions had not yet been discussed. The initial reason was attributed to Chancellor Oxenstierna's commitments in Germany – nothing could be discussed until his return. While assuring Hamilton that Regent Gabriel affirmed that if Charles joined with Sweden the war would continue, Borthwick noted worrying news from Germany:

Her Gabriell reportts that the Chancelor is informed the Kings Majei of Great brittane will doe nothing for [the] help of Germanei for a yeire and that he is agayne to send ane Ambasadour to the Emperor.¹¹⁵

Not without reason Borthwick concluded his letter, "I sould be glayd to heare y[ou]r H[onou]r how matters goes in Ingland that sua I might accomodat[e] my self the better heire".

Sometime over the next two weeks Borthwick had an audience with Chancellor Oxenstierna that produced nothing conclusive.¹¹⁶ Although the Swedes seemed willing to allow a meeting between the elector Palatine and their queen, the stumbling block remained the king's failure to make a firm martial commitment to the German war. For reasons of security, Borthwick did not report the details of his meeting until 14 June when he was able to convey a letter by Barclay's servant.¹¹⁷ In this more detailed report, he described how the proposal was floated to Oxenstierna as an initiative of Hamilton's devising. Without answering, Oxenstierna immediately launched into a resume of Sweden's policy in Germany since Gustavus Adolphus's death and pointed out how Charles I had done "littill ... bot putting of[f] tyme w[i]t[h] treaties to no end". In contrast, Sweden had fought throughout and were now "cleare befor the world to make ther awin peace". As for the marriage proposals, it was not law in Sweden to make such treaties when the party concerned was of the age of consent. Nevertheless, the proposal was of such importance that it would be put before the council and estates. And with that frosty answer Borthwick was put off from "weeke to weeke".¹¹⁸

For the next six weeks Borthwick awaited his answer and continued his illuminating reports. He advised that Gustavus's widow, the queen mother, whose goodwill the marquis had courted, exerted little influence as "the chanseller will dae quhat he pleases".¹¹⁹ Hamilton's confidence on that score seems to have been misplaced. Yet the main difficulty remained that Caroline foreign policy, in whatever guise, carried little weight. As Borthwick angrily noted:

Ther is a wonderfull change in Sued[en] in so littell tyme they look big becaus of this good yeare [and] jeasts to sei the King so used be [the] frens[h] K[ing] quho still respects the Duk[e] of Baverra w[i]t[h] the disgrace of the elect. pallatine ... The Chanseler thinks yt

¹¹³ NRS, GD 406/1/368 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 16 April 1637); GD 406/1/9311 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 3 July 1637).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*; NRS, GD 406/1/370 ((Borthwick to Hamilton, 7 May 1637). Fleetwood returned to the British court around 21 April with offers for continuing the war, W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/71; CSPV, 1632–6, 567; Birch, *Court and Times*, ii, 276.

¹¹⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/369 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 24 April 1637).

¹¹⁶ NRS, GD 406/1/370 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 7 May 1637).

¹¹⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/375 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 14 June 1637).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ NRS, GD 406/1/370 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 7 May 1637).

the elect. pallat. gues not the right way for his bussines and ye Ellc: palletinatt cannot be helped without a parlamen in ingland.¹²⁰

Adding insult to injury, Borthwick reported that Denmark and Sweden were discussing a marriage between Queen Christina and one of the king of Denmark's sons.¹²¹

Borthwick's next letter, on 12 May, began with the equally depressing news that Sweden looked about to accept peace terms in Germany and "we left owt".¹²² The news did not get any better, "it is heire thought that france and England sall not stand long in good tearmis, the esteat of the Court of Ingland is knowin weall heare and few things passes quero of they heave not shortlei intelligence".¹²³ The latter point was something Hamilton would find applied to his negotiations in Scotland the following year, with the Covenanters very well informed about the ongoing discussions at court. Two days later, Borthwick vented his spleen upon the influential Scots at the Swedish court, notably Patrick Ruthven, later earl of Forth and Brentford. He found that the Swedes ignored Barclay and listened to the opinion of Ruthven and his friends. They advised "that ther was no good to be lookitt for from England".¹²⁴ In his final letter, on 3 July, Borthwick pointed out that Ruthven "hes so prevealed w[i]t[h] the Chamberlan and the rest ther, that it is in vayn to perswade anie more by word or wrot yt good can come from Ingland w[i]t[h] owt parlemen[t] wch they think will not be".¹²⁵ It was not just in Britain that the king's aversion to parliaments was heeded.

