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Sir Henry Lee (1533 – 1611) : the life and career of an Elizabethan courtier gentleman.

by

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ABSTRACT

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SIR HENRY LEE (1533 – 1611) : THE LIFE AND CAREER OF AN ELIZABETHAN COURTIER GENTLEMAN

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Sir Henry Lee lived from 1533 to 1611. Despite a long and active career as Elizabeth I's tournament champion, instigator of the Accession Day tournaments, Steward of the Queen's manor at Woodstock, Master of the Armoury and Knight of the Garter, Lee remained a gentleman, howbeit one of the elite courtier gentlemen who served Elizabeth I.

The only studies of Lee's life are the brief monograph produced by his descendant, Viscount Dillon of Ditchley in 1906, and E.K. Chambers' *Sir Henry Lee: an Elizabethan Portrait* (1936). Lee's name frequently appears in major works on Elizabethan England, yet despite its dated nature and factual errors, Chambers' work remains the sole secondary source of reference for Lee's life.

A new study of Lee's long life offers an opportunity to examine the values, hopes, expectations and frustrations of an elite Elizabethan gentleman, with others of his social class. Sir Henry Lee also had talents that singled him out from his counterparts. His contemporary fame was based upon his performance in the tournaments, an activity that was becoming outmoded as training for war, but still, in the eyes of the public, represented the best of chivalric virtues. This study will attempt to analyse how tournaments developed in late Elizabethan England, the uses to which they could be put, and how Lee saw the role of chivalric values they embodied.

Lee is interesting to study as a human being. He had a wife, a mistress, land holdings, a wealth of friends and a long relationship with Queen Elizabeth. This study seeks to describe and appraise Lee's life and career in its entirety, using a wide range of primary sources, many not available to Chambers. These sources will be used in the context of recent scholarship on Elizabeth's England as well as what remains of Lee's material culture, in an attempt to understand the life of an understudied and underrated Elizabethan gentleman.

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ABBREVIATIONS

All terms have been given in full at their first appearance in the text.

BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.*
BL	British Library.
Cecil MS	Cecil Manuscripts, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire.
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, Edward IV, Mary I, Elizabeth, James I.*
CSP Foreign	*Calendar of State Papers Foreign series of the reign of Elizabeth.*
CSP Scotland	*Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots.*
Dasent, *APC*	*Acts of the Privy Council of England,* ed. by John Roche Dasent.
EHR	*English Historical Review.*
HJ	*The Historical Journal.*
HMC Salis.	*A Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire.*
LP	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII.*
ORO	Oxfordshire Record Office.
RSTC	*Revised Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland 1475-1640.*
TNA, PRO	The National Archives, Public Record Office.
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.*

INTRODUCTION

Sir Henry Lee (1533-1611) has been called 'the fairest Man at Armes & most complete Courtier of his Times'.[1] *(Fig. 1).* He is best known as the self-appointed 'Queen's champion' and as the instigator of the Accession Day tournaments held annually in the Queen's honour on the anniversary of her accession, 17 November 1558. Much of his life was devoted to royal service; he held the offices of Steward at the Queen's Manor at Woodstock from 1572 and Master of the Armoury at the Tower of London from 1580. This brief description conceals a career that was rich in diversity; what is fascinating about Sir Henry Lee is the eclectic nature of his life. In addition to his jousting excellence, he travelled widely in Germany and Italy, he fought in several military campaigns, he was an early patron of the Flemish artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger and during his long life he embraced a wide circle of friends, including Lord Robert Dudley earl of Leicester, Philip Sidney, Sir William Cecil Lord Burghley and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, Robert Devereux earl of Essex and Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales. A study of Sir Henry Lee therefore affords insights into a wide variety of aspects of the Tudor and early Stuart Court.

In the eyes of Frances Yates and Roy Strong, Lee was creator of the 'cult of Elizabeth' and the epitome of the Elizabethan gentleman.[2] But how do we define an Elizabethan gentleman? Although Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes have provided an over-view of sixteenth and seventeenth century gentry studies to complement the excellent county studies of Northamptonshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Yorkshire, a firm definition is still elusive.[3] Contemporaries were unable to agree exactly what a gentleman was. Sir Thomas Smith in 1565 made it clear in his much quoted definition that, although wealth was essential, reputation came first as he 'who can live idly and without manual labour and will bear the port, charge and

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[1] From Lee's *Memoriae Sacrum* in E.K. Chambers, *Sir Henry Lee: An Elizabethan Portrait* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 305-6.

[2] F. Yates, *Astraea: the Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth century* (London, 1975), pp. 88-111; R. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1977), pp. 130-4.

[3] F. Heal and C. Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500–1700* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. x. See also D. MacCulloch, *Suffolk under the Tudors, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986); M.E. Finch, *Five Northants Families, 1540-1640* (Oxford, 1956); A.H. Smith, *County and Court: Government and Politics in Norfolk, 1558-1603* (Oxford, 1974).

Fig. 1

Sir Henry Lee by Antonis Mor, 1568

countenance of a gentleman ... shall be taken for a gentleman'.[4] Sir John Ferne, in 1586, while emphasizing the importance of lineage and conduct, stressed that 'honor [is] the chiefest and essentiall part of Gentrie'.[5] John Selden, one of the leading English legal figures of the seventeenth century, wrote 'what a gentleman is, is difficult to define ... in Westminster hall, he is one that is reputed one, in the Court of Honour he that hath arms'.[6] Present-day historians have been equally unable to find an agreed definition; M.E. Finch, in her study of Tudor Northamptonshire families, defines 'elite gentry' as 'families of long-established wealth who belonged to a rank only one degree below the peerage'.[7] Mingay refers to the 'convenient portmanteau expressions that historians are obliged to employ' – greater gentry, lesser gentry, mere gentry and the courtier gentleman.[8]

The root of the problem springs from the fact that, technically, before 1611 there was no difference in nomenclature between the greater gentry whose wealth, possessions and position at Court could rival that of the nobility, and the possessor of a few acres, newly freed from manual labour. In May 1611 James I established some measure of differentiation by awarding the new hereditary title of baronet to some two hundred 'gentlemen of good birth', a number that initially was jealously guarded. Sir Henry Lee died in February 1611, but his heir was invited to assume the title of baronet in June 1611. One might surmise therefore that the estate of Sir Henry Lee ranked among the leading gentry holdings in the country.

Can one achieve any consensus on the attributes of an Elizabethan gentleman? Writers both contemporary and modern seem to agree that gentlemen should be possessed of a certain amount of land and wealth, be armigerous, and be of good lineage. If the last was not immediately evident, there were ways in which, as Sir Thomas Smith noted, 'for money ... the title ... shall pretend to have been found by the ... herald perusing olde registers'.[9]

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[4] Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (London, 1583), p. 55, Revised Short Title Catalogue (RSTC) 22866. Although this was written between 1562-1565 and widely circulated, it was not printed until 1583.
[5] John Ferne, *The Blazon of Gentry* (London, 1586), p. 77, RSTC. 10825.
[6] John Selden, *Discourses or Table talk* (London, 1696), p. 64, Wing S2438.
[7] Finch, *Five Northants families,* p. 68.
[8] G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry* (London, 1976), p. 1.
[9] Smith, *De Republica Anglorum,* p. 70.

Humanist writers reiterated an older tradition whereby gentlemen should demonstrate martial skill and service to the commonwealth, be it in local administration or in service at Court. In addition, there was what Heal and Holmes describe as 'the intense efforts of conduct writers and religious reformers to establish elaborate patterns of gentle behaviour'.[10] Conduct books such as Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* in 1528 and Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book of the Governor* in 1531 found their way into various libraries and circulated among gentry - in the case of Castiglione, long before their actual translation into English.[11]

Additional responsibility fell upon the gentleman with a knighthood, a largely exclusive honour until the last decade of the sixteenth century. The traditional ideals of the 'perfect gentil knight' were legendary, described by authors such as Ariosto and Tasso and reinforced by the pronouncements of the College of Arms and High Court of Chivalry.[12] The tenets of chivalry were clearly expressed in the *Booke of the Ordre of Chyualry,* by the thirteenth century Catalan writer and mystic Ramon Lull.[13] A knight should show loyalty and service to his sovereign, demonstrate prowess in arms, both on the battlefield and at the tournament, show comradeship with other knights and protect the weak. The book was translated and printed by William Caxton in 1484, and was popular long before the courtesy books became common.

The writings of such as Lull, Castiglione and Elyot may have described an ideal to which many gentlemen could only aspire, but they set a tone and fashion for a standard of conduct in polite society. The extent to which a gentleman who was also a knight could, or would, actively attempt to comply with the tenets of chivalry depended on the gentleman in question. Most settled for John Selden's vaguer definition that a gentleman was one who was 'accepted by others as part of the honour community', and 'whose gentility was acknowledged by others'.[14]

For Sir Henry Lee, as for many others of his rank, any attempt to define a gentleman was academic. Lee, secure in his gentry birth and upbringing

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[10] Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry,* p. 17.
[11] Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier,* trans. and ed. by G. Bull (London, 1967); Sir Thomas Elyot, *The boke named the Gouernour* (London, 1537), RSTC. 7636.
[12] Ludovicio Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* (1532); Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1575).
[13] Ramon Lull, *The Booke of the Ordre of Chyualry,* ed. A. Byles (London, 1924).
[14] Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry,* p. 18.

was a substantial landowner with a long family tradition of service to the commonweal and attendance at court. The 'port, charge and countenance' of a gentleman came naturally to him. Lee lived until his seventy-eighth year, serving some five monarchs, and although he was knighted and was elected to the Order of the Garter, he remained by rank a gentleman. One can ask therefore what a detailed study of the long life of Sir Henry Lee can reveal about the mindset of the Elizabethan gentleman in both local and national affairs. Whether Lee, as a knight, also consciously attempted to uphold the tenets of chivalry will be discussed later.

SIR HENRY LEE: AN INTRODUCTORY BIOGRAPHY.

Sir Henry Lee was born around March 1533 and died, if the inscription on his tomb is to be believed, 'with a body bent to earth and a mind erect to Heaven' in February 1611. As a short biography in its own right, Lee's tomb inscription, his *Memoriae Sacrum*, can hardly be bettered.[15] *(See Appendix One)*. It seems unlikely that the old knight, who had a hand in the design, not only of his own tomb, but those of his parents and the future tomb of his long-term mistress, Anne Vavasour, did not have an influence on the wording on the black tablet above his monument. If so, it indicates what Lee himself regarded as important.

Lee's *Memoriae Sacrum* stressed his lineage as a gentleman, the son of Sir Anthony Lee of Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire. His mother was Margaret Wyatt, daughter of Sir Henry Wyatt, Privy Councillor to both Henry VII and Henry VIII. The inscription proudly boasts that Sir Henry Lee was born in his maternal grandfather's house in Kent and briefly came under the guardianship of his uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt. Lee inherited his father's estates in 1549 at the age of sixteen, but no reference is made to the holder of his wardship, William, Lord Paget or to Lee's wife, Anne Paget, from whom he became estranged. Lee was knighted at the coronation of Mary I in 1553, and either through Paget's advice or his own good sense, took no part in the abortive rising of his first cousin, the younger Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1554. As a major Buckinghamshire landowner, Lee sat as Member of Parliament for the

[15] The inscription on Lee's tomb was originally in the now-ruined Quarrendon Chapel, and was composed by Lee's great-nephew, William Scott.

shire, acted as a magistrate and developed his Quarrendon estates. He also served in a military capacity on the Scottish border.

Lee was young in coming to his own estates and to marriage; by twenty five, he wanted something more than the life of a provincial country gentleman, however prosperous. His tomb inscription tells us that at the 'beginninge of the Glorious Reigne of Queene Elizabeth', like many young gentlemen of means, he travelled through Europe to Italy. He repeated his travels in 1568-69, 'gracing the Courtes of the most Renowned Princes' and sending home informative accounts to his kinsman Sir William Cecil, the Queen's Secretary. For a provincial gentleman, Lee was well-connected – Lee also enjoyed a long friendship with Lord Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, the Queen's favourite.

The year 1570 marked a watershed in Lee's career. His prowess at the tournament was probably developed in Italy and Lee was first recorded at a Court tournament in 1571, defeating the best tilters of his generation. He caught the Queen's attention and throughout the 1570s, Lee enjoyed a marked degree of royal favour. Around 1570, he instigated the Accession Day tournaments, held in the Queen's honour, and although their documentation is sporadic until 1581, there is ample evidence that a public tournament was held each year, attended by the Court and citizens.[16]

Lee's talents did not lie only in the military aspects of the tournament. When the Queen visited Woodstock on progress in 1575, Lee organised a new form of entertainment for the occasion that combined the pageantry of the tilt with allegorical narrative. The nature of tournaments was changing in other European states; in France, for example, the popularity of tournaments declined following the death of Henri II in a tilting accident in 1559 and during the regency of Catherine di Medici, the emphasis was placed more on pageantry than combat. Lee left no record of what public chivalric displays he saw in the city states of Italy during his travels, but from 1575, he developed the tournament into a major public spectacle, combining military skill with poetry, prose, music and pageantry. He claimed the honour of being the Queen's personal tournament champion and continued to tilt in both private

[16] Sir William Segar, *Honor military and Civill* (London, 1602), RSTC. 22164.

and public spectacles until he was fifty-seven. In his retirement tournament of 17 November 1590, acknowledging that ' his golden locks time hath to silver turned', Lee resigned his position to George, earl of Cumberland.[17]

A gentleman's obligation and privilege of royal service led Lee to serve the Queen in other roles; the *Memoriae Sacrum* claimed he was 'singled out by the choyce hand of his Sovereigne'. In 1572 he became Steward and Lieutenant at the royal palace at Woodstock, responsible for the Queen's hunting and entertained the Queen and Court there on four occasions. The tomb inscription makes much of his part in the siege of Edinburgh castle in 1573; Lee always saw himself as a soldier and served with distinction in the north of England and Scotland on four occasions. No mention is made on his tomb of the less glorious but more lucrative patents granted by the Queen in 1576 to manumit three hundred bondmen, an anachronistic practice that was rapidly becoming obsolete. In 1577, Lee accompanied the young Philip Sidney on embassy to the Emperor Rudolf in Prague, and in 1580 Lee was appointed Master of the Armoury at the Tower of London, a position traditionally associated with the tournaments. In 1583, Lee bought a new estate for himself at Ditchley in Oxfordshire, near the Queen's manor at Woodstock, and this became his principal home. In 1588, with the imminent threat of Spanish invasion, he served as Master of the Horse in the army of the earl of Huntingdon in the north of England. As Master of the Armoury, in the 1590s he was responsible for making good the depredations on the arsenal brought about by the demands of war and worked closely with the Almain Armourers at Greenwich and the Armourers' Company of London, provisioning expeditions to France, Cadiz and Ireland.

Little of Lee's so-called 'retirement' from the tournament field was spent in the rest, tranquillity and contemplation claimed on the tomb inscription. Apart from his work at Woodstock and at the Armoury, Lee entertained the Queen and the Court at his Oxford home at Ditchley in 1592. He attended the Court regularly in London and in 1595, at the suggestion of Sir William Cecil, now Lord Burghley, he made an abortive attempt to be appointed as Vice-Chamberlain of the Household. In 1597, again through the good offices of

[17] From verses sung at Lee's retirement in 1590, see J.C. Nichols, *Progresses, Public processions etc. of Queen Elizabeth*, 2nd edn. (3 vols., New York, 1967), iii. pp. 46-8.

Burghley, and Lee's kinsman, Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, Lee was appointed Knight of the Garter, the ultimate chivalric accolade and an honour awarded to very few gentlemen.

If the *Memoriae Sacrum* made no mention of Lee's Catholic wife, Anne Paget, it also omitted any reference to his mistress of some twenty-one years, Anne Vavasour.[18] This lady, briefly a maid-of-honour to the Queen, had been seduced by the earl of Oxford soon after her arrival at court and bore him a son in the maids' chamber in 1581. After a period of incarceration in the Tower, she became Lee's mistress and notwithstanding the thirty-year age difference between them, lived with him from 1590 until his death in 1611. In his latter years, Lee indulged in the typical pastime of a gentleman, building '4 goodly Mannors'. He developed his interest in portraiture. As a young man, Lee had commissioned his own portrait from the Flemish painter, Antonis Mor; in old age he built a portrait gallery at Ditchley and filled it with work by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. Gheeraerts' great portrait of Elizabeth I standing on Saxton's map of England was probably commissioned for the Queen's visit to Ditchley in 1592.

Sir Henry Lee outlived Queen Elizabeth I by some eight years, and James I and Queen Anne visited Woodstock and Ditchley on numerous occasions for the hunting. Lee had high hopes of their son, the young Prince Henry and presented him with a complete suit of armour in 1608. Lee's own two legitimate sons and one daughter had long predeceased him, though his bastard son by Anne Vavasour survived him. In 1611, Lee was buried with full honours at Quarrendon Chapel, Buckinghamshire. Interestingly, the inscription made no mention whatsoever of Lee's religious beliefs, other than the conventional phrase that 'he rests with his Redeemer'.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Lee, by inclination and training, was a gentleman who preferred outdoor pursuits; he served his Queen in warfare, at the tournament, in the management of her estates and hunting, and in her Armoury. He had no legal training, nor did he obviously employ a secretary on a long-term basis. Only

[18] Although no mention is made of Lee's mistress in the inscription, the tomb Lee prepared for her future use was immediately adjacent to that of Lee.

two letters addressed to Lee have survived, both of debateable content, which he immediately passed to the Queen's Secretary. There exist some seventy-three letters from Lee, written for the most part in his own hand, in the State papers and archives of other men. The majority of the letters combine items of business with social gossip, observation and expressions of friendship, giving a rich insight into the character of the man over many years. The many other references to Lee's activities in his long career are widely scattered, but there is sufficient documented - and sufficient left unsaid - to invite the speculation of scholars on several discrete topics.