Despite his failure to get an answer, Borthwick continued reporting to Hamilton until the beginning of July. Exasperation made his pen less cautious and the poor standing of Charles and Hamilton was revealed. The Swedes case was that "the King must give more nor his old faire generalls befor he gett the lordschip of Swed[en] to my lord Elector".¹²⁶ The contempt for such a proposal in the light of Charles's history of military non-commitment drew a derisory response. With surprising honesty, Borthwick summarised the situation thus:

ther is nothing heire but jesting at all yr purposes and proceidings in Ingland, nether will they be perswadit to expect anie thing from thence, sume quho hes beine heire leatlei of quhom I wrot particularlei befor hes given them such impression that ether ye want good-will or at least credeit wt yr Master to doe aniething in Stat[e] affaires.¹²⁷

If English foreign policy was a laughing stock, Hamilton, in this case, was the court jester. The charge of a lack of goodwill is understandable given the lacklustre support throughout the decade. The second charge, that Hamilton lacked any political clout, cuts much deeper. About two years before, the same impression was reported to Hamilton from Madrid, thus, "the Conde Ducque told Mr Lyndsay that the mor[e] the King & he inquired of you, the les they culd heir of your credit wt the King of Great Britain".¹²⁸ Lindsay endeavoured to persuade Olivares that Hamilton in fact held "great sway" with Charles I, but whether he succeeded is not recorded.¹²⁹ The charge from Madrid that Hamilton lacked the influence to decisively shift Caroline foreign policy is certainly true. Yet the reports of diminishing influence from Sweden came principally from Ruthven and his friends. In September 1632, Ruthven requested Hamilton's patronage to enable him to leave

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.* Albeit these talks were not going well, and foundered on the same point as Hamilton's offer.

¹²² NRS, GD 406/1/372 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 12 May 1637).

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/373 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 14 May 1637).

¹²⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/9311 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 3 July 1637). The cipher for Ruthven was Lord Innermeath or Hindermeath.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ NRS, GD 406/1/375 (Borthwick to Hamilton, 14 June 1637).

¹²⁸ NRS, GD 406/1/317 (Hugo Sempilio to Hamilton, 10 October 1635).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

“this dangerous prince” (Gustavus Adolphus) and come to Britain “to attend your exc:[ellency].”¹³⁰ Hamilton’s answer has not survived, but the fact that Ruthven was still in Swedish service in 1637 is perhaps answer enough. Though Ruthven occasionally wrote to Hamilton he may have harboured a grudge, but this is only speculation.¹³¹ We have already found evidence that Hamilton was unpopular in Madrid and that may account for his poor standing there.

It is not surprising, however, that frustration in Sweden and hostility in Spain was directed at Hamilton. As previously argued, his views on foreign policy, for most of the Personal Rule, went against the orthodoxy at court. His influence in that sphere was therefore limited. Hamilton would not force his opinions too far if they were unpalatable to Charles I. We will see this again during his time as royal commissioner to Scotland. Yet he organised the unofficial embassy and marriage proposal, of which we would have been unaware had not Borthwick’s letters survived. By instinct and because it was the king’s preference, Hamilton was a courtier politician who often gave his advice unofficially. The Committee for Foreign Affairs was the place to give official advice, but it was sometimes presented with policy that was formulated elsewhere. The extent of Hamilton’s political influence therefore is difficult to gauge. We shall encounter the same problem when we look at Scotland in the same period. That some contemporaries, believed Hamilton was a political lightweight may in some way reflect the workings of the Caroline polity during the Personal Rule. It may also reflect the fact that Hamilton and Charles disagreed on foreign policy, and thus the marquis’s counsel went unheeded.

The accusation that Hamilton, like Charles I lacked real commitment warrants further comment. Despite the king’s claim to Wentworth that he had decided on a more active Palatine policy due to dissatisfaction with the emperor and the king of Spain, Charles also feared that Sweden might sue for peace to the detriment of his nephew’s cause. Charles dabbled with the idea of an anti-Habsburg alliance, albeit limited to a naval commitment, more in the hope of eliciting concessions than going to war. It was at least true to Charles’s serpentine nature, but fooled neither France nor Sweden. In fact, we see the same convoluted approach to negotiations during the civil wars, with the king regularly playing one side against the other and lacking sincerity. That Hamilton was charged with lacking “goodwill” in Sweden may be partly due to his master’s reputation. Yet we cannot always blame Charles’s famous reputation for duplicity each time some of the mud lands on Hamilton. But in this case Hamilton’s resort to a sequence of marriage alliances may signal a view that the grand anti-Habsburg alliance, given the protagonists’ motives, would fail. Perhaps he hoped to salvage something and build from that. Certainly, marriage alliances were more enduring than political alliances and, in similarly fraught circumstances, he attempted to broker a marriage between his daughter, Anne, and the earl of Argyll’s son in 1641.¹³²

Yet if nothing else Hamilton was ever hopeful. Even after the Borthwick Embassy had collapsed, he retained some optimism that the official alliances would be ratified. On 4 August, a month after Borthwick’s last despairing letter from Stockholm, Hamilton warned his more cautious brother-in-law in Venice:¹³³

The tyme ar lykly to be actife for his Matti is sensabill hou he hes beine yused, and hes not only concluded with frans[e] bot is in a faire way lykuys to joyne with sued[en] and holland to the former of which his Matti hes granted freie liberti to make whatt levis they pleais in ani of his dominions.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ NRS, GD 406/1/275 (Ruthven to Hamilton, 17 September 1632).