Anyone attempting to study Lee from the primary sources must express a debt of gratitude to Lee's descendant, Harold Arthur Lee Dillon, seventeenth Viscount Dillon, who lived from 1844 to 1932. Dillon was the last member of his family to live at Ditchley Park and his lifelong fascination with his illustrious ancestor bordered on the obsessive.[19] He started his research on Lee in April 1872, and continued until his death, meticulously recording a chronology of Lee's life and every reference he could find in two large notebooks.[20] He also transcribed some of Lee's own letters to Sir William Cecil, providing an initial point of reference for anyone attempting to read what Lee himself called 'my scribbled fist'. A comparison of Dillon's transcriptions with the originals confirms that his work was accurate.[21] The principal sources Dillon lists are the State Papers Domestic, Foreign, Border and Scottish; J.R. Dasent, *Acts of the Privy Council of England*; Lansdowne MSS., Harleian MSS., Cotton Caligula MSS., the Cecil papers and the more obvious secondary sources of the sixteenth century such as Holinshed, Segar and Camden.[22] While much of Dillon's work is repetitive, it is possible to see what

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[19] As his research progressed, Viscount Dillon appears to have increasingly identified with his illustrious ancestor. As early as 1873, he was consciously copying Lee's signature at the end of the transcripts; in his later years, he was copying Lee's handwriting. In 1874, Dillon named his son and heir, Harry Lee Stanton Lee-Dillon, (1874-1923). Portraits of Dillon at the National Portrait Gallery show what appears to be a deliberately-cultivated likeness to Sir Henry Lee, a similarity which becomes even more marked in later photographs. One wonders if this similarity also extended to his marrying a much younger woman as his second wife. The settlement made on her in his will contributed to the need to sell Ditchley Park in 1933. See J. Graham *Ditchley Park* (Derby, 1994).

[20] O[xfordshire] R[ecord] O[ffice] Dil xxi/3, Dil xxi/4.

[21] See, for example, ORO Dil xxi/12, transcripts of Lee's letters to Cecil 1568-9.

[22] Dillon's notebooks provide an interesting insight into the early days of the Public Record Office and the British Museum library. J.R. Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England,* 32 vols. (London, 1890-1907); Holinshed, *Chronicles* (London, 1577) RSTC.13568a; W. Segar, *The booke of honor and armes* (London, 1590) RSTC. 22163; Segar, *Honor military and civill* (London, 1602), RSTC. 22164.

he consulted, and what he omitted. His work provides an invaluable starting point for a researcher.

Dillon owned several manuscripts relating to Lee that had remained at Ditchley, and these he either deposited at the library of the British Museum or left to be dispersed on his death in 1932. Regrettably, Dillon lacked the finance necessary to preserve his Tudor documents, and although he made transcripts of the most important, several reached the British Library in a poor condition. One of the most important sources for Lee's tournaments is the Ditchley manuscript, *Sir Henry Lee's Devices: speeches, poems etc. taken from entertainments presented by Lee and others to Queen Elizabeth on Queen's Day and various other occasions*; for some sections, Dillon's Victorian transcripts are the only way of reading the manuscript.[23] Dillon also presented Lee's manuscript copy of Philip Sidney's *Old Arcadia* to the British Library.[24] A hand-written copy of Ortelius, the *Mirror of the Worlde,* translated for Lee by his precocious great-niece Elizabeth Tanfield, was given to the Vicar of Burford by Dillon in 1927, and later deposited in poor condition at the Bodleian Library in 1991.[25] The papers that remained at Ditchley referring to Lee's Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire estates were deposited at the newly instituted Oxfordshire Record Office in 1934, together with Dillon's research notes on Lee, armour, battlefields, and the genealogy of the whole Lee-Dillon family.[26] Many of the collections to which Dillon refers, and other manuscripts he did not consult, such as the Wyatt papers, are at the British Library.

Much of Lee's correspondence is in the State Papers, and financial details of his activities at Woodstock are in the Exchequer accounts, both held at the National Archives. His various warrants, patents and draft deeds of manumission in the Duchy of Lancaster papers are also held there. Lee's correspondence with Burghley and Sir Robert Cecil is among the Cecil papers in the possession of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House and these letters have been consulted on microfilm.

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[23] B[ritish] L[ibrary], Add. MS, 41499A; BL, Add. MS, 41499B, (Dillon's transcription).
[24] BL Add. MS, 41498.
[25] Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.; Film Acc. 700.6; also Bodl[eian Library Oxford], Shelfmark Dep. D. 817. Elizabeth Tanfield would enjoy greater fame as one of the first women authors under her married name of Elizabeth Carey.
[26] ORO Dil xxi/1-47.

The primary sources for the tournaments are widely scattered. Apart from the Ditchley manuscript, some texts of Court tournament entertainments can be found in the Lansdowne and Cotton Caligula manuscripts at the British Library. The details of preparations for the tiltyard are found in the Exchequer rolls at the National Archives, together with the accounts of Sir Thomas Heneage, Treasurer of the Chamber.[27] The running order of the jousts and performance of the contestants during Lee's time are shown in an unique collection of scored and unscored tournament cheques – the marked and unmarked tilting lists - held at the College of Arms.[28] Some ancillary material on the jousts is also held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.[29] There are also published eye-witness accounts of the tournaments from foreign travellers and foreign ambassadors.[30] The Victoria and Albert Museum in London holds the *Almain Armourers' Album,* a brilliant pictorial representation of what the jousters wore, re-discovered at the Spitzer sale in Paris by Dillon, who led the appeal to purchase it for the nation in 1894.[31] This album, a coloured collection of folio drawings made by Master Armourer Jacob Halder in the late sixteenth century, shows the armour and tilt garniture of some thirty-two armours produced by the Almain Armourers at Greenwich in the years between c.1555 and c.1588 for various notable named courtiers. Lee's name is associated with three suits.

The financial accounts of Lee as Master of the Armoury are in the Exchequer accounts, and the Royal Armouries' Archive at the Tower of London holds several of Lee's letters, together with some Almain Armourers' accounts. The sixteenth-century records of the Armourers' Company are housed in the Guildhall Library in London, some of them badly water-damaged in the Second World War. Lee's letters attempting to broker a peace between the earl of Shrewsbury and his son Gilbert Talbot are in the Shrewsbury and Talbot papers at Lambeth Palace. Lee's own financial accounts have not survived, but some idea of his estate can be pieced together from his will and that of his father, the *inquisitions post mortem* of the

[27] T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], E351 series; TNA, PRO, E351/542.
[28] C[ollege of] A[rms], M4; M4 bis; Portfolio of Tournament cheques.
[29] For example, Bodl[ian Library] MS, Ashmole 845.
[30] Lupold von Wedel, 'Journey through England and Scotland, 1584 and 1585', *T[ransanctions] R[oyal] H[istorical .S[ociety]*, new series ix (1895), pp. 258-9.
[31] V[ictoria] & A[lbert] [Museum] D586 & D586A (1894) to D614 & D614A (1894).

two men, estate documents and references to the purchase of land held in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Record Offices. Two letters from Lee as Constable of Harlech Castle are in the Clenennau letters at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The survivals of Lee's material culture are numerous, and here again, Dillon reoccurs as a *leitmotif.* Most of Lee's portrait collection was dispersed immediately prior to and just after Dillon's death in 1932. Dillon himself presented the Gheeraerts' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, the Antonis Mor portrait of Lee, and portraits of Sir Philip Sidney and Archbishop William Warham to the National Portrait Gallery, London. Other portraits were sold to private bidders, but Gheeraerts' portrait of Thomas Lee is now in the Tate Britain, and portraits of Sir Henry Lee and Anne Vavasour were bought by the Royal Armouries and the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company in London. The portrait of Sir Henry Lee and his dog still hangs at Ditchley, and one late portrait of Lee is in a private collection. Lee's first suit of armour has disappeared, and what remains of his second suit is dispersed between armouries in Leeds and Stockholm. His near-complete third suit of armour with its 'AV' engraving for Anne Vavasour, is in the possession of the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, London. An archæological survey of Lee's garden at Quarrendon was undertaken in 1989 but the site still remains unexcavated.[32] These material sources are important; not only do they give another rich dimension to a study of Lee, but also provide useful clues about his financial circumstances at the time of their creation. Their integration with the written sources is not found in any previous study of Lee's life.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

Any literary references to Sir Henry Lee soon ceased after his death, as tournaments were superseded by the Court masques of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones. Lee left no direct heir to keep him in the public eye and Ditchley eventually passed by marriage to the Dillon family. Quarrendon, the original Lee family home in Buckinghamshire was sold and fell into ruin.

[32] Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME)/English Heritage survey 1989-1990. The site of Quarrendon is National Monument No. 12004.

It was the neglected and decaying nature of the Quarrendon chapel, last resting place of Sir Henry Lee that brought Lee to the attention of the nineteenth century antiquarian writers. In June 1817, a public letter from *Viator* (*aka* George Lipscomb, the antiquarian) to J.C. Nichols (*aka* Mr Urban, editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine)* on the parlous state of the chapel led to a long correspondence published in the magazine on the subject of Quarrendon, Lee's tomb, and the family of Lee himself.[33] Lipscomb recorded the precise wording of the *Memoriae Sacrum* on the monumental marbles of Lee's tomb, a fortunate move as Quarrendon church itself rapidly fell to ruins in the succeeding years.[34] Much of Lipscomb's work on Quarrendon Church was lifted verbatim when Nichols published his major work, *The Progresses, Public Processions etc. of Queen Elizabeth* in 1823.[35] While Nichols' work consisted largely of useful compilations from Holinshed, Segar, Churchyard, Camden and the reproduction of some primary documents now in the British Library, he included his own editing notes and extracts from certain manuscripts, such as the Hamper manuscript, which have subsequently disappeared.[36] He also provided alternative texts to entertainments recorded elsewhere in the Ditchley and Petyt manuscripts.[37] Although these entertainments were organized by Lee, neither Ferrers nor Nichols attempted to define Lee's exact role in them.

The interest that was taken in Sir Henry Lee by his descendant, Viscount Dillon has already been noted. Dillon had always intended to write a biography of his ancestor, to compliment his work on arms and armour, and the portraits at Ditchley.[38] Yet Dillon's attempt at a biography of Lee is

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[33] *Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxxvii (June 1817), p. 504; (July 1817), pp. 105-8; lxxxviii (Feb. 1818), pp. 116-20; (April 1818), pp. 311-13. Lipscomb's letter in April 1818 includes a reference to the portrait of 'Mr Lee with a large dog' - the Marcus Gheeraerts' portrait of Lee with 'Bevis', who allegedly saved his master from assassination. The story itself appears to have ensured Lee a place in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Woodstock* (1826) and the name 'Bevis' appears first in Scott's tale.

[34] George Lipscomb would later enlarge this work in his *History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*, vol. ii (1847).

[35] J.C. Nichols, *Elizabeth*, iii, pp. 46-8.

[36] 'Introduction to the Masques: Masques performed before Queen Elizabeth ... from a volume of manuscript collections by Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton ... in the possession of William Hamper Esq. of Birmingham' in Nichols, *Elizabeth,* iii, pp. 198-213.

[37] BL, Add. MS, 41499A; Inner Temple Petyt MS, 538/43.

[38] H.A. Dillon, 'Armour: An Elizabethan Armourer's Album', *Archaeological Journal,* lii, second series vol. ii (1895), pp. 113-29; 'Tilting in Tudor Times', *Archaeological Journal*, lv, second series vol. v (1898), pp. 296-321; 'Armour Notes', *Archaeological Journal*, lx, 2nd series, vol. x (1903), pp. 96-136; *A Catalogue of Paintings in the Possession of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Dillon at Ditchley, Oxfordshire*

disappointing to the extreme, consisting of a handwritten text of some eighteen pages only.[39] A version of this, 'The Real Sir Henry Lee', appeared in *Antiquary* and was subsequently reprinted as part of the delightful *History of Spelsbury* in 1931.[40] Considering the intellectual and national standing of Viscount Dillon, his short paper on his ancestor is little more than a selection of anecdotes drawn from family sources. The overall tone indicates that this was intended for local consumption; no attempt was made to use the Ditchley manuscript of tournament literature which Dillon had transcribed earlier, neither was Lee's overall contribution to the Elizabethan Court considered. This is a pity, as Dillon obviously had a great affection for his illustrious forebear, and his short text has a humour and sparkle that was lacking in Lee's subsequent biographer.

One feels that the antiquarian hand of Dillon lay heavy upon theatre-historian Sir Edmund Kerchevor Chambers (1866-1954) when he came to write his biography of Sir Henry Lee in 1936.[41] Chambers' book *Sir Henry Lee: An Elizabethan Portrait*, the only biography of Lee to date is, as F. Gordon Roe wrote in *The Connoisseur,* the 'work to which all writers on Sir Henry Lee must henceforth stand indebted'.[42] Such was Chambers' academic reputation that most subsequent scholars were and still are content merely to quote his biography as a source for Lee, rather than returning to the primary material.[43] In his heavily deferential preface, Chambers acknowledges his debt to Dillon but his account of Lee's life is far from objective. Chambers' biography is exhaustive and exhausting in its scholarship and its range was not lost on its reviewers. Whereas most

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(Oxford, 1908); *An Illustrated Guide to the Armouries of the Tower of London – a summary catalogue of pieces exhibited* (London, 1910).

[39] ORO Dil xxi/ 6.

[40] H.A. Dillon, 'The Real Henry Lee of Ditchley', *Antiquary* (Dec. 1893), pp. 241-6; Elsie Corbett, ed., *A History of Spelsbury* (Long Compton, 1931), pp. 131-160. It is possible that Dillon, working as an independent scholar, feared that the cost of producing any major biography might be too much for his already precarious finances. See Graham, *Ditchley Park,* p. 19.

[41] E.K. Chambers, *Sir Henry Lee: An Elizabethan Portrait* (Oxford, 1936).

[42] F.Gordon Roe, 'The Last of Sir Henry Lee', *The Connoisseur,* CX, (1942), pp. 3-12.

[43] The unique position Chambers' biography holds as the chief point of reference on Lee means that the minor errors made by Chambers are repeated *ad nauseam.* On a very basic level, Chambers states that in 1590, Sir Henry Lee (1533-1611) retired from the tilt at the age of forty-seven (p. 135). Although the mistake is obvious, its survival is interesting. For example, the mistake is repeated by eminent historians including Yates, *Astraea*, p. 102; G. Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour* (Hague, 1977), p. 126; J.A. Dop, *Eliza's Knights* (Alblasserdan, 1981), p. 77; A. Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London, 1987), p. 163. Only Strong, *Cult*, p.151 restores Lee to his fifty-seven years.

praised the rich accumulation of details and 'antiquarian thoroughness', they also criticised Chambers for 'refusing to combine the role of showman with that of recorder.'[44] 'The Champion of the Tilt', they complained, 'commands respect but fails to excite interest or stir the imagination'. When J.E. Neale, while praising Chambers' scholarship, denied the publishers' claim that the book is 'eminently readable and popular', he voiced a criticism that has stood the test of time. The biography only went into one edition, and there has been no attempt to reprint it.

Chambers' biography is invaluable as a point of reference, giving us not only a mine of information, but some eight appendices, including Lee's will, his *Memoriae Sacrum*, excerpts from the Ditchley manuscript and the first printed copy of the 1592 Ditchley entertainment. The emphasis on Lee's genealogy and role as a landowner and country gentleman probably reflects Chambers' use of Dillon's original notebooks, more than his own interests. It is strange that Chambers, author of *The Elizabethan Stage,* offers no description of Lee's Accession Day tournaments, and his sparse discussion of the 1592 Ditchley entertainment suggests that he was content to add the text as a mere appendix.[45] Both Dillon and Chambers appear to have recreated Lee in their own image; and the Elizabethan champion of the tilt emerges as a rather elderly Edwardian gentleman. It would have occurred to neither that they needed to define what a gentleman was. Above all, Chambers committed the cardinal sin in any biographer, he made his subject boring. We are therefore left with a dated biography that, for all its factual detail, makes no attempt to analyse either Lee's life in context or his motivation and his achievements as an Elizabethan gentleman.

Chambers' work in 1936 was the only attempt so far to write on Sir Henry Lee's life as a whole; subsequent historians have preferred to plunder aspects of his career to illustrate their own particular interests and opinions. Inevitably, it was Lee's performance on the tournament field that has drawn the most attention. The coronation of a second Elizabeth and the fourth

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[44] See A. Walker, 'Book Review of *'Sir Henry Lee: an Elizabethan Portrait' by* E.K. Chambers', *Review of English Studies,* xiii, 50, (April,1937), pp. 225-229; J.E. Neale, 'Book Review of *'Sir Henry Lee: an Elizabethan Portrait'* by E.K. Chambers', *E[nglish] H[istorical] R[eview],* liii, (1938) p. 163; G. Bullough, 'Book Review of *'Sir Henry Lee, an Elizabethan Portrait'* by E.K. Chambers', *Modern Language Review,* xxiii (1938) p. 69.

[45] E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1926).

centenary of the accession of the first Elizabeth on 17 November 1958 raised new interest in the sixteenth-century Accession Day celebrations from J.E. Neale, Roy Strong and Frances Yates.[46] Yates and Strong subsequently developed the concept of a deliberate 'cult of Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen', fostered by Elizabeth's government and furthered by portraiture, literature and Court pageantry.[47] As the instigator of the Accession Day tournaments, and 'Queen's champion', Lee was credited with a major role in the creation of this cult - the 'imaginative refeudalization of late Tudor society'.[48] Yates' treatment of Lee centred on the Accession Day tournaments, their European context and an analysis of their written texts. Strong tended to concentrate on an analysis of more visual evidence, using the somewhat neglected Almain Armourers' Album and the College of Arms scored cheques in relation to Lee. Subsequently, Strong has given us a discussion of Lee's patronage of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, and the only published account of Lee's relationship with Henry, Prince of Wales.[49] Despite the colour and vigour that both Yates and Strong bring to any study of tournaments and Lee's part in them, Lee is only an adjunct, a tool, a puppet in their larger scheme of developing the concept of a deliberately engineered cult of Elizabeth. His career has been hijacked to fit the over-arching theories of these two eminent historians.