¹³¹ There seems to be only one example, *HMC. Hamilton*, 93 (Ruthven to Hamilton, 4/14 May 1635).

¹³² See chapter 8, pp.187–8; 193–4.

¹³³ NRS, GD 406/1/9555 (Feilding to Hamilton, 6 February/27 January 1636/7). In which Feilding points out the hazards of going to war to recover the Palatinate.

¹³⁴ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/86 (Hamilton to Feilding, 14/4 August [1637]).

With less optimism, he told Feilding about five weeks later that it would not be long before “a full resolution” in the “forrane treatseis”. With a hint of despair, however, he added that if the treaties did not go through it would not be the king’s fault, “bot my feair is France and Spaine will conclude peace and England neglected if not excluded.”¹³⁵ Despair turned to silence and the treaties were never mentioned again in his subsequent correspondence. Predictably enough, efforts by Sweden and France to get a full commitment from Charles remained elusive,¹³⁶ though the king provided some aid for the prince Palatine.¹³⁷ For all that, rumours continued that the alliances were still on throughout 1638.¹³⁸ By that time Hamilton had been forced to turn his attention elsewhere.

As we have seen, such was the political orthodoxy of the Personal Rule that alternatives, or complements, to anti-Habsburg alliances were explored, both officially and unofficially. Economic warfare was another effective way to dent Spain’s power in Europe. The activities of the Providence Island Company with its famous members (Warwick, Holland, Bedford, Saye, Pym, St John et al) was, amongst other things, geared towards damaging the economic and colonial power of Spain.¹³⁹ Apart from the earl of Holland, their members were all excluded from the government of Charles I. They embraced a militant Protestant vision which had some sympathisers in the government and they probably hoped to follow their lead with a similar enterprise. Unlike Providence Island however, this project depended on a breach with Spain and would be supported, if not led, by the government.

The idea emerged during the prince Palatine’s stay at court and was taken up by his assiduous supporter, Sir Thomas Roe. The plan was to set up a West Indies company on the Dutch model and was in varying degrees supported by the prince Palatine, Arundel, Northumberland, Pembroke and Hamilton.¹⁴⁰ There is little doubt that the company was intended as the second prong in the projected war with Spain. Its formation and survival depended on the anti-Habsburg alliances being established and the subsequent breach with Spain. The company would compensate the crown for the loss of trade revenues from war with Spain in Europe and the Indies.¹⁴¹ To separate the Indies from Spain would cripple their ability to make war in Europe. As Roe pressed on with his preparations he reported his progress to Hamilton in September 1637 and enclosed a blueprint for the company.¹⁴² Yet like the anti-Habsburg alliances on which it depended the project stymied. Again, that is not as important as the fact that Hamilton was to some degree involved. In terms of identifying policies to which he was sympathetic, his connection with the West Indies project fits into the general pattern.

The question posed at the beginning of this section – how far Hamilton was willing to commit himself for the Palatine cause – has been answered as far as the evidence allows. Certainly, when the opportunity arose for a more active policy Hamilton was a firm and enthusiastic supporter. Yet the policy preferred by Charles was to use the threat of Britain joining an anti-Habsburg coalition to force concessions for his nephew. The military option, if indeed the king ever intended

¹³⁵ W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox ms, CR 2017/C1/90 (Hamilton to Feilding, 15/25 September [1637]). Feilding warned Hamilton that this might happen, NRS GD 406/1/9555.

¹³⁶ CSPV., 1632–6, 364–5, 400–401, 403, 403–4, 470. And attempts by Spain to stop the alliance, *Ibid.*, 437, 438.

¹³⁷ See pp.66–67 & note 45.

¹³⁸ CSPV., 1632–6, 390, 470.

¹³⁹ Reeve, *Road*, pp.212–215; Smuts, ‘Puritan Followers’, pp.37–9; A. P. Newton, *The Colonizing Activities of the English Puritans* (New York, 1914).

¹⁴⁰ TNA, SP 16/364/84 (Roe to Charles Lewis, 29 July 1637). Northumberland saw it as ‘the most hopefull and feasible designe’ but doubted whether the money could be raised in the present recession, SP 16/365/28 (Northumberland to Roe, 6 August 1637). For Hamilton, NRS, GD 406/1/1252 (Roe to Hamilton, 19 September 1637). This project is briefly mentioned in M. Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe 1581–1644, A life* (Salisbury 1989), p.226 and note 61, but Hamilton is not mentioned.

¹⁴¹ This forms the basis of Roe’s letter to Charles Lewis, TNA, SP 16/364/84.

¹⁴² NRS, GD 406/1/1252.

going that far, was restricted to a naval commitment. This simply was not enough for Charles's coalition allies.¹⁴³

But was it enough for Hamilton? Of the limited evidence that has survived none shows the marquis objecting to the limits imposed by the king. A shrewd politician such as Hamilton would never commit such thoughts to paper anyway. With some certainty we can say that Hamilton supported the projected coalition as far as the king seemed willing to take it, that is to an initial naval commitment. Unlike Charles, however, he may have seen that as the first step rather than the final one. His sponsorship of the marriage proposals with the concomitant military option suggests that he wanted much more than the king was inclined to give. The marriage proposals may also have been an attempt to salvage something more permanent if the grand alliances proved illusory. That Hamilton was associated with the West Indies design is further evidence that he envisaged war with Spain at some point, but then again, in the early stages, so may have the king. For all that, Hamilton was certainly much closer to the foreign policy objectives of those men associated with Providence Island and the 'opponents' of the court than he was to the bulk of the court and indeed, the king. It was to these individuals and their friends that Hamilton would attach himself as the new decade dawned.

III

Including a discussion of Hamilton's religion as part of this chapter is deliberate, for it provides the only route into a most elusive topic. Put simply, Hamilton did not leave enough evidence to reconstruct his religion from either his personal piety or his ecclesiastical patronage. Instead, we must piece together what fragments of comment he made, but even more we have to rely on circumstantial evidence. By that it is meant how he behaved in public affairs which could have confessional connotations. In other words, to what extent did religious belief shape Hamilton's public actions? Therefore, it is appropriate that we should conclude an analysis of the Protestant cause and diaspora with some reflection on the marquis's religion.

Nevertheless, a loud note of caution should be made before proceeding. In the next chapter it will be argued that Hamilton, even though he was a patron of the Protestant cause, was very flexible in his patronage connections and political alliances, often working with men and women of divergent ideological and religious beliefs. So one must be wary of slotting him and others into neat political, social or religious categories. For instance, the politics of foreign policy and the politics of patronage were not always the same. Therefore, in this short discussion of Hamilton's religion, the main argument will be that his religious belief did not always dictate his political alliances, his social connections nor on whom he bestowed his patronage.

What should also be made clear from the outset is that Hamilton's religious experience was Scottish. He spent his first fourteen years in Scotland under the influence of his Calvinist mother, Anna Cunningham, the dowager marchioness of Hamilton and though his religious attitudes were almost certainly softened at court, these formative influences were very important.¹⁴⁴

In the circumstances it would probably be best to begin with a review of what Hamilton was not in religious terms. First and most obviously, Hamilton was not a Catholic. Hamilton's Catholic relatives have been discussed earlier, the earls of Abercorn, a cadet branch of the family which broke away in the late sixteenth century.¹⁴⁵ Hamilton was from the Protestant and main line of the family, though in his Will he left instructions that his eldest daughter, and heir, should be married to Lord

¹⁴³ *CSPV*, 1632–6, 401, 470; and above.

¹⁴⁴ See chapter 1, p.14.

¹⁴⁵ See chapter 1, pp.10–11.

Paisley, the second earl of Abercorn's eldest son.¹⁴⁶ This attempt to re-unite the Hamiltons may have been prompted by a desire to avert the legal challenge brought by the earl of Abercorn from 1652, initially concerning the Chatelherault title, over a female succession.¹⁴⁷ Dynastic problems aside, Hamilton's patronage of the Protestant cause and his consistently anti-Spanish stance would make it unlikely that he was Roman Catholic. At least two instances have survived, in 1622 and in 1639, when an anti-Catholic streak showed itself.¹⁴⁸ Many of those associated with the German campaign such as Elizabeth of Bohemia, David Ramsay and the earl of Roxburgh all attested to the enthusiastic young marquis's Protestant credentials.¹⁴⁹ Even the most vindictive pamphleteers in 1648 did not refute Hamilton's Protestantism.¹⁵⁰

In his voluminous study of the Hamilton brothers, bishop Gilbert Burnet confined himself to observing that the marquis's religion was "protestant and reformed" and that he was a "zealous enemy to popery".¹⁵¹ Burnet's first point is so broad that it is difficult to disagree with, especially given what has already been said. Yet his second point is surely an exaggeration, for though it has been argued that Hamilton displayed an anti-Catholic streak, it did not stop him working or corresponding with Catholics. He even retained one of his own personal counsel, Dr James Baillie, despite suspecting that he was a Roman Catholic.¹⁵² In 1638, George Con, papal legate to Henrietta Maria, exchanged letters with Hamilton.¹⁵³ Earlier in the same year, and more remarkably, Hamilton's brother-in-law, Basil, Lord Feilding (ambassador extraordinary to Venice and the princes of Italy), recommended to Hamilton one Mr Fitton, who had acted as Feilding's intelligencer in Rome thus:

Hee is a secular preist, but of that order (wch of all others is the lesse dangerous) the most moderate, and therefore the more capable of your lops assistance wherein your lop may owne him for your servant.¹⁵⁴

Evidently, we have walked into a minefield.