Subsequent work directly on tournaments has included references to Lee, though few historians, other than Alan Young, have included any prolonged discussion of his role.[50] Where the emphasis has been on the political implications of the tournaments, for example, in the work of Jan van Dop and Richard McCoy, Lee is dismissed as a 'more docile courtier'.[51] Richard Stewart's work on the Ordnance Office at the Tower of London from

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[46] J.E. Neale, 'November 17th', *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1958), pp. 9-20; F. Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* xx (1957), pp. 4-25; R. Strong, 'The Popular Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* xxi (1959), pp. 88-91.
[47] Yates, *Astraea,* pp. 88-111; Strong, *Cult,* pp. 130-134.
[48] Strong, *Cult,* p. 129.
[49] R. Strong, 'Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger', *Burlington Magazine,* CV, (Apr. 1963) pp. 149-157; O. Millar, 'Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, a sequel through inscriptions" *Burlington Magazine*, CV, (June, 1963) pp. 33-41; R. Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London, 1986). See also T. Wilks, 'The Court culture of Prince Henry and his circle 1603-1613' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1987).
[50] Young, *Tournaments,* pp. 150-4, 160-4.
[51] Van Dop, *Eliza's Knights,* p. 74-8; R. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood* (London, 1999), pp. 1-16.

1585-1625 contains a useful chapter on the Armoury, but little evaluation on Lee's work there.[52]

Lee's diverse career earns him a passing reference in many disparate texts. He is mentioned briefly in many biographies of Philip Sidney, and his ownership of the *Old Arcadia* is discussed in Woudhuysen's 1996 *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640.*[53] Lee's patents for the manumission of royal bondmen in the 1570s were quoted at length in a ground-breaking article in 1903 by Alexander Sabine and later in the work of Diarmaid MacCulloch.[54] Lee's armour is lovingly discussed by the *aficionados* of the craft, and Lee frequently appears as a footnote in the biographies of more notable men.[55]

SIR HENRY LEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTROVERSY.

Although there is no particular historical controversy over Lee's career, a detailed study of his long life can be used to illustrate many aspects of the most contentiously-fought Elizabethan historiographical debates. What light is thrown on these controversies will be discussed in greater depth as the debate becomes specifically relevant.

The classic mid-twentieth-century 'storm over the gentry' debate between R.H. Tawney and Lawrence Stone on the one hand, and Hugh Trevor-Roper on the other is now more than half a century old.[56] A close analysis of Lee's financial position as a well-established landowner both in

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[52] R.W. Stewart, *The English Ordnance Office 1585-1625: A Case Study in Bureaucracy* (Woodbridge, 1996).

[53] K. Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney, Courtier Poet* (London, 1991); A. Stewart, *Philip Sidney, a double life* (London, 2000); H.R. Woodhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558-1640* (Oxford, 1996).

[54] A. Sabine, 'Bondmen under the Tudors', *TRHS.*, 2nd series,xvii (1903), pp. 235-89; D. MacCulloch, 'Bondmen under the Tudors', in *Law and Government under the Tudors: Essays presented to Sir Geoffrey Elton on his retirement*, ed. by C. Cross, D. Loades and J.J. Scarisbrick (Cambridge,1988), pp. 91-109.

[55] C. Ffoulkes, 'The Armourers' Company of London and the Greenwich School of Armourers', *Archaeologia*, lxxvi (1927) pp. 41-58; C. Blair, 'The Armourers' Bill of 1581', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society,*xii (1986), pp. 20-53. Lee is discussed in the biography, A.G.R. Smith, *Servant to the Cecils: the life of Sir Michael Hickes, 1543-1612* (London, 1977).

[56] R.H. Tawney, 'The rise of the gentry: 1558-1640', *Econ[omic] H[istory] R[eview],* xi (1941), pp. 1-38; L. Stone, 'The Anatomy of the Elizabethan Aristocracy', *Econ.HR,* xviii (1948), pp. 1-53. H. Trevor-Roper, 'The Elizabethan Aristocracy: An Anatomy Anatomized', *Econ.HR,* 2nd series, iv (1953) pp. 279-98; H. Trevor-Roper,' The gentry 1540 – 1640', *Econ.HR,* Supplement 1 (1953); Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558 – 1641* (Oxford,1965).

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, and his influence at Court can be used to illustrate several aspects of this multi-faceted argument, although J.H. Hexter's warning against taking an individual case to demonstrate a thesis is apposite here.[57] Lee is involved more directly in the later debates on the purpose and meaning of the ceremonial side of the Elizabethan Court. Disagreement among historians has run high over the existence and timing of the 'cult of the Virgin Queen' - the heady, alluring thesis proposed by Frances Yates and Roy Strong. Frances Yates had no doubt in naming Lee as the author of the 'cult of Elizabeth', seeing a deliberate, continuous thread of narrative from the 1575 Woodstock entertainment, through the tournament texts and culminating in the Ditchley entertainment of 1592.[58] Roy Strong saw the Accession Day tournaments developing from an informal joust among Court gentlemen to something more public and formal after 1581 and, along with allegorical texts and portraiture, contributing much to 'the cult of Virgin Queen' from that date.[59] G.R. Elton attacked this thesis as 'absolutist fantasies of monarch-worshipping ... we need no more reveries on accession tilts and symbolism, no more pretty pictures of gallants and galliards'.[60] Penry Williams, while not subscribing whole-heartedly to the 'politics of adoration', argued more moderately that the pomp, symbolism and display were 'essential to the regime and the unity of its subjects'.[61] One could therefore ask whether Lee had a specific political agenda in devising the Accession Day tournaments and was that agenda his own?

Controversy also exists over the efficacy of the late Tudor tournament as training for war. Sydney Anglo, while acknowledging that the early Elizabethan tournament score-cheques show that tilting was more than the 'ceremonial breaking of fragile lances into which it ultimately degenerated', regarded the tilt as useless as a military exercise by the latter half of

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[57] J.H. Hexter, 'The Storm Over the Gentry', *Reappraisals in History* (London, 1961), pp. 117-162.
[58] Yates, *Astraea,* pp. 88-111.
[59] Strong, *Cult,* pp. 129-162.
[60] G.R. Elton, 'Tudor Government: The Points of Contact; the Court', *TRHS,* series 5, xxvi (1976), p. 219; P. Williams, 'Court and Polity under Elizabeth I', in *The Tudor Monarchy*, ed. by J. Guy (London, 1997), p. 358; S. Doran and T. S. Freeman, eds., *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke, 2003); H. Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen* (Basingstoke, 1995).
[61] P. Williams, 'Court and polity under Elizabeth I', *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 2002), p. 425.

Elizabeth's reign.[62] Medievalists such as Richard Barber and Juliet Baker dismiss late Tudor tournaments as theatrical events.[63] Malcolm Vale and Roy Strong, on the other hand, argue for the usefulness of the tournament, with Strong claiming that 'well into the seventeenth century, the tournament continued to be regarded with all seriousness as training for war'.[64] Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, taking a wide European view, argues that the changes in late sixteenth century tournaments across Europe meant that they went beyond the mere ability to wear heavy armour and guide a heavy lance, and mirrored the changing nature of contemporary warfare. Modern weapons and tactics called for the use of lighter, better-trained horses and the ability to show speed, manoeuvrability, sureness of aim and quickness of eye - all skills of the tournament.[65] Lee always regarded himself as a soldier: did he see the jousts as military training?

A study of Sir Henry Lee's life can also inform the debate over faction and clientage in the late Elizabethan Court especially in the 1590s, as discussed by Simon Adams and Paul Hammer.[66] Lee was not only a friend of long standing to the Cecils, but also to the earl of Leicester and the second earl of Essex, viewed by some as rivals at Court. How did Lee balance these friendships? In addition, as head of the extended Lee family, Sir Henry was very aware of his responsibilities in furthering the claims of his own family members. How did he use court influence to achieve his ends?

It is also difficult to examine the historiographical debate over what Richard C. McCoy calls the 'rites of Knighthood' without reference to Lee.[67] Roy Strong described the Accession Day tournaments as expressing 'in festival form the role of the monarch both as liege lord to his knights and as

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[62] S. Anglo, 'Archives of the English tournament: score cheques and lists', *Journal of the Society of Archivists,* ii (1961-1962), pp. 153-162.
[63] R. Barber and J. Baker, *Tournaments, Joust, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1989).
[64] M. Vale, *War and Chivalry* (London, 1989), p. 63; R. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge, 1984), p. 12.
[65] H. Watanbe-O'Kelly, 'Tournaments and their relevance for Warfare in the Early Modern Period', *European History Quarterly*, xx (London, 1990), pp. 451-63.
[66] S. Adams, 'Factions, clientage and party: English politics, 1550-1603', in *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 13-23; P. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999).
[67] R. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: the Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (London, 1989), pp. 1-16.

the fount of those two supreme chivalrous qualities, honour and virtue'.[68] To Mervyn James, the concept of honour was at the heart of one of central contradictions of Elizabethan politics - the conflict between aristocratic self-esteem and autonomy, and the demands of obedience and duty to the monarch.[69] An outlet for aristocratic pride was required, and James contends that for a great many aristocrats, Elizabethan chivalric displays provided such an outlet. McCoy stresses the conflict between loyalty to Tudor sovereignty and the glorification of aristocratic militarism, honour and autonomy, seeing tournaments in general as 'a cultural resolution of ... one of the contradictions of Elizabethan politics'.[70] The revival of the 'rites of knighthood' kept alive the aristocracy's sense of their customary rights. Conversely, Sydney Anglo sees the entire chivalric revival as a 'nostalgic anachronism and escapist fantasy of a decadent ruling class'.[71] A study of Lee contributes much to the debate over the survival of chivalry in the late sixteenth century. What was Lee's understanding of chivalric values and what part did he believe the tournaments played in their display? Where did Lee, an Elizabethan gentleman and no scion of a great house, stand *vis-à-vis* politically ambitious noble courtiers such as Leicester, Sidney and Essex? And did the purposes of the tournaments devised by Lee before 1590 differ from tournaments after that date, dominated as they were by Essex?

METHODOLOGY.

I propose to ask certain questions in this dissertation.
Firstly, what can a detailed study of the life of Sir Henry Lee tell us of the concerns, expectations and frustrations of an Elizabethan courtier gentleman?
Secondly, what made the life and career of Sir Henry Lee so singular, and how fundamental were chivalric values to Lee throughout his life?
Lastly, can Lee be regarded as having been successful in his long service to the Queen?

Having reviewed the considerable body of data that exists on Sir Henry Lee, it would appear more appropriate to analyse his life thematically, rather

[68] Strong, *Art and Power,* p. 11.
[69] M. James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986).
[70] McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood,* p. 3.
[71] Anglo, 'Archives of the English Tournament', p. 160.

than attempt the broad chronological narrative presented by Chambers. A biography naturally presents itself as a certain pattern of life, in that Lee was more active in the middle portion of his life, rather than in youth or extreme old age, and more data exists for that period. Here the various themes will run concurrently. It is the coming together of various motivating themes in his life which is most fascinating, and that will be taken up my conclusion.

Sir Henry Lee was at least thirty-five when he came into royal favour. Evaluating the largely undocumented childhood and youth of a minor Elizabethan courtier can only be speculative, but initially I propose to look briefly at the early influences upon Lee and the circumstances in which he was raised before asking why he remained out of favour for so long. I shall then review the area for which he is most famous, the tournaments, held both privately at Court and publicly on the Queen's Accession Day. I shall look in detail at Lee's career and his relationship with the Queen, especially in the two positions in which he served the Queen officially, as Steward of her manor at Woodstock and as Master of the Armoury. Lee's private life – his own lands, his finances, his family and his friends, will then be reviewed before evaluating Lee's position in the reign of James I. Finally, overall conclusions will be drawn from Lee's life and career, in an attempt to provide some answers to the questions posed above.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAKING OF A COURTIER GENTLEMAN 1533 - 1573

Sir Henry Lee can best be described as a courtier gentleman, belonging to the upper ranks of the gentry class and having the personality and talent to achieve a position at Court. Gentlemen of Lee's standing were not necessarily created; they often came from generations of birth and breeding, but they were trained from an early age to be conscious of their duties, responsibilities and privileges. Courtiers, on the other hand, could be and were created. To be a successful courtier, one needed contacts at Court, the higher placed the better. If one did not want merely to haunt the corridors of power, importuning for any office that might return a living, one needed to offer a talent acceptable and flattering to the reigning monarch. Above all, one needed the money to sustain the lifestyle, and the ambition for a career at Court, where fortunes could be fickle and could change at once with the death of a monarch. Sir Henry Lee was thirty-seven by the time he received the first recorded sign of royal favour from Elizabeth I, past the midpoint of man's allotted lifespan and relatively advanced for the life expectancy of the day. His long court career owed more to his longevity than to an early start. A study of the first half of Lee's life illustrates how he most probably acquired the values that remained with him all his life, how his initially promising court career was cut short by a change of monarch and how, with discretion, he was able to return to royal favour on his own terms.

THE MAKING OF A GENTLEMAN - LEE'S EARLY LIFE 1533-1553.

The aspirations and values of a Tudor gentleman in his formative years were influenced by many factors. At this distance in time, it is necessary to rely more on conjecture than evidence when attempting to identify the influences that could have operated upon the young Henry Lee. Certain possibilities can, however, be suggested such as his own family traditions, his education, the influence of popular conduct books, the society in which he grew up, and the circumstances of his wardship.

The traditions within Lee's immediate family clearly contributed to the two guiding principles that remained constant throughout his life - loyalty and service to the monarch and commonweal, and faithful stewardship of his own estates. Born around March 1533, Henry Lee was the first son of Anthony Lee and Margaret Wyatt. Both his mother and father came from families well-established at Court, loyal to the Tudors and regarding practical service at Court as the norm rather than the exception. Anthony Lee's father, Sir Robert Lee of Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire, had served at Court in his younger days as Gentleman Usher at the Court of Henry VII, yeoman usher to Princess Mary by 1508 and a Gentleman Usher of the Chamber by 1512.[1] Anthony Lee was Gentleman Usher of the Bedchamber to Henry VIII by 1533, while his wife Margaret Wyatt served Anne Boleyn in a similar capacity.

It was probably from the Wyatts that Lee derived his ambition to do something more for his Queen than merely a gentleman's duty to attend Court periodically. The tradition of royal service was paramount in the Wyatt family; Lee's maternal grandfather Sir Henry Wyatt had been loyal to the young Henry Tudor before his victory at Bosworth in 1485 and subsequently had served him in a military capacity in the north of England. He was Master of the King's Jewels from 1488 to 1524, Councillor in 1504 and an executor of Henry VII's will in 1509. Wyatt remained at Court as Councillor to Henry VIII until his retirement in 1533.

Henry Lee was born and spent his early years at Allington Castle in Kent, the home of his grandfather and his uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt, a loyal servant to Henry VIII as esquire of the king's body and as an ambassador. (*See Appendix Two*). Whereas Lee, as a child of three, would have known little of the tension in May 1536 when Sir Thomas was implicated in the fall of Anne Boleyn and thrown into the Tower of London, he might have sensed the family's relief at Sir Thomas's release into his father's supervision in June. The excitement of the King's visit to Allington on 31 July 1536 would have been memorable. Henry Lee was not yet four when his grandfather died on 10 November 1536, and whereas

[1] J.S. Brewer, R.H. Brodie and J. Gairdner, eds., *L[etters and] P[apers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII]* (23 vols. in 38, 1862-1932), II i p. 872.

he would have had somewhat limited personal memories of Sir Henry Wyatt, anecdotal stories of this beloved patriarch appear to have been kept ever-green in the family.[2] Sir Henry Wyatt's reputation for integrity and honesty in royal service is recorded both in the letters of his son Sir Thomas Wyatt and testimony of Polydore Vergil, the contemporary chronicler.[3] Together, they create a vivid image of Sir Henry Wyatt, 'welbelouid of many, hatid of none'.

In November 1536, Allington Castle and the guardianship of the Lee children passed officially to Sir Thomas Wyatt, although most of his time was spent travelling as ambassador to the court of the emperor Charles V. Lee's own parents were still at Court, and at some point young Henry Lee would have known of the brief confinement of his father, Anthony Lee on 2 October 1537 for 'consenting to the steling of certain the King's hawkes'.[4] Thanks to Henry Lee's mother, Margaret, 'suying for his deliverance' with the King at Windsor 10 October 1537, Anthony Lee was released. Their relief must have been tangible, as Thomas Cromwell, the King's secretary and chief minister, remarked that 'they be both merry and the King's Highness is now again good lorde unto him'.[5] The Lees showed their gratitude to the King's minister by naming their youngest son, Cromwell Lee. Thomas Cromwell had also been the chief patron and protector to Sir Thomas Wyatt and with the fall and execution of Cromwell in 1540, Wyatt was at the mercy of the many enemies he had made at Court. He was arrested on a charge of treason in January 1541 and taken bound and handcuffed to the Tower. Allington Castle was cleared on the orders of the Council, and from an inventory of persons residing there, it is clear that the Lee children, now numbering at least four, Henry, Robert, Thomas and Cromwell, had already moved. As Anthony Lee had come into his inheritance at Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire at the death of his father, Sir Robert Lee on 23 February 1539, it is reasonable to surmise that his growing family had reassembled there.

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[2] BL, Add. MS, 62135 ff. 332-373. *The Commonplace Book of George Wyatt* contains a series of anecdotes collected in the late 1590s from Jane Hawte, wife of Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger, by her youngest son.
[3] K. Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool, 1953), pp. 38-9; Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia,* ed. D. Hay, Camden Society, 3rd series, lxxiv (1950), pp. 6, 95, 149.
[4] LP, XII ii. 870.
[5] BL, Harleian MS, 282 f. 208.

How much of this the young Henry Lee would have known is conjectural. He was seven when he left Allington, the eldest child in a highly politicised family. If he knew little at first hand, family experience would have warned him that royal service was rife with pitfalls, jealousy and rivalries, and that the financial returns were far from guaranteed. Lee's uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt was released from the Tower and rehabilitated into royal service by 1541, but he died in debt, many miles from home and was buried in a stranger's vault in Sherborne, Dorset in 1542. It may have been Lee's awareness of this, as well as his family pride in his uncle's achievements, that led him in 1609 to leave money in his will for a tomb to be constructed for Sir Thomas Wyatt at Quarrendon. The order was never carried out.