The second negative we can suggest is that Hamilton was not a hard line Calvinist. As we have seen, he was not bitterly anti-Catholic. Nor did he shun visual imagery as idolatry. Hamilton's art collecting activities during the 1630s shows that he happily collected pieces on religious topics by

¹⁴⁶ Lennoxlove, Hamilton mss, TD 91/109/M14/3/4 (12 June, 1648). Hamilton had two daughters only: Anne and Susanna, if Anne died before she could marry Lord Paisley then Susanna was to marry him.

¹⁴⁷ When Hamilton was made a duke in April 1643, he had a special remainder, failing heirs male of his body, to his brother William's heirs male (who only had daughters), with remainder to the eldest heir female of his own body, G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, ii, 260, 467; Balfour, *Scots Peerage*, iv, 377–381. It was the succession through Anne which Abercorn unsuccessfully contested.

¹⁴⁸ In 1622, Hamilton, then earl of Arran, complained about the release of recusants from prison, CSPD 1619–23, 448 (Bishop Williams to Arran, 17 September 1622). In 1639 Hamilton railed against Roman Catholics to the earl of Traquair, Innerleithen, Traquair mss, 7/10A (Hamilton to Traquair, [August] 1639). For more on the second instance, see chapter 7, pp.178. See also, TNA SP 16/169/17 ([J?]) Carleton to Dorchester, 19 June 1630).

¹⁴⁹ *HMC Hamilton Supplementary*, 26 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 19 November 1632); *State Trials*, iii, 448, 452, 464, 502; NRS, GD 406/1/241(Roxburgh to Hamilton, 17 March 1632). On hearing of the death of the Calvinist landgrave of Hesse in 1637, Hamilton lamented the passing of 'a constant man for the liberty of Germanie', W.R.O., Feilding of Newnham Paddox mss, CR 2017/C1/76 (Hamilton to Feilding, 20 October [1637]). See also, GD 406/1/140 (Elizabeth to Hamilton, 21 1631).

¹⁵⁰ See for example, Nedham, *The Manifold Practises*, pp.8–9.

¹⁵¹ Burnet, *Lives*, p.518.

¹⁵² Baillie was living in London and receiving a pension of 500 merks per term from Hamilton and, by 1645, was married to Margaret Hamilton (Hamilton's natural sister). He may have been the same James Baillie who was Hamilton's governor when he first arrived in London, Lennoxlove, Hamilton mss, TD 90/73/F1/25/1–17; TD 90/73/F1/123. See also, NRS, GD 406/1/241. For Baillie's suspected Catholicism, GD 406/1/940 (Hamilton to Windebank, 15 April [1639]).

¹⁵³ NRS, GD 406/1/11197 ([Copy] Hamilton to George Con, 24 October [1638]).

¹⁵⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/9500 (Feilding to Hamilton, 28 March/7 April [1638]). For more on Feilding, see chapter 4.

Catholic painters such as Tintoretto, Titian and Raphael.¹⁵⁵ What we have with our subject then, is someone who evades neat religious categorisation, just as he defies neat categorisation in his political, social and patronage connections.

Two areas may help to narrow the focus further, Hamilton's private worship and his ecclesiastical patronage. We do not even know for certain who Hamilton's chaplain was. In 1638, Robert Baillie said that it was the unfortunately named Mr Laudian (surely a corruption of Lothian) who had written in favour of kneeling to receive the sacraments. But what is known is that Robert Baillie warmly approved of the minister, who it was rumoured had recently died, "he was an excellent philosophe, sound and orthodoxe, opposite to Canterburie's way, albeit too conforme: I counselled oft Glasgow [University] to have him for their divine lecturer".¹⁵⁶ Later in his career, both James Johnstone, minister at Stenhouse and a Dr Sibbald may have been at different times the marquis's chaplains.¹⁵⁷ Other than suspecting that the latter was Dr James Sibbald, one of the Arminian Aberdeen doctors who challenged the Covenanter ministry in 1638, little is known about these two men.¹⁵⁸

The Hamiltons enjoyed enormous ecclesiastical patronage in the West of Scotland, Lothian and Arbroath, but no records of presentations has survived.¹⁵⁹ Be that as it may, it seems almost certain that Hamilton's Calvinist mother, Anna Cunningham, the dowager marchioness, not only ran the Scottish estates, but may have controlled most of the ecclesiastical patronage as well.¹⁶⁰ Certainly she organised conventicles in the Hamilton area during the 1630s.¹⁶¹ Hamilton's acquisition of Chelsea House and Manor in June 1638 brought with it the nomination of the incumbent for Chelsea and the power to collate the parsonage of Fulham.¹⁶² However, by the time these places fell vacant in the summer of 1642, Hamilton was on his way back to Scotland to avoid taking sides in the English Civil War and the marquis's chamberlain at Chelsea, Sir John Danvers, appears to