The prosaic but more profitable virtues of land ownership and development came from the Lee family traditions, and Henry Lee knew that as first-born son, he would eventually inherit the entailed Lee estates. The acknowledged founder of Lee's landed fortunes was his grandfather, Sir Robert Lee. The Lee family had begun to feature as leaseholders of the manor of Quarrendon near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire from 1438 and it became their property by a grant of socage in 1512.[6] After pursuing an interesting if somewhat unprofitable career at Court in his early years, Robert Lee inherited the freehold of Quarrendon in October 1516 and was knighted in 1522. Sir Robert chose to turn his back on the Court, choosing the less flamboyant but more lucrative path of landholder and sheep-farmer. If Sir Robert Dormer, a near-neighbour, could be described by Henry Machyn as 'the grete shepe-master in Oxfordshyre', the same might well have been said of Sir Robert Lee in Buckinghamshire who, like many gentleman graziers, was busy enlarging and consolidating his lands.[7] Quarrendon, his principal manor, was held in knights' service to the crown and by 1526, he had acquired land at nearby Burston, Weedon, Hardwick and Fleetmarston where the Lees already had interests.[8] Quarrendon was prime

[6] ORO Dil X/a/1-13. (Court rolls of Quarrendon).
[7] Henry Machyn, *Diary,* ed. J.G.Nichols, Camden Society xxxxii (London, 1847), p. 22.
[8] ORO Lee ii/1 and Lee ii/7. The precise details of the Lee estates in Buckinghamshire are discussed in chapter five below.

pasture land, and Sir Robert Lee followed the contemporary custom of converting arable land to pasture. With rising prices for wool, there was an ever-present temptation to enclose land and despite Wolsey's commission of enquiry in 1517 which mentioned Robert Lee twice in this context, Fleetmarston and Quarrendon itself were enclosed.[9] Sir Robert later obtained a licence to export wool to Calais in 1533, laying the foundations for solid family income and possessions.

It was also from his grandfather that Henry Lee derived the inestimable advantage of good family connections. *(See Appendix Three)*. Sir Robert Lee married twice. After the death of his first wife, he used his Court connections in 1521 to marry Lettice Penistone, widow of Robert Knollys and mother of Sir Francis Knollys who married Katharine Carey, daughter of Mary Boleyn. This was the most advantageous marriage the Lees ever made and eventually linked Sir Henry Lee not only with the Knollys and Carey families at Court, but to Lord Hunsdon, Queen Elizabeth's cousin and to the Queen herself. Through the usual Court web of nuptial connections, the Lees later became connected to the earls of Essex and the earl of Leicester. The Lees were also linked by marriage to the Cookes, a relationship which would bring them into kinship with the Cecils, the Hobys and the Killigrews, influential families at the court of Queen Elizabeth. Sir Robert's first marriage had produced a son and heir, Anthony; his second marriage would produce a son and two daughters. It also had the effect of keeping Anthony Lee and his family away from Quarrendon until his father's death.

Anthony Lee, like his father before him, had followed a somewhat limited Court career, but was knighted in 1539 and rode with other knights to receive Anne of Cleves between Blackheath and Greenwich in January 1540.[10] On his father's death in February 1539, Anthony had inherited the manor of Quarrendon and Lettice, as widow, received a life-interest in Burston, which she later returned to her stepson.[11] Sir Anthony Lee was happy to retire with his family to his

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[9] I.S. Leadam ed., *The Domesday of Inclosures, 1517-1518* (2 vols.,London, 1897), i. pp. 161,170.
[10] LP, XIV ii. 572..
[11] An entangled court case over detention of deeds ensued between Sir Anthony and his stepmother, see TNA, PRO, C1/847/7 and C1/1024/17-18. The twice-married Lettice did not stay a widow long. After the

Buckinghamshire estates and John Leland described Quarrendon as standing in 'the myddle parte of the vale of Ailesburie ... fruitful for pasture ... where Mr Leigh hath a goodly house with Orchards and a parke'.[12] Although Sir Anthony preferred to remain at home, he was still described as the King's servant in 1542 and sat as Member of Parliament for Buckinghamshire in the parliaments of 1542 to 1545 and of 1547 to 1549.[13] As one of the leading county gentlemen, he took musters for the Aylesbury hundred of Buckinghamshire and provided great horses, light horses, demi-lances, archers and arquebusiers for the King's service.[14]

Sir Anthony Lee also added to his family complications. He had had four sons, Henry, Robert, Thomas and Cromwell, by Margaret Wyatt. At what point Margaret Wyatt died is unknown, but by the time of Anthony Lee's second marriage in May 1548 to Anne Hassall, he already had two illegitimate sons by her, Richard and Russell alias Hassall. Sir Anthony also had four daughters, but his will is unclear as to which mother they belonged to. When Sir Anthony Lee died on 24 November 1549, he made provision for all his children, but left his lands and 'all my horses, greyhounds, spanyells, geldings and mares' to 'Harry Lee my sonne'.[15] At sixteen, Henry Lee was already identified as someone with a marked preference for an active and sporting life. Thus if Lee inherited an appetite for royal service with a knowledge of its pitfalls from his Wyatt lineage, it was from his Lee inheritance that he gained the highly profitable estates that would finance his aspirations at Court.

Were Henry Lee's values and aspirations influenced by his education? By the terms of Sir Henry Wyatt's will of 1536, Henry Lee had received 'yerely duringe his nonage tenne poundes, and in lykewyse unto Robert Lee his brother

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death of Sir Robert Lee, she married Sir Thomas Tresham of Rushton, Northants, later the first Prior of the restored Order of St. John of Jerusalem. This gave Sir Henry Lee a longstanding link with the staunchly Catholic Tresham dynasty.

[12] John Leland, *Itinerary,* (2 vols.,Oxford, 1710-12), ii. p. 110.

[13] LP, V 686; VI 32; VIII 9; XVII 641.

[14] *C[alendar of] S[tate] P[apers], D[omestic, 1547-1580,* p. 6. (20 Feb 1548).

[15] TNA, PRO, PROB 11/33 (17 Oct 1550).

during his nonage yerely tenne markes towards and for to fynde them to scole'.[16] Where Henry Lee received his education is uncertain. Although he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil in 1594 that 'I was once a student at New College, in Oxford', it is difficult to prove conclusively that he had followed the normal pattern of having earlier attended Winchester College.[17] Few documented cases exist at this period of New College students who were not Wykehamists, but unlike their Lee cousins from Maids Moreton, Buckinghamshire, neither Henry nor Robert appear on the Scholars' list for Winchester College.[18]

The society in which Lee grew up was influenced and informed by the popular conduct books circulating at the time, but without a knowledge of Sir Henry Lee's library, it is impossible to know what precise effect they had upon his values and youthful aspirations. Lee, at least six years in the literary household of Sir Thomas Wyatt, grew up with the notion that books were a necessary part of a gentleman's possessions. If it is impossible to prove that Henry Lee read Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke named the gouvernor* and Baldesar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier,* he was at least raised in a society influenced by their precepts. Peter Burke omits Sir Thomas Wyatt from his list of readers of the *Courtier* 'for lack of evidence', but it is difficult to believe neither he nor Lee ever read it.[19] Sir Thomas Hoby, the first English translator of the work in 1561 confessed in his preface that 'this Courtier hath long strayed about this Realm'.[20] George Bull, a more recent translator, comments that 'the kind of behaviour recommended to Italian courtiers became the accepted standard for English gentlemen'.[21] Not only was Hoby Lee's cousin, but when Hoby's English translation was published,

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[16] TNA, PRO, PROB 11/26. Young Robert Lee appears to have been born in Hatfield, Yorkshire before 1536, and lived there most of his adult life. The only family connection is the fact that Sir Henry Wyatt was Constable of nearby Coningsburgh Castle, which office subsequently passed to his son, Sir Thomas Wyatt.

[17] *HMC [A Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The marquis of]Salis[bury, K.G., preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire]* (24 vols., London, 1883-1976), IV p. 529, (13 May 1594).

[18] T.F. Kirby, *Winchester* Scholars (London, 1888). I am grateful to Caroline Dalton, archivist at New College for these details.

[19] Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: the European reception to Castiglione's Cortegiano* (London, 1995), p. 163.

[20] *Baldasarre Castiglione, The Courtier, done into English by Thomas Hobby* (London, 1588), p. 2. RSTC. 4781.

[21] Castiglione, *Courtier,* p. 13.

Lee had already spent several months in Italy and was clearly conversant with the language, which he used during his later travels in 1568 and 1569. Similarly, in the light of Lee's subsequent career, it would be unusual if he had not come into contact with Caxton's editions of Mallory's *Morte D'Arthur* and Ramon Lull's *Order of Chivalry.*[22] It is possible to link the latter especially with the chivalric themes of loyalty, obedience and military prowess found in the Ditchley manuscript, themes which had a major influence on Lee's life.

It was perhaps Henry Lee's guardian, Sir William Paget who was responsible for many of his early expectations and his initial steps towards a career at Court. Lee was still a minor at the death of his father in 1549, and as Quarrendon was held in socage from the crown, his wardship and marriage were available for purchase. It is unclear what the relationship between Sir Anthony Lee and Paget had been as Paget was named as one of the executors of Lee's will, receiving some 'threescore fatte weathers' in payment.[23] Paget was an ambitious man who had risen from lowly beginnings in London to become secretary of state under Henry VIII and one of the most powerful office-holders in the kingdom. With six daughters and three sons to provide for, he took a keen interest in the profitable purchase of wardships and obtained Henry Lee's in December 1549. S.R. Gammon suggests that Paget's second daughter, Anne, was already betrothed to Henry Lee, and at least three more of Paget's wards became his sons-in-law.[24] Although there is no evidence that Paget ever abused his position, the dating of Henry Lee's wardship coincides almost exactly with the time of greatest complaint against the system. Bishop Latimer preached before Edward VI in March 1549 that 'there was never such marrying in England as is now ... I hear of stealing of wards to marry their children to. This is a

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[22] Ramon Lull, *The Booke of the Ordre of Chyualry,* trans. and printed by William Caxton, 1484, ed. Alfred Byles (London, 1924).
[23] TNA, PRO, PROB 11/33 (17 Oct 1550).
[24] S.R. Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William, 1st Lord Paget* (Newton Abbot, 1973), p. 22. Paget already had the lucrative wardship of Thomas Kytson, and that of two illegitimate sons of the wealthy Mayor of London, Sir John Alleyn.

strange kind of stealing, but it is not the wards, it is the lands they steal'.[25] Lee was eighteen or younger when he married Anne Paget who was even younger. His father-in-law, in a letter to William Cecil on 31 July 1551, stated 'I mynd vppon Monday to remove to my soone Lees house there to take clene ayer for a sevenught'.[26] Lee's wife Ann bore him three children in all, a girl and two boys. Paget wrote to the Countess of Bath on 24 June 1558 that 'my doughter Lee ... was brought to bed of a goodly boye ... and was moche weakened but now thankes be to God doth fele her self moche amended'.[27] Both the boys, John and Henry, died in infancy and Lee's daughter Mary, died in the early 1580s.

In the long run, the circumstances of Lee's early marriage had a major effect on his career. At the time, a minor had little choice but to marry whomever the holder of his wardship chose. Lee lost any chance to benefit materially by marrying an heiress and any advantages he gained from his association with Lord Paget rapidly ceased when Paget fell from power in 1559. Lee's early marriage could explain his failure to take a degree at New College, Oxford, not in itself uncommon for a gentleman, but also his failure to spend time at the Inns of Court in London, a practice which was rapidly becoming a prerequisite requirement for a position in government service. Lee's inclinations may have been against a career in administration in his younger days, but without at least some legal experience, he stood little chance when he sought a Court appointment after his retirement as 'Queen's champion' in 1590. Most importantly, Lady Lee failed to give him a son who lived beyond a few months and although she herself lived until 1590, she was, by her own admission, prone to melancholy. Her Catholic beliefs became problematic, as did the increasingly treasonable practices of her brothers. There had been little in Sir Henry Lee's early life to convince him that marriage should include either devotion or felicity, and he rapidly tired of his wife.

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[25] J. Hurstfield, *The Queen's wards: wardship and marriage under Elizabeth I* (London, 1958), p. 25.
[26] B.L. Beer and S.M. Jacks, eds.,'Letters of William, Lord Paget of Beaudesert', *Camden Miscellany* xxv, 1-141, Camden Society, 4th series, xiii (London, 1974), p. 123.
[27] Ibid, p. 138.

THE MAKING OF A COURTIER – THE BEGINNINGS OF A COURT CAREER 1553-1558.

Although Henry Lee gained little in material terms from his marriage, he did benefit from the opportunities Paget could create for him at Court after 1553. Lee was old enough to appreciate the vicissitudes of Court politics which had affected Paget's career. Paget had been a leading member of the Privy Council under Henry VIII, but despite being created Baron Paget of Beaudesert in December 1549, he was forced to resign many of his offices in that year. He was arrested in October 1551 on charges of corruption and stripped of his Order of the Garter. Paget was later pardoned and his political fortunes were restored with the accession of Queen Mary in 1553. There were benefits for his family; his son and heir Henry Paget was created a Knight of the Bath at the coronation on 1 October 1553, and two of his wards and sons-in-law, Henry Lee and Christopher Alleyn, were among the eighty knights dubbed by the earl of Arundel the next day.[28] On becoming a knight, Lee was deemed to have achieved his majority and came into full possession of his own lands. The new Sir Henry Lee was acquiring his own political acumen; when his cousin, the younger Sir Thomas Wyatt led a rebellion against Queen Mary in 1554, Lee had the good sense to maintain his distance and there is no further recorded contact between the Lees and the Wyatts until the last decade of the century.

There is one tantalizing incident that if proven, could give us an invaluable clue to Lee's early experience as a courtier. From 20 May to 10 June 1555 Paget travelled to Gravelines, attempting unsuccessfully to negotiate a peace treaty between the empire and the French at Marck. Paget did not go alone; the State Papers Venetian relate that Lord Paget's son and son-in-law came to Brussels to see the Court on 4 June 1555. The two young men had not come in any official capacity; Paget's heir Henry was eighteen at the time and it would appear that his father had simply given them a chance to see the most magnificent court in Europe at the Coudenberg Palace in Brussels. On 8 June

[28] Machyn, *Diary*, p. 22.

> the Emperor [Charles V] gave orders for refreshments to be sent to Lord Paget's son and son-in-law, and as they had not asked to kiss hands, his Majesty gave them to understand ... that he wished to see them before their departure, as he did, showing them many marks of good will. [29]

This appears to have caused not a little consternation; the Emperor was granting very few audiences at this time and had earlier refused to meet that Plantagenet loose-cannon, Sir Edward Courtenay. The case for Lee being the son-in-law is strong; Paget's only other son-in-law at the time was Sir Christopher Alleyn of Ightham Mote in Kent. Although now a wealthy knight, Alleyn was the illegitimate son of a London merchant with little experience at Court. Sir Henry Lee, on the other hand, was a third generation courtier on both sides of his family and already familiar with court practices. Lee's uncle, Thomas Wyatt, would have been well known to Charles V, and at twenty-three, Lee was more of an age to be a companion to the young Henry Paget than the older Alleyn. If this is more than conjecture, one can well imagine the splendid impression made on Lee by the Coudenberg Palace with its magnificent tiltyard and possibly court reminiscences of the 1549 Magnificences at Binche. At some point, Lee acquired his taste for foreign courts and the tournament, and the Imperial Court in Brussels would have been an impressive place to start.

It is possible that it was through his connection with Sir Henry Paget that Lee formed his long friendship with Lord Robert Dudley. Dudley's father, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, had been executed in 1553 for his attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne and his sons owed their reinstatement at Court in no small part to the influence and friendship of Lord Paget. Later Robert Dudley, as earl of Leicester informed the third Lord Paget that 'he loved his father and brother as dearly as any friends I ever had'.[30] Lee and Dudley, much the same age, shared not only a love of the tournament but the experience of an early marriage that had been rapidly outgrown.

Lee had other formative experiences of government policy. On 16 October 1555, he was present at the burning of the Protestant divines, Hugh

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[29] *C[alendar of]S[tate] P[apers] Venetian*, VI 1555-1556 pp. 121, 127.(4-8 June 1555).
[30] S[taffordshire] R[ecord] O[ffice] Paget MS, X/12. (12 May 1574).

Latimer and Nicholas Ridley in Oxford. John Foxe tells us that, immediately prior to execution, Master Ridley 'gave away divers other small things to gentlemenne standynge by ... to Syr Henrye Lee he gaue a newe grote, and to diuers of my Lord Williams Gentlemen ... some nutmegs and rasins'.[31] Lee was standing in a prime position near the stake; but it is not recorded whether he was officially part of the armed guard provided by Lord Williams of Thame, an Oxfordshire nobleman frequently used by Queen Mary in a military capacity. Lee was named as someone of note in the first edition of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* in 1563, and singled out in print. There is no intimation whether he shared Williams' distaste for the task or how he viewed the sight, especially of Ridley's prolonged sufferings. Lee did, however, develop a marked and life-long tendency to sympathise with the unfortunate, and numerous persons such as the Duke of Norfolk at his execution in 1572 would later rely on him for support.[32] By 1555, Lee was taking up his responsibilities as one of the principal landowners in Buckinghamshire; he was named as a magistrate in that year and despite his relatively tender age, he was elected as knight of the shire in the two parliaments of 1558.[33]

Paget's position on the Privy Council as Comptroller also gave Sir Henry Lee his first opportunity of soldiering in the service of the commonwealth, an aspiration of many young gentlemen. In 1558 the Regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, was attempting to ravage the Border lands with French troops, and Lee was appointed by the Council to lead three hundred men to join the English army on the Scottish border in January 1558.[34] Holinshed recounts in his *Chronicles* that 'Sir Henrie Lee, Captain Read and others, beyng in the battell, behaved themselves very stoutly, causing the footmen to staye and boldly to abide the

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[31] John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1563), p. 1377. RSTC. 11222. I am indebted to Tom Freeman for the suggestion that the source was probably Shipside, Ridley's brother-in-law and that Lee would have been standing near the stake, not merely with the crowd.

[32] See below chapter four.

[33] The parliaments were held 20 January–7 March 1558 and 5-17 November 1558.