¹⁵⁵ For Hamilton's art collecting activities through his brother-in-law in Venice, see chapter 4, section iv. For lists of some of the paintings he acquired, Paul Shakeshaft, 'To much bewiched with thoes intysing things: the letters of James, 3rd marquis of Hamilton and Basil, Viscount Feilding, concerning collecting in Venice 1635–1639', *Burlington Magazine*, February 1986, pp.114–132, esp. pp.131–132; E.K. Waterhouse, 'Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth Century England', *Italian Studies*, vii, (1952), pp.1–23. At least one of the paintings Hamilton acquired, 'the Madonna and Child with saints' by Palma Vecchio, had a cross in it, reproduced in Shakeshaft, 'To much bewiched', p.127. For Robert Cecil's pictures, Pauline Croft, 'The Religion of Robert Cecil', *The Historical Journal*, 34/4 (1991), pp.787–788.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals*, ed., D. Laing, (3 vols, Edinburgh 1841–2), i, 77.

¹⁵⁷ For Johnstone, *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 3rd Series* ed., P. Hume Brown, (16 vols, Edinburgh, 1908), i, 276. For Sibbald, Burnet, *Lives*, pp.510–511, 515; *HMC Hamilton Supplementary*, 76 (Sibbald to William, 2nd duke of Hamilton, 5 May 1649).

¹⁵⁸ Sibbald may only have attended Hamilton for the few months before his execution. He was not Dr James Sibbald, the Aberdeen doctor who died in Dublin a few years earlier. See below.

¹⁵⁹ There may well be records on ecclesiastical patronage which I have missed in the enormous Hamilton archive. For a thorough appraisal of the extent of Hamilton religious patronage in the sixteenth century, Elaine Finnie, 'The House of Hamilton: patronage, politics and the church in the Reformation period', *Innes Review*, no.36, pp.3–28. See also the review of charters and deeds in *NRA (S)*, 332, part 48, nos.138–152.

¹⁶⁰ The dowager marchioness was a very powerful and independent lady, most clearly seen in her Will where, amongst other things, she hoped that her eldest son would look more to God's glory 'nor to al that this wordil can give him', Lennoxlove, Hamilton mss, TD 91/109/M14/3/3 (Will of Anna Cunningham, 4 November 1644). For an example of her tough stance with Hamilton when he asked for money for his brother, NRS, GD 406/1/408 (Anna Cunningham to Hamilton, [1636–37]). For examples of the marchioness's signature on estate accounts and debts, Lennoxlove, Hamilton mss, TD 90/93/F1/42/1; F1/79; F2/135; F2/103; F2/92; F2/93; F2/102; F2/112; F2/114. Sir John Hamilton of Orbiston was Hamilton's main link with the estates. Hamilton appears to have had some contact, through Sir Thomas Hope, the lord advocate, with nominations for entries in his own parishes for the Commission for Planting Kirks, GD 406/1/262 (Hope to Hamilton, 31 December 1633). For the king making a nomination for the kirk of Carluke, NRS, GD 406/1/249 (Charles I to Archbishop of St Andrews, 18 March 1633). For the dowager marchioness's robust support of the Covenanters see chapter 7, p.167.

¹⁶¹ W. Makey, *The Church of the Covenant 1637–51: revolution and social change in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp.72–73.

¹⁶² *CSPD 1637–8*, 526–7; NRS, GD 406/1/1698 (Danvers to Hamilton, 30 June 1642).

have been left with the nominations.¹⁶³ At this stage then, it can be said that Hamilton was neither Catholic nor rigid Calvinist and Robert Baillie's endorsement of his chaplain in 1638 leaves the impression that he did not approve of the orthodoxies of the church in England, nor was he enthusiastic about Laud's interventions in Scotland.

Apart from his patronage of the Protestant cause, other instances of Hamilton's political behaviour could also contain evidence of religious attitude. Such an approach has to be carried out with the greatest care, however. When William Prynne was tried in Star Chamber in February 1634 for his condemnation of women actors in his book *Histriomastix*, Hamilton voted for the highest sentence.¹⁶⁴ But this throws no light on Hamilton's piety, or lack of it, for he almost certainly voted condign punishment on the godly Prynne, like the earl of Dorset, because Queen Henrietta Maria, a keen actress and theatre-goer, had been libelled.¹⁶⁵ Court position and family relation (Hamilton's wife and mother-in-law were of the queen's Bedchamber) therefore dictated his condemnation of the unfortunate Prynne.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Hamilton's patronage of William Middleton and Henry Downhall was less to do with doctrinal empathy than the fact that both were successively Lord Feilding's chaplains.¹⁶⁷ Hamilton's association with Eleazor Borthwick throughout the 1630s was grounded on similar views on foreign policy, but the relationship was closer than anything we have found with other ministers.¹⁶⁸ Borthwick embraced the Scottish National Covenant in 1638 and gradually became an influential figure in the movement, yet he retained his links with Hamilton.¹⁶⁹ Even though too much can be read into this relationship, it seems to point in the same direction as Baillie's earlier approval of Hamilton's chaplain. A picture of Hamilton as a moderate Scottish Protestant then, is perhaps beginning to emerge.

The marquis's views on episcopacy would certainly clarify this picture. The next two chapters will examine his activities in England, Scotland and Ireland prior to the Scottish troubles and it will cite no examples of Hamilton collaborating with bishops either in secular or religious matters.¹⁷⁰ That may be significant and it suggests his disapproval of the growing influence of bishops in civil matters, especially in Scotland. During the Scottish troubles, Hamilton again displayed what could at best be described as an ambivalent attitude towards the Scottish episcopate and he was widely believed by contemporaries to be anti-episcopal and "ane incliner to the puritane side".¹⁷¹ How contemporaries viewed Hamilton is perhaps more important than how he behaved in his official capacity as royal commissioner in 1638–39. Thus the commissioner's assistance to

¹⁶³ NRS, GD 406/1/1698. Hamilton may have written back to Danvers with his nominations, but he was leaving other areas of patronage in his gift to his servants and others, see for example, NRS, GD 406/1/1847 (Hamilton to [?], 5 June 1643).

¹⁶⁴ S. R. Gardiner, *Documents Relating to the Proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637* (Camden Society, ns xviii, 1877), pp.13–25. Hamilton missed the first day of the trial, being in Scotland negotiating taxation returns, 'yett for the tyme hee satt he findes the cause soe odyous that hee agreeth in his sentence with the highest', *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹⁶⁵ The queen's lord chamberlain, and organiser of her theatrical entertainments, Edward Sackville, 4th earl of Dorset condemned Prynne for the same reason, D.L. Smith, 'Catholic, Anglican or Puritan? Edward Sackville, Fourth Earl of Dorset and the ambiguities of religion in Early Stuart England' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1992, Vol.2, 105–124.

¹⁶⁶ Hamilton's court position, family connection political alliances in England will be discussed in chapter 4.

¹⁶⁷ See chapter 4, pp.117, 124.

¹⁶⁸ As described above, Hamilton sent Borthwick to Stockholm in 1637, and he also sent him to Scotland in 1638 and received a very interesting advice paper from him, see chapter 6, p.141.

¹⁶⁹ See above for Borthwick and Hamilton before the troubles. NRS, GD 406/1/1382 for Borthwick acting as a messenger between Hamilton and the Covenanters in the summer of 1641. In November 1641, the committee of estates chosen by parliament to go to the English parliament nominated Borthwick and Harry Rollock as their ministers, Baillie, *Letters*, i, 397.

¹⁷⁰ See chapters 4 & 5, *passim*. There is a suggestion that Hamilton may have collaborated with John, earl of Traquair, lord treasurer of Scotland in 1637, over the nomination of James Fairlie for the bishoprick of Argyll, NRS, GD 406/1/1012.

¹⁷¹ The words are Baillie's, *Letters*, i, 85. For the tension between Hamilton and the Scottish bishops, chapter 6, *passim*. For some other examples of contemporary opinion that Hamilton was anti-episcopal, Spottiswood, *History of the*

ministers dispossessed by the Covenanters in 1638–39 was at the behest of the king and casts little light on Hamilton's religious outlook.¹⁷²

The only instance where Hamilton's personal piety and his political role as royal commissioner clashed was over his subscription in September 1638 of the 1581 Negative Confession and Royally approved band, the so called King's Covenant. In a letter to Archbishop Laud, Hamilton described how he put the King's Covenant before the Scottish Privy Council on 22 September,

Wee resolved to the subscription of the Confession of faithe and band, wch wee all did, and my sellff wth this protestation that corporell presenc I understode was meant and not reall presence, wch was I said clearlie expressed in the confession established by act of parliament.¹⁷³

Obviously, the rejection of any real presence at the consecration was a very important point to Hamilton. And it continued to trouble him. For two months later, when the policy of which the King's Covenant was a key part had failed, Hamilton told Charles that he had tried everything to gather a Royalist party in Scotland to the point where he had "even straned my Contience in sume poynts (be subscribing the negatife confession)".¹⁷⁴ Earlier, in May 1638, Hamilton informed his mother that he was coming to Scotland as commissioner and expressed a fervent hope that the troubles could be settled "and yeitt by god[s] grace we keipe our religioun untented or poluted".¹⁷⁵ Even though Hamilton was trying to get his mother on his side, such an expression may offer us a glimpse of the marquis's opinion on the recent liturgical reforms. Such scruples bring him even closer still to the moderate Scottish Protestants characterised by Baillie and Borthwick, ministers to the right of centre in the Covenanting movement in the Summer of 1638.¹⁷⁶