[34] *A[cts of the] P[rivy] C[ouncil of England],* ed. by John Roche Dasent et al, new series (46 vols., London, 1890-1964)VI p. 244. (1556-58).

enemy'.[35] He added that, but for this, 'it might have turned very euil to the English'. In a letter to Queen Mary from Warkworth, 30 April 1558, the earl of Northumberland commented that 'on Thursday night with Sir Henry Lee and other captains of your garrisons there, my brother passed over at Norham and burnt the town and took a great booty/of cattle'.[36] Lee was appointed to serve at Berwick-on-Tweed by force of the Council's letter 28 June 1558 with a warrant for £100 for victuals for his men.[37]

If it was unusual for a young Buckinghamshire gentleman with no known military experience to be given a command on the Scottish border, it was even more unusual for him to be singled out for inclusion in a harp song made for the occasion. A single manuscript in the Bodleian library, Oxford, preserves a thirty-six line ballad, 'Within the north country', which celebrates the heroes of the campaign - the earls of Westmorland, Cumberland and Northumberland, Lord Dacre, Sir Harry Percy, and Sir Richard Lee .[38] Alongside this illustrious host

> ther ys also Sr harry ley
> who dar both fight and fray
> w[he]ther it be be [sic] night or day
> I dar be bold to say
> he wyll not rone a way
> he ys both hardy & frae

The young Lee had made his mark in good company. On 17 October 1558, he was called home, with orders 'to leave in good order his charge with his lieutenant for this wynter season'. [39] If Lee's initial appointment had been the result of highly-placed Court connections, his conduct showed him to be adept at soldiering. In the next thirty years he would seize what limited opportunities there were to exercise a military role, short of mercenary service on the Continent.

With the accession of Elizabeth I in November 1558, Paget's authority and influence at Court declined rapidly and with it, Lee's early hopes of a flourishing

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[35] Raphael Holinshed, *The firste volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande* (London, 1577), p. 485. RSTC. 1358.
[36] Norham castle was across the border into Scotland. *CSPD* Addenda 1547-1565 p. 474 (30 April 1558).
[37] BL, Harleian MS, 7457 ff. 6, 12, 20 (wrongly numbered in the catalogue).
[38] Bodleian MS, Ashmole 48, f. 101; Andrew Taylor, 'The Sounds of Chivalry: Lute Song and Harp Song for Sir Henry Lee', *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, xxv (1992), pp. 1-23.
[39] Dasent, *APC,* XVII p. 415; BL, Harleian MS, 7457 ff. 12-20.

Court career. Before his retirement, however, Paget secured Lee's first appointment for the new Queen. In September 1558, a commission had been made out for the Lord Chancellor William Lord Howard of Effingham, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, the newly-appointed resident ambassador in Paris and Dr Nicholas Wotton to travel to the French Court, escorted by Sir Henry Lee, Sir Robert Rich and John Smythe. Although Queen Mary died in November 1558, Elizabeth was persuaded to re-appoint her sister's commissioners to travel to Paris in May 1559 for the ratification of the Treaty of Cambrai.[40] The peace-treaty concluded at Câteau-Cambrèsis in April 1559, marking a general cessation of hostilities in Europe, had left unsettled certain matters between England and Scotland. These were the subject of a treaty signed at Upsettlington in May 1559 which needed ratification by 'King and Queen Dauphin' of France, Mary Stuart and her husband François, as *de jure* rulers of Scotland.

On 3 May 1559, letters were sent to Lee, Rich and Smythe, instructing them 'to be here at Court upon Sunday next, so as they may be ready the day following to attend the Lord Chamberlain and others whom the Queen presently sends to the French King'.[41] The three young men were of much same age and with similar talents; Lee was a personable young courtier of proven military skill, Robert Rich was the son of the first Baron Rich and accustomed to the ways of the Court and John Smythe was a gentleman who had fought as a volunteer in France and the Low Countries. Ambassadorial escorts who could dance as well as they could fight were useful diplomatically. We only know of Lee's initial summons to Court; although he is not mentioned again by name, presumably he was among the many people who participated in the official entry into Paris, and in the jousts and courtly entertainment that followed the formal ratification of the treaty on 28 May. After the formalities, Howard and Wotton left Paris with their entourage on 30 May, bearing the proclamation of a tournament to be held at the French Court on 28 June 1559 – a tournament that would cost the life of King Henri II.

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[40] Paget, from his sickbed, had been offering advice to Cecil on these peace negotiations in 1559 and doubtless Cecil was happy to include Paget's son-in-law and his own kinsman on the embassy.
[41] Dasent, *APC* VII p. 99. (3 May 1559).

On his return from Paris, Sir Henry Lee received no more commissions from the Queen. With the change of monarch and with Paget's retirement from office and subsequent death, Lee's potentially promising Court career temporarily ground to a halt. There were many young gentlemen at court vying for advancement and Elizabeth showed a marked preference for those who had shown her conspicuous loyalty in earlier years. Lee was marked by his association with the previous reign, he lacked influential patrons and had little distinctive to commend him to Elizabeth. It would be ten years before he received any recognition from his Queen.

REBUILDING A COURT CAREER 1559-1573.

Lee was fortunate that, as a wealthy landowner, he had no financial necessity to importune for office, but at twenty-five, the life of a country gentleman was not going to satisfy him. It was a popular aspiration among young gentleman of means in Tudor England to travel abroad, acquiring the cosmopolitan polish and competency in languages which were necessary for a diplomatic career or preferment at Court. The courts of Italy were the chief attraction, and even Sir William Cecil sent his son and heir Thomas Cecil to Italy in 1561 to 'have the French or Italian tongue'.[42] Another aspiration of young gentlemen was to gain military experience. Opportunities for this were few in Elizabeth's England, and the government was conscious that a long peace would lead to a lack of experience in the very class that was needed to provide military leadership in the localities. By 1559, Sir Henry Lee was no *ingénue,* travelling abroad with a tutor for his education and seeking youthful excitement in foreign skirmishes. He had already tasted both foreign travel and battle, and if he was to rebuild a court career, he needed to make both his travels abroad and his soldiering of practical use to the new Elizabethan regime. There is little to suggest that Lee deliberately set out to work his way into royal favour; with money he had freedom to follow his own wishes. But as he 'gave himself to Voiage and Travaile into the florishinge States of France Itally & Germany ... gracinge the Courts of the most renowned

[42] Stone, *Crisis,* p. 693.

princes [with] Skill and Proofe in Armes', he was becoming the accomplished courtier that was most attractive to Elizabeth.[43]

Prolonged warfare in Europe had curtailed non-essential travel abroad, but the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrèsis in 1559 created new possibilities. Lee took the opportunity of peace in Europe to visit foreign courts, especially in Italy and see at first hand the tournaments and armour used abroad. We know little of Lee's attitude to the new Elizabethan regime at this time, but the survival of a private letter written during a visit to Venice and Naples in Spring 1561 raises some interesting questions. Lee, while abroad, was corresponding with Francis Yaxley, a man of dubious political loyalties.[44] Yaxley, initially a protégée of Sir William Cecil and a Clerk of the Signet until 1558, developed a taste for diplomatic meddling, and on the accession of Elizabeth, displayed firm Catholic beliefs and an indiscreet tongue. In January 1561, while corresponding weekly with Lee, Yaxley was briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London for speaking too freely of the Queen's possible marriage to Lord Robert Dudley. His papers were later seized, and they included correspondence with leading Catholics who had been imprisoned in 1561 for hearing Mass. Lee's letter of March 1561 to Yaxley, confiscated with the others, mentioned that Lee had also been writing to his Buckinghamshire neighbour, the Catholic peer Lord Loughborough, Master of the Horse under Mary.[45] Loughborough was arrested in April 1561 with 'divers persons for unlawful practices in religion'.[46] He was later released, and like other leading Catholics of proven loyalty, his religious affinities appeared to do him little harm as long as he was discreet. Lee was probably seeking Loughborough's aid over some local Buckinghamshire matter and on the evidence of Lee's later letters, it appears entirely out of character that he was writing on religious matters. Throughout his life, there was little to suggest he had Catholic

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[43] From Lee's *Memoriae Sacrum* in Chambers, *Lee,* p. 304.
[44] TNA, PRO, SP70/19/1 f. 05. The internal evidence in the letter confirms that this correspondence was two-way and weekly.
[45] *C[alendar of] S[tate] P[apers] For[eign series of the reign of Elizabeth]* 1561-1562 p. 7. (23 vols, London, 1863-1912), 4 March 1561; TNA, PRO, SP70/19/1 f. 05.
[46] *CSPD,* XVI, p. 49; *CSPD* Addenda, XI p. 510, (8 April). Loughborough's imprisonment was brief and he continued to serve actively as a Knight of the Garter until his death in 1572.

sympathies. The incident illustrated how warily one had to tread in the changing religious climate of the early years of the new reign.

There was nothing in Lee's letter to Yaxley from Venice to suggest that he was using his travels abroad for any ulterior political or religious motive. Lee was merely passing on a factual report of an imminent conflict between Phillip II of Spain and the Turks, and the rebellion of the second son of the Sultan Suleiman against his father. It is difficult to see how Yaxley could have put it to any real political advantage; probably he saw himself as part of the information-gathering service for Dudley, with whom he was also in correspondence in 1561.[47]

On his return from Italy, Lee leased a London lodging at the Savoy in February 1563, and developed a network of highly-influential friends, including Sir William Cecil, the Queen's Secretary. Lee's friendship with the Queen's favourite Lord Robert Dudley, now earl of Leicester also developed and in February 1566 Lee welcomed him to his home at Quarrendon.[48] Lee possibly supported Leicester's aspirations as a royal suitor, as he had Sir Thomas Smith's *Dialogue on the Queen's Marriage* copied for his library.[49] Lee's connections gave him the beginnings of a standing at Court. In an uncalendared letter from Sir Nicholas Throckmorton to Leicester on 9 May 1567, Throckmorton referred to a recent disagreement between the earl and the Queen, but stated that 'I do judge by Sir H. Lee she meaneth to send your Lordship a token and some message'.[50]

When Lee next departed for Italy in June 1568, ostensibly in a private capacity, he conducted a somewhat safer correspondence with Cecil and Leicester. Although the ten letters Lee sent home from June 1568 to March 1569 are full of immediate and pertinent news from the Continent, it is not clear if his reports had any official standing. The flow of letters was not one way; Lee refers to letters he received from Cecil although these have not survived. The

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[47] *The Household accounts and disbursement books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-61, 1584-86,* ed. S. Adams, Camden Society, 5th series vi (Cambridge,1995), p. 78. In 1561, Lee was not corresponding directly with Dudley.

[48] TNA, PRO, SP12/39/105 (20 Feb. 1566).

[49] Item 21, Taylor Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, (Princeton University). This was formerly in the library of Viscount Dillon.

[50] Reference is made to this in the introduction to *CSPD* Addenda 1566-79 p. xv.

indications are that Lee's letters were sufficiently useful for Cecil to reply regularly.

For the first part of his journey, Lee travelled with his Buckinghamshire neighbour, Edward, Lord Windsor, the newly appointed ambassador in Italy. In Antwerp, the two men found time to have matching portraits painted by King Philip's former master painter Antonis Mor.[51] *(Fig. One).* In this, the first portrait we have of Lee, he is shown as a handsome, athletic man, with shoulders disproportionately wide, betokening his skill with the lance and sword. The portrait is rich in the enigmatic symbolism typical of Lee's later portrait collection and by 1568, Lee could afford the fees of a notable artist.

There were more pressing matters in the Netherlands in June 1568 than portraits. In 1567, Philip II had sent the Duke of Alva to the Netherlands as captain general, to subdue what was perceived as heretical unrest. In September 1567, Alva had instigated the punitive Council of Troubles in Brussels, and when the Regent, Margaret of Parma departed in December 1567, Alva was appointed as Governor-General. Lee's first letter to Cecil, sent from the relative calm of Antwerp, was very detailed and suggests that Lee was attempting to prove his usefulness.[52] After giving military news from Friesland, Lee described the recent actions of Alva who

> no what abstaynathe from his fyste begone course, but with more cruelte to the utter dysmeyng of all this contry. On twesday laste he begane his execusyon, on whyche day in Bryssealles dyed XXII gentellmen, on wensday III and yesterday beyng satterday Count d'Egmunt and Count Horne.

Lee enclosed the names of twenty-five gentlemen, marking with crosses seven who were shriven by friars before death. He made no personal comment on proceedings, above noting that all the victims were gentlemen or nobles. The last execution on the list was on 5 June in Brussels; by the next day, Lee was

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[51] This portrait is analysed below in chapter six with others in Lee's portrait collection. Lee's portrait now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London. The much-damaged matching portrait of Windsor is owned privately.

[52] TNA, PRO, SP70/104b/36-38.(6 June 1568). The list of names is accurate with the exceptions of the Seigneur de Backerzeel and Antoine van Stralen, the Burgemeester of Antwerp, who were executed on 24 Sept. 1568.

forwarding a professionally-inscribed list to Cecil from Antwerp suggesting that Lee was not just the amateur bystander he claimed to be. Lee's letters, unlike official missives, were always prepared to relay useful gossip and rumour along with precise information, and he included a lively description of a dinner-table fight in Antwerp involving his former travelling companion John Smythe.

Lee then continued alone to Augsburg, sending Cecil and Leicester virtually identical letters about the hospitality he had received from the Prince of Orange, the military dispositions of the Elector Palatine and his son Casimir, the reaction among German princes to Alva's actions and the rumours of the Emperor Maximilian II's condemnation of the executions in Brussels.[53] Lee was in a position to visit some of the leading courts in Europe and unlike Windsor, who had an official ambassadorial position, Lee could go anywhere the 'port ... and countenance of a gentleman' could take him. At thirty-five, he was a personable character, with confident, easy manners; from the evidence of his letters, many ranks of men were prepared to talk to him. Later letters show that Lee's sporting prowess made him a welcome guest at the many princely courts of Europe - prime places in which to gather news. From Florence, for example, he reported in December 1568 that he had frequently spoken to the Prince 'and since coming in his company, I have been twice or thrice a-hawking'.[54] The *entrée* into court circles accorded to sporting gentlemen was a recurring refrain throughout Lee's career.

It appears that Lee's initial role in Italy was to forward to Cecil 'advices', the confidential *avvisi* or handwritten newsletters that had a very limited circulation within diplomatic circles. He made his base in Venice, well positioned to receive the *avvisi* from Constantinople, which he mentioned in his letter from Venice, 21 August 1568. Lee was also eager to include his own observations, and in his early letters, he took pains to stress both his kinship and loyalty to Cecil, begging him 'to command me as one that desyerath to searve you ...

[53] *HMC Pepys* I p. 119, TNA, PRO, SP70/98/41. See also SP70/102/90, (Padua); SP70/103/73-74, (Venice); SP70/104a/17, (Florence); SP70/106/133 (Venice). See also ORO Dil xxi/12.
[54] TNA, PRO, SP70/104a/17.

withowt double dealyng'.[55] Lee wrote from Venice, Padua, Florence and Rome, principally of political events, such as rumoured royal marriages and alliances throughout Europe and included details of the military movements of Protestant princes, Casimir, William of Orange and the Prince of Condé in France. In retrospect, his information was highly accurate. Many of the enclosures, the 'advyces from Constantynople', have not survived but the advices from Rome to *All'Illustre S[ign]or et padrone mio Colend[issi]imo S[ign]or Arigo Leaa, cavallliero inglese*, 9 October 1568, have.[56] On this occasion, Lee forwarded three pages of detailed political information, some of it encoded. Lee's informant appears to have had a very precise knowledge of Papal policy towards the Italian states, towards Alva and Philip II, to the Spanish in Naples and to both the French King and the Emperor. It also mentioned the ample *denari* that could be sent from Rome to Catholic armies in France and Flanders. It is written from the inevitable conviction that Papal opinion was central to all events in Europe, and possibly came from inside the Vatican itself. It is not clear if any other 'advices' now in the State papers were forwarded by Lee.

One recurrent issue which Lee reported home to Cecil, apart from the widespread effects of Alva's actions in the Low Countries, was the Catholic reaction to Emperor Maximilian II's granting the people of Hungary and Lower Austria permission to use the *Confessio Augustana,* the Lutheran Augsburg Confession, in August 1568. Lee referred to it in his letter from Padua in September, and the consternation it was causing in the Vatican was a major topic in the advices from Rome in October. In the same month, Lee reported from Venice that the 'papal troops [are] to ... hinder the growth of the confession Augustana'.[57] By December 1568, Lee wrote from Florence to say that the Duke's son-in-law had been given the command of a Papal army of five thousand to 'determin'd the overthrowe of all contrary relygons', and also reported that the Florentine 'chieffe captayns of credyte' were flocking around the Prince offering

[55] TNA, PRO, SP70/102/90 (Padua).
[56] TNA, PRO, SP70/103/35-37. To my knowledge, this has not been re-translated since Cecil's day; neither the HMC Calendars, nor Dillon and Chambers attempted a translation. I am grateful to Mel Marshall and Leofranc Holford-Strevens for their assistance with this.
[57] TNA, PRO, SP70/103/73-74 (31 Oct. 1568 from Venice); SP70/147/342 (20 Nov. 1568 from Venice)

support for his policies.[58] Given the international standing of Florentine banking, this was interesting news, especially in relation to events in England.

In late December 1568, somewhat uncharacteristically, Sir William Cecil ordered the seizure of Spanish ships in the English Channel, carrying money borrowed from Genoese bankers to pay Alva's army in Flanders. As Wallace MacCaffrey has rightly observed, Cecil's view of the international scene was changing and his opinions were summed up in his official paper of January 1569 'A short memorial on the state of the realm'.[59] In this, Cecil outlined his conviction that there was a growing European Catholic crusade, in obedience to the Pope, directed against Protestants in the Low Countries, in France and especially in England. If the precise information Lee was relaying from Italy were typical of the 'advices' Cecil was receiving, his change of policy at this time is very understandable.

Lee's last Italian letter from Venice in March 1569 reported that, although the Pope had committed eleven thousand horsemen and twelve thousand foot soldiers to help the French king, the 'bruits of Italy' were that Elizabeth would not willingly have wars against Spain. Lee was correct, war was averted, but he confessed that 'the fame of the warres wyll make me draw homeward sooner than I had ment ... to searve her majestie ... and my contre'.[60] If there was any possibility of England's going to war, Lee wanted to be part of it, as much for personal inclination as for patriotism. He travelled home via the Imperial court, again indicative of the level at which he was gathering his information. Sir Henry Lee's letters from 1568 to 1569, as well as revealing much about his own aspirations and interests, clearly illustrate the machinations of Cecil's intelligence gathering service. In his biography of Sir Horatio Palavicino, Lawrence Stone gives a graphic description of how Cecil and Elizabeth's spy-master Sir Francis

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[58] TNA, PRO, SP70/104a/17 (4 December 1568 from Venice).
[59] W. T. MacCaffrey, 'Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 200). [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983]; C. Read, 'Queen Elizabeth's Seizure of the Duke of Alva's Pay-Ships', *The Journal of Modern History*, v, 4 (1933) pp. 443-64.
[60] TNA, PRO, SP70/106/133 (5 March 1569).

Walsingham both came by their foreign information.[61] News came from a variety of sources – from official ambassadors in neutral and friendly countries, from Protestant leaders such as William of Orange and Henry of Navarre, and from international merchants whose business interests depended on knowledge of the current political situation. There then remained the murky world of the professional spies, what Stone calls the 'leaky and unreliable vessels as sources of military and political intelligence'. A major problem with Tudor espionage was the difficulty in assessing whether the information was reliable; it is probable that Cecil was using such information as Lee sent back to corroborate other sources. Lee frequently admits in his letters that Cecil is 'better advertysed by others' and there is little evidence to suggest he was acting in any official capacity.[62] To Sir William Cecil, Lee was a free source of information, a loyal kinsman he could trust, an experienced traveller with a keen military eye who could express himself well on paper and one who had the social *entrée* into many varied *milieux*. The effort Cecil put into conducting a two-way correspondence was a small price to pay.

War with Spain failed to materialize, but Lee arrived home in time to join the royal army sent to subdue rebellion in the North of England in November 1569. It was a gentleman's duty to serve his monarch and the commonweal in a military capacity, but the government of Elizabeth and Sir William Cecil was reluctant to commit itself to war, and the years between 1564 and 1586 saw few opportunities for nobles and gentlemen to fight on the battlefield. Paul Hammer has observed that

> in an age which placed an enormous premium upon martial exploits, wars were a necessary part of political and social life, while prolonged peace ... represented stagnation, moral decline and the loss of opportunity to display skill and courage.[63]

[61] L. Stone, *An Elizabethan: Sir Horatio Palavicino* (Oxford, 1956), p. 234.
[62] TNA, PRO, SP70/102/90.
[63] P.E.J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 10.

Gentlemen might serve in mustering troops in their counties, but many sought active military service. Some, like John Smythe, went abroad to fight as volunteers in France and in the Low Countries; others, like Sir Henry Lee, seized what few opportunities arose at home.

The 'Rising of the Northern Earls' had been precipitated by a conspiracy hatched in the Spring of 1569, to overthrow Cecil and marry the Duke of Norfolk to Mary Stuart, the Scottish Queen, who was a prisoner in the north of England. Although the conspiracy had collapsed when Norfolk confessed all to Elizabeth, his co-conspirators, the earls of Westmorland and Northumberland rose in rebellion at Durham in November 1569. The earl of Sussex, President of the Council of the North, was slow in dealing with the situation, and the Queen sent her cousin Lord Hunsdon north, rapidly followed by the earl of Warwick and Baron Clinton with a royal army of some 20,000 men. This was the army that Sir Henry Lee and other loyal gentlemen joined as volunteers. Once again, Lee wrote letters home to Cecil, acknowledging that he was in no way supplanting the official reports, but substantiating suspicions about Sussex harboured by many in the Privy Council. Sussex, approached initially by Norfolk's agent in Spring 1569, failed to inform Cecil of the plot. When the northern earls rose in rebellion, Sussex was criticised by the Council for letting Northumberland escape from captivity and for being slow to raise an army. Cecil at this point had reason to exercise some caution, and doubtless welcomed the firsthand opinions of a kinsman with military experience. On 14 December 1569, Lee wrote to Cecil from the military camp at Wetherby that

> here be with our Lords many willing hearts; more of experience and counsel would do no hurt. The most of Lord Sussex's dealings that I mislike is that such as are known both for religion and dutiful zeal to her Majesty have less trust committed to them, and the contrary, more credit.[64]

Lee's military opinion was apposite; Sussex's loyalty was unimpeachable, but both Hunsdon and Warwick had seen more military action and few of the troops were experienced. Lee was sufficiently secure in his relationship with Cecil to

[64] *CSPD.* Add., 1547-80 p. 151.

commit his opinion to writing, criticising not only his social superior, but his commanding officer.

By 1569, Lee's letters reveal a growing confidence in his own opinions and his position *vis-à-vis* men of authority. His relationship with Sir William Cecil developed into a friendship that lasted for the rest of their lives, and would extend to Cecil's son Robert. Lee had also achieved some favour with the Queen. In 1570, Lee had some undisclosed business in the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, and the Queen wrote to the Archbishop 'in his favour'.[65] Cecil also wrote to Parker on the same matter stressing 'how heartily I do love Sir Henry Lee for many good causes'.[66] By January 1571, Lee was being described as 'the Queen's servant' and in the same year he was first seen tilting at Court.[67] Later in 1571, Lee purchased Edward Dyer's patent as Steward of the Queen's manor at Woodstock and established himself as the *de facto* administrator of the property.

Re-established in royal favour and with a potentially promising Court career in view, Lee would have been quite justified in retiring from any military involvement. The fact that in 1573, he felt himself free to volunteer to fight at the siege of Edinburgh Castle is indicative of his desire to serve his Queen and country on his own terms. Lee was a man of forty with private means, who despite his responsibilities at Woodstock, chose to retain some freedom of action. This was not unattractive to Elizabeth, who admired chivalric prowess in her male courtiers. In later years, Lee would take pride in his role with the army, and it militated against claims that tournaments were merely courtly posturing by those with no genuine military experience. At the siege, Lee not only acquitted

[65] John Strype, *Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (4 vols., London, 1711), IV i. p. 527.
[66] J. Bruce ed., *The correspondence of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1853), p. 354 (24 September 1569).
[67] TNA, PRO, C.66/1076. Lee's role at Woodstock is discussed below in chapter three.

himself with distinction but once again sent his private opinions home to Cecil, now Lord Burghley, 'synce I am on the stage a bistander'.[68]

The situation in Scotland had been volatile and confused for several years. After the collapse of the Northern Rising in 1569, the northern earls had fled into Scotland, making common cause with supporters of the exiled Mary Stuart, led by William Maitland of Lethington. The head of the regency government in Scotland, the earl of Moray, had entrusted the nation's greatest stronghold, Edinburgh Castle, to Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, an experienced commander who had fought in France for Henri II. Moray himself was assassinated in 1570, and Maitland persuaded Kirkcaldy to defect to the Marian rebels. Together, they held Edinburgh Castle for Mary, with its ordnance, Crown jewels and State papers in what became known as 'the Lang Siege'. In 1573, Sir Henry Killigrew, Elizabeth's agent in Scotland, brokered an agreement between the new Regent, the earl of Morton and other Marian rebels, leaving Kirkcaldy and Maitland isolated in Edinburgh castle. The possibility of French aid to the besieged castle finally galvanized Elizabeth into action, and in April 1573, Sir William Drury, commander of the English garrison at Berwick, was ordered to take Edinburgh castle with some fifteen hundred men and thirty-three pieces of artillery. Regent Morton joined him with five hundred Scots troops, ranged against a castle garrison of only one hundred and fifty defenders.

Drury's force was joined by a certain number of 'gentlemen of name', who 'serve at their own free wile', including Sir Henry Lee. Henry Killigrew, himself a veteran of the attack on Boulogne in 1563, had little regard for the military capabilities of these 'newly-come courtiers', and thought them better suited for dancing attendance on the Queen than enduring the rigours of war.[69] The composition of this group, ranging from men in the prime of life to excitement-seeking youths illustrates the aspirations of a cross-section of Elizabethan courtier-gentlemen. Sir Henry Lee was one of the older members of the group, with the most military experience and with his own company of recruits. Others,

[68] BL, Cotton MS, Caligula CIV ff. 91-2.
[69] TNA, PRO, SP52/25/42. (Killigrew to Burghley)

such as Sir George Carey the Queen's cousin, William Knollys and Burghley's son Thomas Cecil, had seen action against the northern rebels in 1569. There were a number of inexperienced young courtiers, William Killigrew, younger brother of the ambassador, Edward Dyer and the future Master of the Revels, Edward Tilney.[70] Together they had youth, enthusiasm, experience in the tiltyard, chivalric aspirations and a certain *esprit de corps.* They also demonstrated how eager Elizabeth's young lions were to prove themselves in the crucible of war, and how difficult it was to find the opportunity.

Lee was first to admit to Burghley that he had little ideological commitment to the action, '[these] being causes not pertaining to me' and his letters reflect the fact that the predominant sympathy of the English officers appeared to be with the besieged Maitland and Kirkcaldy.[71] Regent Morton was 'wise and wily', whereas 'Kirkcaldy [is] well-beloved here of all sorts ... for his valour and wisdom'.[72] Lee reserved his chief scorn for the Scots in general, 'in appearance only religious but in effect traitorous'. As allies, he failed to understand or trust them.

> Ys not Scotland a poor, barren and ne[e]dy contry, full of people rather cravyng increase than able to spare any thyngs? Wyll the[Scots] nobles and gentellmen, in who was never truth nor constancy, newly reconcyled ... suffer us, being strayngyers ... to spoyll that place of wealth wherin the honour of this contry lyeth [the castle].

Lee feared for the English ordnance, suspecting that the Scots 'will covet ... that which they so much need,' leaving the English forces 'in hazard'.

Nevertheless there was a job to be done, and the volunteer gentlemen were welcome. Drury began his attack on the castle on 4 May 1573, personally commanding the battery opposite the castle's principal fortification. The other sides of the castle were bombarded by batteries on four mounts, commanded by Lee, George Carey, Regent Morton and Thomas Sutton, a seasoned English

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[70] Holinshed, *Chronicle,* v, p. 669.
[71] Maitland, a former friend of Burghley's had been instrumental in securing Henry Killigrew's release from a French prison in 1563; Kirkcaldy had a long-standing friendship with Sir William Drury and his professionalism, military abilities, chivalry and valour were respected by all.
[72] BL, Cotton MS, Caligula CIV ff. 91-2. (11 May 1573).

captain.[73] Lee's expertise might have been with armour and cavalry, but on this occasion, he showed his competence in commanding cannon. Killigrew reported to Burghley by 22 May that Sir Henry Lee's breach was 'in more forewardness', and on 26 May, during a feigned assault at Lee's breach, Drury stormed the main entrance. Much of the castle was reduced to rubble, occasioning a major reconstruction of the buildings. Strenuous efforts were made by Drury to save the lives of Maitland and Kirkcaldy after the surrender, but Lee was percipient when he wrote of the Regent, 'the fear he hath to the aforenamed two will make him thruste more greedily after their bodies, that he may live hereafter more qui[et]ly'.[74] Maitland, already sick, died in captivity on 9 June, and Kirkcaldy was hanged in August 1573.[75]

At the end of the siege, Lee's position of favour with the Queen proved useful to Sir William Drury. He and Killigrew had sent efficient official military and diplomatic accounts of the action to Cecil but something more personal was required for Elizabeth. Lee had not only the military credibility, but the innate courtliness and imagination to act as personal *raconteur.* On 31 May 1573, Drury sent Lee to the Queen, advising Burghley that 'the particularities of winning the Castle are referred to Sir Henry Lee, who saw the experience thereof'.[76] Lee gave a good account of the action; on 8 June the Queen wrote to Drury, stating

> by the lively report of our trusty servant, Sir H. Lea, knight, who like a very good gentleman, has had his part therein, we do most certainly understand the continuance of your labours and dangers to have been such that none could be more.[77]

Paul Hammer makes the salient point that the Queen recognised that 'going to war would require her to delegate her royal authority to distant commanders and

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[73] *C[alendar of] S[tate]P[apers relating to] Scotland [and Mary, Queen of Scots],* vol. iv, 1571-4 p. 568.
[74] BL, Cotton MS, Caligula CIV ff. 91-2 .
[75] It was Elizabeth herself who ordered Drury to turn over Maitland and Kirkcaldy to Regent Morton. On 31 May, Morton told Burghley that the fate of the prisoners 'rests now in her majesty'. At the end of July, Morton finally received advice from Queen Elizabeth that she would leave 'the judgment and ordering of those matters to him', *CSP Scotland* 1571–4, pp. 575, 582.
[76] *CSP Scotland* 1571-4 p. 276.
[77] *CSP Scotland* 1571-4 p. 581. Lee maintained his interest in northern events; and sat on a Parliamentary commission on the bill to fortify the frontier with Scotland 25 February 1581.

weaken her control over events'.[78] Elizabeth was sensitive to the fact that, as a woman, she would never emulate her father and lead the army herself; any detailed information that enabled her to believe that she was still *au fait* with the military situation would make her look favourably upon the messenger. At a time when most courtier gentlemen could only aspire to military experience and tournaments were mocked as mere posturing, Lee's commendations on the battlefield provided solid evidence of his practical expertise and his loyalty to Queen and commonwealth. In November 1573, Lee was rewarded with the reversionary lease to the lieutenancy of Woodstock, his first major royal appointment.[79]

CONCLUSION.

Is a detailed study of Lee's early life important? Leaving aside the fact that Lee was thirty-five before his first royal appointment, his early life and experiences made him the man he was, the man that eventually found favour with Elizabeth. His family was armigerous for several generations; not for him the vain pursuit of a coat of arms through documents fabricated by the Heralds. He had the assurance of a man of considerable property, he had been tested on the battlefield and found his courage to be more than adequate; he had visited the courts of Europe and acquitted himself well. He had much to offer his Queen and commonweal, and the experience and freedom of action to choose how he would serve.

Lee had waited a long time to return to royal favour. If he had been too young to appreciate the career of his uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt, he was old enough to learn from the example of his father-in-law, Lord Paget, and experienced for himself the vicissitudes of Court life. Courts were splendid places, gentlemen might become ennobled, but favour was fickle. Knights of the Garter could be made and unmade on a whim, a royal Councillor could find himself in the Tower facing a ruinous fine, and a change of monarch could signal

[78] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 59.
[79] See below chapter three.

the end of a promising career. Elizabeth's Court was a place for back-biting, gossip and slander; a young courtier gentleman might be dazzled by its energy and dangled promises, but Lee, as an older man, preferred to serve his Queen at some distance. By 1573, he had found his own solution to the problem. In future years, he would receive and entertain the Queen lavishly at the royal manor of Woodstock when she came to him on progress, and he would devise the Accession Day tournaments in her honour, where he himself would determine the action.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TOURNAMENTS

Sir Henry Lee is best known for his role as instigator of the Accession Day tournaments, held annually on 17 November to celebrate the Queen's accession on that day in 1558. Under Elizabeth, tournaments enjoyed something of a renaissance as a form of entertainment, and it is the purpose of this chapter to explore the nature and purpose of Elizabethan tournaments, and the contribution which was made to them by Sir Henry Lee. Although later writers credit Lee with the title of 'Queen's Champion', it was not a title he himself claimed, nor was it in the Queen's gift to bestow.[1] The hereditary dignity of Champion of England or 'King's Champion' was held by the Dymoke family of the manor of Scrivelsby, Lincolnshire. Sir Robert Dymoke had delivered the loyal Challenge at the coronations of Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VII, and his son Sir Edward Dymoke had exercised the same role at the coronations of Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. By tradition, Sir Edward's son Robert should have inherited the position after his father's death in 1566, but Robert, while imprisoned as a Catholic recusant, suffered a stroke and died in 1580. In the absence of a legal claimant, Sir Henry Lee assumed the *de facto* role of personal champion to the Queen at tournaments, issuing the formal challenge to anyone who would dispute her honour, proudly wearing the Queen's colours and leading out the Challengers onto the tiltyard against the Defenders.[2] He exercised this role until his retirement in 1590, when the Queen accepted George Clifford, earl of Cumberland as her champion.

TOURNAMENT TRADITIONS INHERITED BY SIR HENRY LEE AND ELIZABETHAN TILTERS.

The earliest concept of the tournament was as a brutal practice for even more brutal warfare, fought à *l'outrance* with resultant carnage and loss

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[1] See among others, Hackett, *Virgin Mother,* p. 86; Ewan Fernie, 'Lee, Sir Henry (1533–1611)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn., Oct 2007 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16288]. Similarly, Cumberland is credited with the title after 1590, see Peter Holmes, 'Clifford, George, third earl of Cumberland (1558–1605)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5645].

[2] These terms are explained below.

of life.[3] The tournament as an expensive chivalric Court entertainment, fought à *plaisance*, was developed in the mid fifteenth century at the court of René of Anjou and at the Burgundian courts of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold. It became widely adopted throughout Europe, with chivalric literature, festival books, elaborate scenery and dramatic programmes.[4] England's own tournament traditions had already been codified by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester who formulated the first rules of jousting in English in 1466.[5] The Burgundian tournament genre was first seen in England in 1467, when the negotiations for the marriage of Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV, to Charles the Bold occasioned an initial tournament between the Burgundians and the English at Smithfield in London. The actual marriage in 1468 was marked by a magnificent *Pas d'armes de l'Arbre d'Or* in the marketplace at Bruges, and Sydney Anglo points out that the allegorical references to 'Florimont, knight of the Golden Tree' that ran throughout the eight days of jousting, in no way detracted from 'the consummate artistry of the exercises and feats of the necessary disciplines of Arms'.[6] This was jousting that required genuine skill, not merely the symbolic breaking of lances that Anglo believes became the norm in the late Elizabethan court. It set a high standard for any subsequent tournament devisers.

It was Henry VII who did most to introduce the Burgundian tradition of tournament as a spectacle into England after the demise of the Burgundian dynasty in 1477. The arrival of Katherine of Aragon in England in November 1501 as the bride of Arthur, Prince of Wales was marked by a splendid festival.[7] With William Cornish as the deviser of the festivities, a distinct narrative thread can be perceived throughout the action, with knights in pageant-cars fashioned as dragons, ships or castles, fantastical pavilions and

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[3] Jousts à *l'outrance* involved combat with sharp-edged weapons, often to the death. Jousts à *plaisance* were with rebated or blunted weapons, often with safety tips.