Ten years later, Hamilton wisely composed his Will before taking his ill-fated army into England to rescue the king in the summer of 1648.¹⁷⁷ Although some English historians have warned us that the preambles to Wills were often formulaic,¹⁷⁸ the preamble to Hamilton's Scottish Will is nevertheless instructive:

I doe humblie recomend my sould to the mersie of my glorious Creatore, hoping that by the mereites of my Blissed savior Chryst Jesus he will pardone my sines and reseae me in to his Mersie: deying as I have profesed a member of the treu reformed Religion, as it is nou established in this kingdome, and a Loyall subject to my Gracious Master King Charles.¹⁷⁹

Whilst the part before the colon about salvation through the merits of Jesus was standard enough, the part after the colon could have been inscribed on Hamilton's standard as he marched into

Church of Scotland (1659 Edinburgh), preface 'Authors Life' by 'D.M.'; Oxford, Bodleian Library, mss Rawlinson D. 857 (Several Passages at the Assembly at Edinburgh 18 August 1639 [unfol.]).

¹⁷² In May 1638, Hamilton agreed with the king that he would assist the silenced ministers, see chapter 6, p.138. For a list of clergy put out of their places drawn up in 1639, NRS, GD 406/M1/72/2. For a petition by George Hannay, minister at Torpichen, describing his violent ejection from his church, GD 406/M1/31 (Hannay to Hamilton, [after 6 May 1638]). See also, Peter Donald, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637–41* (Cambridge, 1990), p.98.

¹⁷³ NRS, GD 406/1/564 (Hamilton to Laud, 24 September [1638]).

¹⁷⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/326/1 (Hamilton to Charles I, 27 November [1638]). For a detailed analysis of Hamilton's commissionership to Scotland between May–December 1638, chapter 6, *passim*.

¹⁷⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/409 (Hamilton to Anna Cunningham, 21 May 1638).

¹⁷⁶ Hamilton eventually signed the February Covenant in the summer of 1641 (with the king's approval) to be allowed to sit in parliament and later asked the House of Lords in England to allow him to abstain from voting on bishops exclusion as he was already bound by the Covenant, NRS, GD 406/1/904. For a different stance when writing to the bishop of Ross in August 1639, GD 406/1/944.

¹⁷⁷ Lennoxlove, Hamilton mss, TD 91/109/M14/3/4 (12 June, 1648). The Will is all in Hamilton's hand.

¹⁷⁸ For a discussion of this, D.L. Smith, 'Earl of Dorset and the ambiguities of religion' above.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

England. Once again, we encounter the problem of separating Hamilton's religion from his politics, and it is something that refuses to yield, whether through a lack of evidence or the marquis covering his tracts. Even at his execution, in March 1649, two rival statements were published, one rejecting Scottish religion and the other embracing it – the former presumably for an English audience and the latter for a Scottish one.¹⁸⁰

We have only been able to catch glimpses of Hamilton's religion, and when these are put together an approximate picture is the best that can be achieved. In fact, that blurred picture is probably what Hamilton wanted his contemporaries to have. A Reformed Protestant, with an anti-Catholic and anti-episcopal streak, who disapproved of Laudianism in England and could be placed to the right of centre in Scottish religion in the summer of 1638 is about as near as Hamilton has allowed us to get. Unlike Charles I, Johnstone of Wariston or Viscount Scudamore in England, Hamilton was not famous for his strong religious views.¹⁸¹ His actions as a courtier and politician were not directed by a godly compass. His self-fashioning was imbued with the behaviours and standards of the ancient nobility and as a cousin of the king. Rather, Hamilton was governed by codes of honour, respect, self-interest and a desire to retain harmony and balance within the body politic. If a political, economic or social problem presented itself, Hamilton would try to effect a solution within the limits of what was feasible, of what was possible at the time. If anything, Hamilton at times may have tried to keep religious issues out of politics, but occasionally, as in 1647–48 when he harnessed Presbyterianism to his political manifesto, he brought it in to achieve secular ends. And perhaps significantly, that was Hamilton's last desperate political act. Witnessing the ravages wrought by religion in the Thirty Years War may have left the young nobleman with a *politique* mentalité, a desire to keep religion out of politics because it tended to overheat the body politic and divide the state.¹⁸² That we cannot be more specific about Hamilton's religion is less to do with the vagaries of archive survival, and more the result of another smooth evasion by our subject.

¹⁸⁰ The two speeches are printed in Burnet, *Lives*, pp.506–512.

¹⁸¹ For Scudamore, see Ian Atherton, 'Viscount Scudamore's "Laudianism": the religious practices of the first viscount Scudamore', *Historical Journal*, 34/3 (1991), pp.567–596. I am very grateful to Ian Atherton for advice on the problems of revealing an early modern nobleman's religion.

¹⁸² I am grateful to Dr. Brendan Bradshaw for discussions around this point.