[4] For a general discussion of tournament development in Europe, see R. Barber and J. Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1989). For the European antecedents of the Elizabethan tournament, see G. Kipling, *Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden, 1977).

[5] Sir John Harrington claims that Tiptoft's rules were readopted in 1562, but were republished by Harrington in *Nugae Antiquae,* Thomas Park ed. (London, 1804; repr. New York,1966).

[6] S. Anglo, 'Anglo-Burgundian Feats of Arms at Smithfield: June 1467', *Guildhall Miscellany* II, vii (1965), pp. 271-85.

[7] Katherine's sister, Juana, had been married to Philip the Fair of Burgundy earlier in 1496, amid great triumphs and celebrations. It behoved Henry VII, securing the first foreign marriage for the new Tudor dynasty, to emulate the celebrations of the most fashionable court in Europe.

a tree of chivalry. Kipling makes the point that only the lack of a literary text to accompany the action distinguishes these tournaments from those of the Elizabethan Accession days organised by Lee.[8] The latter spectacle, however, was for private Court entertainment; only Katherine's entry into London was public.

The apogee of the English tournament was reached in the reign of Henry VIII, with the King himself leading some forty recorded jousts between 1509 and 1529. Whereas many were simply Court entertainments to celebrate Christmas or Shrovetide, some were great triumphs. The Westminster tournament of February 1511 to mark the birth of Henry's short-lived son cost some £4000, nearly twice the cost of his warship, the *Great Elizabeth.*[9] In October 1518, jousts were held to celebrate the Treaty of Universal Peace and in June 1520, the meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I of France at the Field of Cloth of Gold was marked by jousts, tourneys and barriers. Sir Henry Lee's family had long been associated with these spectacles; his grandfather, Sir Henry Wyatt, organized the finance for many of the tournaments and at the Christmas Revels of 1524-25, Lee's uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt was among the jousters defending the 'Castle of Loyalty'.[10] Although a new tiltyard was built at Whitehall for the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533, tournaments declined somewhat after that date and Henry VIII's spectacular fall during a tournament in 1536 marked the end of his personal participation in the sport. No triumphs marked the birth of Henry VIII's son Edward in 1537, followed as it was by the death of his Queen, Jane Seymour. There was little reason to impress foreign ambassadors and the King's own declining physique made him unwilling to hazard the tourney.

Tournaments under Edward VI were tailored more for the King's tender years. A coronation tournament was held in 1547, but subsequent activity included the young king merely 'running at the ring', a training exercise for boys, or 'the Justes of the hobihorses' for New Year's Day,1553.[11] Mary I had little enthusiasm for tournaments, but her Spanish husband, Philip, was eager

[8] For a full description, see Kipling, *Triumph*, pp. 72-95; S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 56-92.
[9] *The Great Tournament Roll of Westminster,* with introduction by S. Anglo (Oxford, 1968).
[10] See also TNA, PRO, E36/227 – repayments to Sir Thomas Wyatt for work on two triumphant arches and stores for the revels in the banqueting house, Greenwich.
[11] Machyn, *Diary,* p. 7.

to reintroduce them at Court for his own reasons. Relations between his Spanish and English gentlemen were often fraught, it was reported that 'not a day passes without some knife-work in the palace between the two nations' and Philip saw the tournaments as a way of bonding the two groups.[12] The King, with his Spanish retainers, having failed to impress the English with traditional cane-play or *jeugo de canãs* on 25 November 1554, issued a challenge for a tournament on 18 December 1554. The score cheque or tilting list for the tournament reveals that the King led a team of challengers drawn from both nations, whereas the defenders were dominated by the three Dudley brothers, Ambrose, Robert and Henry.[13] Richard McCoy makes the point that the King's need to include English tilters gave the Dudley brothers an excellent opportunity to restore themselves in royal circles after their imprisonment in the Tower and their father's execution in 1553.[14] The tournament itself was so successful that it was repeated on four other occasions before Philip's departure for Brussels in September 1555, giving many young English courtiers their first experience of tilting.

Queen Elizabeth's own obvious enthusiasm for Court spectacles saw a new flowering of tournaments after her accession in November 1558. She celebrated her coronation in January 1559 with a two-day tournament, one of four held that year with Robert and Ambrose Dudley as leading challengers.[15] The reorganization of the College of Arms under the Duke of Norfolk as Earl Marshal from 1555 had brought greater codification of the Heralds' tournament duties, and Tiptoft's Ordinances were re-adopted in 1562, giving tournaments a greater degree of formality.

THE ELIZABETHAN TOURNAMENT.

What actually happened in an Elizabethan tournament? Beneath the allegorical rhetoric and Courtly spectacle, Sir Henry Lee inherited a tournament structure which had remained basically unchanged in England for several centuries. The organization was handled by the Heralds, who derived

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[12] *Calendar of letters and State Papers ... between England and Spain preserved in Archives [various],* XIII, July 1554-Nov. 1558, pp. 60-61, 74 (20 October 1554).
[13] CA. MS, Tournament cheque portfolio 3b.
[14] R.C. McCoy, 'From the Tower to the Tiltyard: Robert Dudley's return to Glory', *[The] H[istorical] J[ournal] xxvii,* (1984) pp. 425-435.
[15] CA. MS, Portfolio, 4A, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 5c.

much of their income from the occasion. Initially a Challenge or 'cartell', usually written by the knights themselves, would be proclaimed by the Heralds.[16] In the case of international tournaments, these 'cartells' would be issued several weeks or even months ahead, and the Heralds would make lists of those knights who agreed with Challenge - the Challengers - and those who refuted it - the Defenders. The Crown was responsible for the upkeep of the four tiltyards in London, at Westminster, at Whitehall, at Greenwich near the Almain Armourers' workshop and at Hampton Court. The majority of Elizabethan tournaments were held at Whitehall, with Hampton Court being kept for practice or when plague struck in London. In the days immediately prior to the tournament, the tilt rail, the judgehouses, the stands for spectators and the temporary stairs leading to the Queen's windows were erected at the Crown's expense, and these are clearly illustrated in contemporary pen and ink sketches.[17]*(Fig. 2).*

On the day of the tournament, when the Queen and Court had assembled, the knights would enter the tiltyard with their entourages, and with paste-board shields, bearing *imprese* - enigmatic devices and classical mottoes, obliquely referring to their hopes and aspirations. These would be symbolically hung on a specially-constructed 'Tree of Chivalry', a relic of the medieval Burgundian *Arbre d'Or.* In 1593 in a letter to his wife, Sir George Carey commented on 'euery gallants best employed witts, best to shew themselfs at the cowrs in the filde, witty in theyr shilde deuises and pleasinge in the choyse of theyr presents'.[18]

The tournament itself consisted of three parts: the Joust, where a knight would break six lances with his opponent across a tilt barrier, the Tourney, or *grand mêlée*, where all the knights fought on foot simultaneously, and Barriers, which was man to man combat on foot across a barrier, often fought with staves.*(Fig. 3).* The whole was governed by the rules of chivalry and adjudicated by the Judges who sat at a little distance from the tilt barrier. The scores of the knights were kept by the Heralds on score cheques or tilting

[16] See BL, Add. MS, 41499 f. 1, 'A cartell for a challenge', Sir Henry Lee's Challenge before Shampanie.
[17] TNA, PRO, E.351/3204 - 3229.
[18] Berkeley Muniments General Series Letter Bundle 4, reproduced in Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Christs Teares, Nashes's 'Forsaken Extremities", *The Review of English Studies,* New Series, xxix (May, 1998), pp. 170-5.

Fig. 2

The Tiltyard

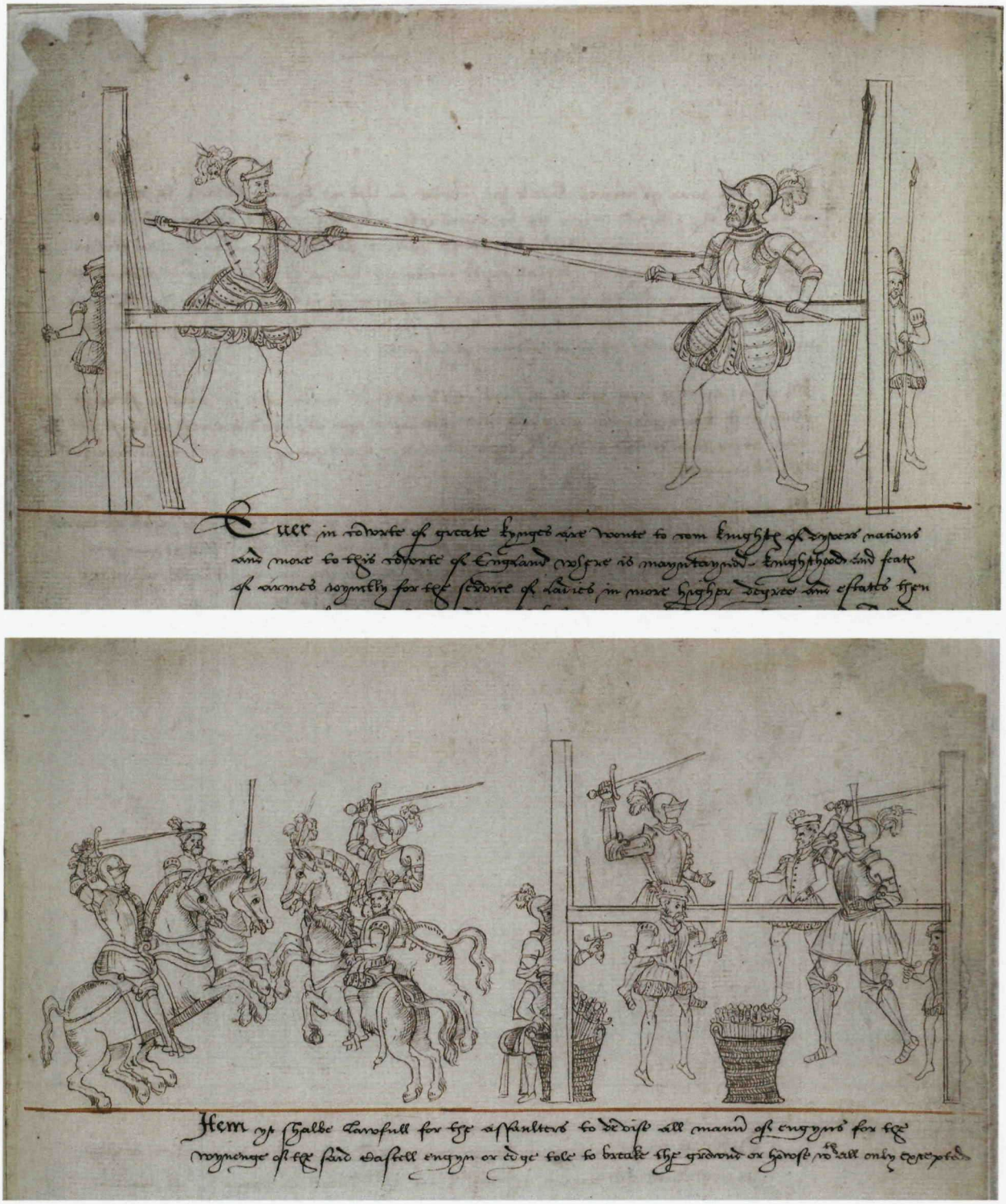

Fig. 3

Tourney and Barriers

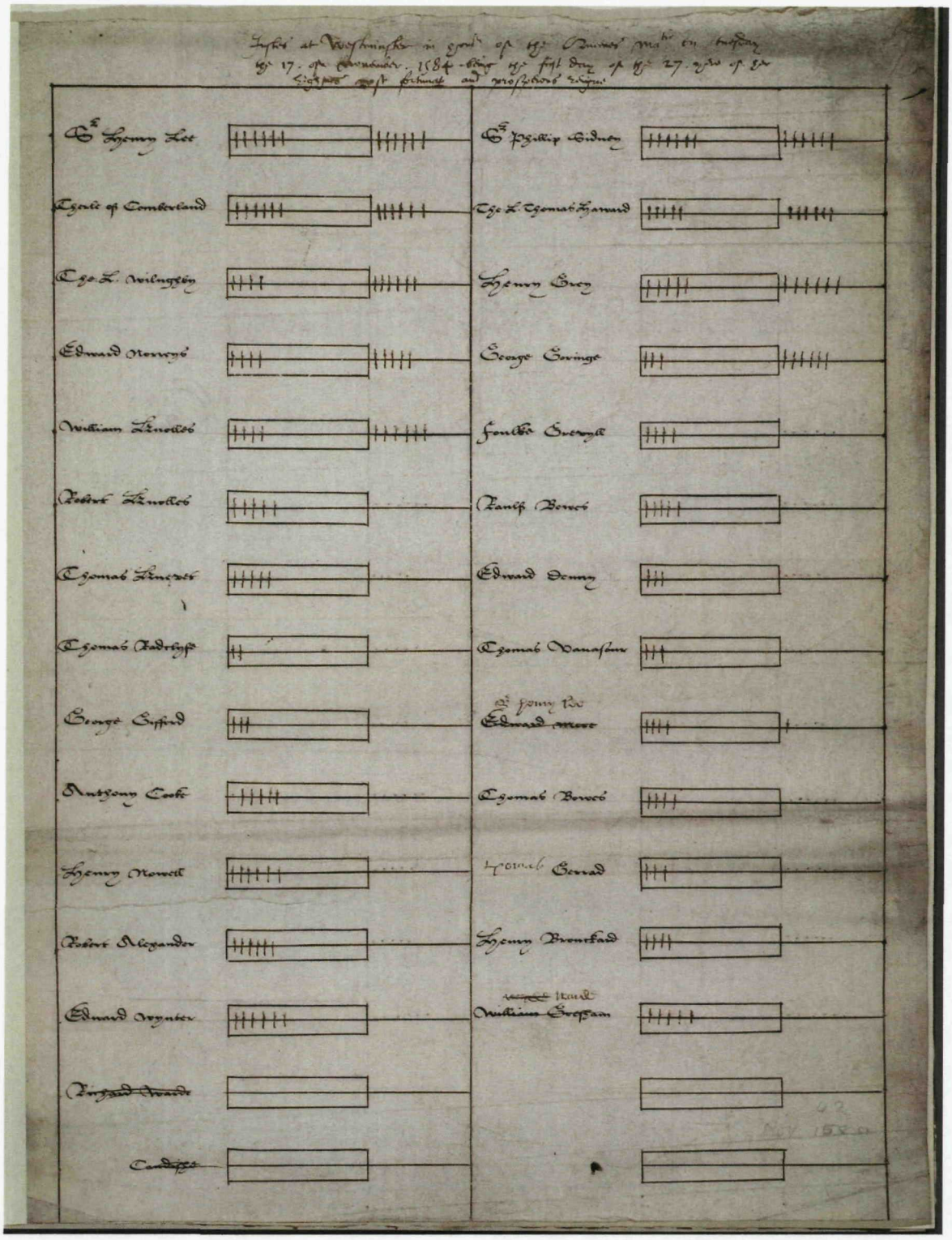

Fig. 4

Score cheque 1584

lists, either by marking the number of broken lances or pricking the sheet with a pin.[19] *(Fig. 4).* In the evening, prizes would be awarded to him who 'hath justid best of all'.[20] Knights were responsible for their own armours, horses and accoutrements, but items of armour such as vamplates, and the staves and lances used were supplied by the Tower of London Armoury. Many knights maintained their expensive armour at the Tower and Sir Henry Lee's later appointment as Master of the Armoury at the Tower reflected his connection with that office in the context of the tournaments.

Although one had to be at least of gentry status to participate in the 'triumphs' at Court, the sixteenth-century score cheques held at the College of Arms suggest that a very open attitude pertained as to who could or could not participate.[21] Prowess at the sport was the over-riding criterion; mere gentlemen tilted against peers of the realm, known Catholic adherents tilted alongside men of extreme Protestant views. Some jousters were members of the aristocracy, some were drawn from the ranks of the Gentlemen Pensioners, many, like Lee, were courtier gentlemen, eager to show their ability. There were also professionals; score cheques reveal the continued presence of Robert Alexander, *alias* Zinzan and later his sons Henry and Sigismund, of Hungarian extraction, who were employed to provide training and skilled opposition for aspiring tilters at Court.[22]

SIR HENRY LEE'S TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE.

The first record of Lee tilting is in 1571, as one of the 'four knights errant' who challenged some twenty-seven 'excellent men of armes ... late fallen asleep from any kynde of expertise'.[23] By that date, Lee was no novice; he was thirty-eight, jousting alongside renowned tilters such as Charles Howard and Christopher Hatton and acquitted himself exceptionally well.[24]

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[19] CA MS, M4bis ff. 1-58b; CA Portfolio of tournament cheques; S. Anglo, 'Archives of the English tournament: Score cheques and Lists', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, ii., 4 (1961), pp. 153-162.
[20] CA MS, Portfolio of Tournament cheques.
[21] CA MS, M4bis; CA MS Portfolio of tournament cheques.
[22] Lee's later letters show he maintained a close relationship with both father and son, commending Robert to positions after the latter's retirement. See Cecil MS 78.32 (HMC Salis., XI, p. 156), (Lee to Sir Robert Cecil, 3 April 1601).
[23] CA MS, M4bis f. 1.
[24] The earl of Oxford, at 21, was the fourth challenger. The score cheque for the occasion, and the 'tilting table' (Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 845, f. 164) shows that Lee and Oxford were the two

Tilting, at this level, took a great deal of practice and expensive equipment. Experience could be gained in the royal tiltyards in London and some great houses, such as Kenninghall in Norfolk, and Kenilworth boasted their own tiltyards. Lee is not recorded as having participated in the tournaments held by King Philip in the winter of 1554-5, nor in the coronation tournament in 1559, but not all tournament score cheques have been preserved. A good tilter was always in demand, if only for practice sessions, and many young court gentlemen gained their initial experience and expertise in this way.

It is possible that Lee gained tournament experience during his travels in Germany and Italy in 1568 and 1569. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly has shown that the sport was very popular in the German-speaking courts and those of Northern Italy.[25] The itinerant Imperial court staged great spectacles, as did the Estes in Ferrara and public tournaments were held in the *Strada Nuova* in republican Genoa. Lee's letters to Cecil make no reference to tournaments during his travels, but Lee's first suit of armour gives us a possible clue. Master Armourer Jacob Halder's *Almain Armourers' Album* shows an illustration of Lee's first armour, inscribed 'Sir Henrie Lee. This feld armor was made beyond see'.[26] *(Fig. 5a).* During the sixteenth century, some of the finest armour was made in Augsburg and Halder himself trained there until his move to England in 1557. Alan Williams observes that Augsburg and Greenwich technologies are very similar and it is often difficult to know in which armoury different parts of an armour were made.[27] As could be expected, tournaments were held in Augsburg; the four superb *Monatsbild* painted panels executed by Jörg Bren the Elder in 1531 show a lavish tilt and tourney proceeding in the central square of Augsburg.[28] Lee passed through Augsburg in June 1568, and could well have participated in a public tournament.

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highest scoring participants, both breaking 32 lances out of a possible 42. Oxford also achieved three hits to the helm, hence being the overall winner.

[25] H. Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews: tournaments at German-speaking Courts in their European Context 1560-1730* (Berlin,1992).

[26] V&A, *Almain Armourers' Album*, D599 and D599A, 1894.

[27] A.Williams and A. de Reuck, *The royal armoury at Greenwich, 1515 – 1649* (London, 1995), p. 99; A. Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace* (Leiden, 2003), p. 361.

[28] Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, *Monatsbild Januar-Februar-Marz,* Jörg Bren, 1531. (DHM 1990/185.1).

Fig. 5 a

Sir Henry Lee's first armour

Fig. 5 b

Sir Henry Lee's first armour – garniture

He retraced his steps in March 1569, believing he was returning to an England at war. Wherever Lee purchased his first armour, the cost must have been significant, and the purchase sufficiently important to Lee to warrant it. The *Armourers' Album* also shows that Lee's armour had additional pieces or garniture essential for tournament purposes and the illustration bears the inscription 'Thes tilte peces wer made by me Jacobe'. *(5b).* The garniture must have been made in England as Halder had been in Greenwich since 1555. By 1569, Lee was sufficiently sure of his ability as a soldier and as a tilter to spend a substantial sum on the best foreign armour, confident that he could acquire the garniture in England.

Tournament experience could also be gained in foreign royal courts, as there are references to the organisers of international tournaments requesting the participation of English tilters. On 30 November 1570, the French ambassador La Mothe Fénélon presented a request for *'un ambassade extraordinaire au roi et aux seigneurs anglais d'assister au tournoi ... en France',* to celebrate the marriage between Charles IX and Elizabeth of Austria in March 1571.[29] There is no proof that Lee was among these gentlemen, but the request suggests that there were opportunities for gentlemen of ability, presence and courtliness to acquire tournament skills at the highest level.

TYPES OF TOURNAMENTS.

Tournaments were held on four distinct types of occasion, and Sir Henry Lee participated in the majority of them from 1570 until his retirement in 1590. First, tournaments were used as Court entertainment; to mark events such as a coronation, Twelfth Night, Shrovetide or visits from foreign notables and the cost of these would be borne by the Exchequer. Lee took part in a tourney held by torchlight on 14 June 1572 to entertain the Duke of Montmorency, leader of the French Huguenots.[30] Other foreign dignitaries were similarly entertained; Sir Henry Lee issued the Challenge before le Sieur de Champagny in February 1576, as the 'straunge knight ... in hewe of greene'

[29] *Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon ambassadeur de France en Angleterre de 1568 a 1575* (7 vols. in 4, Paris et Londres, 1838-70), III. (Depesche du dernier jour de novembre 1570).
[30] BL, Cotton MS, Titus C 10 f. 16a.

and Duke John Casimir of Heidelburg was welcomed with a tournament in February 1579.[31] The Duke of Anjou watched the Accession Day tournament in November 1581 and participated in the January 1582 tournament. On 1 December 1584 a *hastiludum*, a joust between ten married men and ten bachelors was held for the entertainment of the Court, with Lee competing against the brother of his future mistress, Thomas Vavasour.[32]

Second, individual courtiers often staged tournaments to celebrate family weddings, and even though these were held at Whitehall, the cost was borne by the families. A three-day celebration was held in November 1565 to mark the marriage of Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick and Anne Russell, and on 17 December 1571 jousts were held for the marriage of the earl of Oxford to Burghley's daughter, Anne Cecil.[33] As a friend of Burghley's and tilting partner of Oxford, Lee took part in the latter occasion.

The third type of occasion, and the one that was most controversial, was the tournament staged entirely by private individuals for the exclusive entertainment of the Queen and the Court. These spectacles, where the instigator bore all the expenses, were few and costly, suggesting that those who staged them had ulterior political motives and were taking an expensive gamble in an effort to influence the Queen. The entertainment itself needed an authored text to make the argument clear, and the text would usually be printed and circulated with some speed to reach a wider audience. There was always the risk that the Queen might take offence at the message implied. Leicester set something of a precedent for this type of entertainment, combining a tilt and tourney with *Gorboduc,* a dramatic presentation performed at the Inner Temple and at Court in January 1562.[34] In 1565, he staged a tournament at Court, followed by a masque where the goddesses Juno and Diana debated the virtues of marriage as opposed to chastity. Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador, reported that 'the Queen turned

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[31] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 1; TNA, PRO, 31/3/27.
[32] Bodl. MS Ashmole 845 f. 168.
[33] CA Portfolio M6, 8a-8c 1565; CA M4 ff. 4a, 7, 5a. This latter, in the hand of the Clarencieux Herald, Robert Cooke, is misdated 17 December1572.
[34] See G. Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 196-222 for a fuller discussion of this performance.

to me and said "this is all against me'".[35] In 1575, the entertainment Leicester staged during Elizabeth's visit to his home at Kenilworth had originally included a tournament, but this was cancelled when the Queen cut short her visit.[36]

In 1581, Philip Howard, son of the fourth Duke of Norfolk, issued and published *the Earl of Arundel's challenge by Callophisus.*[37] The Norfolk title had been rendered extinct by the fourth Duke's treason and execution in 1572, but Philip Howard inherited his grandfather's title *jure matris* on the death of Henry Fitzalan, earl of Arundel on 24 February 1580. Howard's title to the earldom was questioned before the Privy Council, and his expensive and lavish tournament staged on 22 January 1581 was an attempt to win the Queen's favour. Howard tilted against the earl of Oxford, Philip Sidney, Lord Windsor and Fulke Greville, and although Lee did not participate in this contest, the Ditchley manuscript contains several pages of unpublished text from the triumph, suggesting that he had contributed to its planning. [38]

The most spectacular of the privately-funded tournaments was the *'Fortress of Perfect Beauty'*, depicting Elizabeth as Queen and woman under siege from the 'Four Foster Children of Desire', Philip Sidney, Lord Windsor, Fulke Greville and Arundel. The entertainment clearly referred to the Queen's impending marriage to the Duke of Anjou and was staged on 15 and 16 May 1581 before the Court and the French commissioners sent to negotiate the matter. The tournament was accompanied with music and a full dramatic text, which was immediately printed by Henry Goldwell.[39] The four did not perform alone; their challenge was met by twenty-one Defenders, including Sir Henry Lee, who entered 'in the midst of the running as Unknown'. Historians have long debated the political purpose and efficacy of the piece, which eventually showed the Queen to be an impregnable fortress, resistant to siege by the Children of Desire. Katherine Duncan-Jones voices the conventional thesis

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[35] *C[alendar of letters and] S[tate] P[apers relating to English affairs preserved principally in the archives of Simancas] Spanish*, Eliz. 1558-1567 p. 404; S. Doran, 'Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581', *HJ.*, xxxviii (June, 1995), pp. 257-274.

[36] See below chapter three.

[37] RSTC. 4368.5. The Challenge was printed and circulated in London on 16 January 1581.

[38] CA MS, M4 f. 22a-b; BL, Add. 41499 f. 6a.

[39] Henry Goldwell, *'A brief declaration of the shews, devices, speeches and inventions performed before the Queen's majestie & the French ambassadors* (London, 1581), RSTC. 11990.

that this lavish two-day spectacle was funded entirely by Leicester, Sidney's uncle, in opposition to the Queen's marriage with Anjou.[40] Susan Doran disagrees, arguing 'there can be little doubt that this production was commissioned by the queen, and therefore an official statement of policy and not merely another public relations exercise by opponents of the match'. Philippa Berry is sceptical about this explanation; the Privy Council was divided over the French match, as were the 'Four Foster Children' themselves in private life. It would appear from the delays incurred in the timing of the production that Elizabeth and many other members of the Court were far from making up their own minds over the French marriage.

In 1595, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex extended the personal use of the tournament to a wider audience when he staged the scripted drama of *Erophilus* or *Love and Self-Love* during the Accession Day tournament of that year, holding up the tilting action for twenty minutes while the crowd grew impatient. Cumberland, who had entered the tiltyard first as Queen's Champion, stood 'impacient of Delaie, awaytinge there his friendly foes' approache'.[41] When Essex continued his *Erophilus* drama in the evening in place of the barriers, Elizabeth was not amused and retired to bed saying 'if she had thought their had bene so much said of her, she wold not haue bene their that Night'.[42] It would appear that while the Queen welcomed praise and laudation of herself in public, any attempt to give counsel or criticism was best kept for a private occasion.

The fourth type of occasion marked by tournament, and the one most closely connected with Sir Henry Lee, was the anniversary of the Queen's accession on 17 November. These annual public contests came to dominate the tournament scene in England and from 1588, they replaced all other tournaments. The occasion often marked the Queen's return to London from her annual progress and her chambers were prepared in Whitehall, 'her

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[40] Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney,* p. 204; Doran, 'Juno versus Diana', pp. 257-274; Philippa Berry, *Of chastity and power: Elizabethan literature and the unmarried queen* (London, 1989), p. 113. The spectacle was originally scheduled to be staged in April 1581, and was delayed twice at the Queen's request.

[41] Peele, quoted in Young, *Tournaments,* p. 173.

[42] A. Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State ... [of the Sydney family]* (2 vols., London,1746), i, p. 362; Young, *Tournaments,* pp. 172-176.

highness comynge thether to see the Triumphe and Running at the tilt'.[43] Sir William Segar, in both his *Booke of honor and armes* (1590) and in *Honors Military and Civill* (1602), suggested that it was at the commencement of Elizabeth's reign in 1558 that Sir Henry Lee

> voluntarily vowed (unlesse infirmity, age or other accident did impeach him) during his life, to present himselfe at the Tilt armed, the day aforesayd yeerly, there to performe, in honor of her sacred Majestie the promise he formerly made.[44]

Despite Segar's claim, the existing evidence suggests that 'these annual exercises in Armes' began somewhat later in the reign. David Cressy has made the plausible suggestion that the defeat of the Northern rebels in 1569 had sparked off spontaneous rejoicing, with bell ringing, bonfires and national celebrations that were rapidly adopted as festivities for 'Crownation Day'.[45] Several of these annual customs appear to date from this period. In London, the celebrations took the form of church services, followed by the public Accession Day tournament at Whitehall.[46] The Exchequer records are unclear whether preparations for the first November tournament were made in 1569 or 1570, but as Lee was still with the army in Wetherby in November 1569, the latter date is more feasible.[47]

The November tournament rapidly became an annual event; the French ambassador La Mothe Fénélon recorded in 1572 that on 17 November, tilts were usually held at Court and his successor M. de Castelau refers to a November tournament in letter to Henri III of 24 November 1577.[48] Score cheques exist for 1574 and 1578 indicating no month but having the same format as those for later Accession Day Tournaments.[49] A tournament was held on 17 November 1580, and from November 1581, an unbroken set

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[43] TNA, PRO, E351/542 f. 31v., November 1581, (Accounts of Sir Thomas Heneage, Treasurer of the Chamber).
[44] Segar, *Honors Military and Civill* p. 197.
[45] D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1969), p. 50-7.
[46] In 1576, a special liturgy was added to the Prayer Book for 17 November.
[47] Exchequer records TNA, PRO, E.351/3204 run from 1567 to 1572, and are unclear whether preparation of the tiltyard took place in 1569 or 1570.
[48] *Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon,* V. pp. 203-4; TNA, PRO, 31/3/27.
[49] See TNA, PRO, E351 series for preparations to the tiltyard at Whitehall, also TNA, PRO, E351/542 - Sir Thomas Heneage's accounts for 'making ready for her Ma[jes]tie ... against the running'. Score cheques CA MS, M4 f. 4 (1574) and CA MS, M4 f. 3 (1578) show the year and running order but not the month.

of score cheques gives clear evidence that Accession Day tournaments were held annually. From 1588, the occasion became a two-day affair, extended to include 19 November, St. Elizabeth's Day, as a celebration for the victory over the Spanish.[50]

The Accession Day Tournaments differed in many ways from other 'triumphes' held at the English Court, or anywhere else in Europe. They were held on a fixed date, 17 November, and the verses in the Adam Ottley manuscript, attributed to Philip Sidney, show that even if 'her day on which she entred' fell on a Sunday, the 'Sainte of the Saboath' was still entertained with triumphs.[51] The tournaments were annual, only being cancelled twice because of the plague in 1582 and 1592, and postponed once because of bad weather in 1599.[52] Members of the Court, invited dignitaries and ambassadors had seats on the erected stands, but the occasion was open to all the citizens of Elizabeth's England who could afford the 12d entry fee. Lupold von Wedel, a Swiss traveller, gives us an eye-witness account of the 1584 tournament. *(See Appendix Four).* He describes 'thousands of spectators, men, women and girls ... not to speak of those who were within the barrier and paid nothing'.[53] Von Wedel's account suggests that the tournaments followed the relatively fixed format of tilt, tourney and barriers, but with an increasing emphasis on spectacle and pageantry. The knights themselves entered the tiltyard with their servants 'disguised like Irishmen, with hair hanging to the girdle like women ... the horses equipped like elephants'. The pages approached the stairs to the Queen's window and, as the mouthpiece of their masters, would flatter and amuse the Queen with extravagant speeches and present a costly gift.

The financing of the Accession Day tournaments is far from clear. The tiltyard itself and the erection of the tilt, judgehouse and stairs to the Queen's

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[50] Although the name and the date were convenient, November 19th was in fact the saint's day of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

[51] P. Beal, 'Poems of Sir Philip Sidney: The Ottley Manuscript', *Library,* v, 33 (1978), pp. 284-295. The Adam Ottley manuscript is held at the National Library of Wales and the poems AT19, AT21 and ATOt are quoted in full in Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney,* pp. 413-415.

[52] CA MS, M4, ff. 54v-55v.

[53] Lupold von Wedel, 'Journey through England and Scotland, 1584 and 1585', *TRHS.*, new series ix, (1895), pp. 258-259. Von Wedel's account of 1584 is inaccurate. He credits the earl of Oxford and the earl of Arundel with the overall victories. Neither tilted in 1584, as Oxford was in disgrace and Arundel was in the Tower.

window were clearly paid for by the Exchequer.[54] The individual knights paid for their own armour, horses, equipment and entourage as well as a present for the Queen and this could run into several thousand pounds. In November 1580, Philip Howard, earl of Arundel, paid *'tout la despence qui est fort grande'* for the tournament and had been accused by his family of wasting 'a great part of [his] Estate ... by profused expences of great Summs of money in diverse Tiltings & Tourneys made upon the anniversary dayes of the Queen's Coronation'.[55] The Master of Revels received a payment to attend the occasion and prepare a festival book, although he played no role in the tournament itself.[56] Some payment was made to the College of Arms and to the heralds themselves who ran the tournaments. By tradition, the heralds were allowed to claim any item that dropped to the ground, as part of their fee, but these would have been ransomed by individual knights. Londoners paid an entry fee to view the proceedings, ranging over the years from 'the spence of a few pence' to 12d in later years, but who benefited from these fees is uncertain; clearly it was not the jousters themselves. As the Accession Day tournaments became the only tournaments to be held at Court after 1588, the participants became the chief funders of the event. An increasingly parsimonious Queen relied on these tournaments for the entertainment of foreign ambassadors; it was reported in 1590 that 'these sports were great and done in costly sort, to her Majesty's liking and their great cost'.[57]

SIR HENRY LEE'S ROLE IN THE ACCESSION DAY TOURNAMENTS.

In 1590 Sir William Segar first claimed that Lee was the instigator of the Accession Day tournaments, and in an undated tournament speech, Lee described himself as the 'first Celibrater in this kind of this sacred memorie of that blessed rayne'.[58] Lee had no official salaried role like the traditional organizers of Court events in the Office of Revels. The inception of the

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[54] TNA, PRO, E351 series for preparations to the tiltyard at Whitehall.
[55] TNA, PRO, 31/3 28 f. 203a; H.G. Fitzalan-Howard, *The Lives of Philip Howard earl of Arundel and of Anne Dacre, his wife* (London, 1857), p. 7. The accusation was made in 1578.
[56] Albert Feuillerat, ed., *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels in the time of Queen Elizabeth* (Louvain, 1908) p. 391.
[57] Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History*, biography and manners (3 vols., London, 1791), ii, p. 419.
[58] BL, Add. MS, 41499A ff. 1-1v.

Accession Day tournaments in 1570 coincides with the time when Lee first came into royal favour, and the internal evidence of existing sources confirms that Lee played a major role in deciding the content of the tournaments. It is highly significant that Lee was the principal challenger in the majority of tournaments between 1570 and 1590, acting as the Queen's champion and fighting for her honour. Josuah Sylvester in 1605, gives a retrospective description of Lee in his prime, as

> hardy Laelius, that great Garter-Knight,
> Tilting in triumph of Eliza's right
> (Yearly the day that her dear reign began)
> Most bravely mounted on proud Rabican
> All in gilt armour, on his glistring mazor
> A stately plume of orange mixed with azure,
> In gallant course, before ten thousand eyes,
> From all defenders bore the princely prize. [59]

George Peele, in *Polyhymnia* describes Lee as 'Knight of the Crown', and gives a vivid picture of Lee at the start of his retirement tilt of 1590. [60]

> Mightie in Armes, mounted on a puissant horse,
> Knight of the Crown in rich imbroderie,
> And costlie faire Caparison charg'd with Crownes,
> Oreshadowed with a withered running Vine
> As who would say, My Spring of youth is past;
> In Corslet gylt of curious workmanship,
> Sir Henry Lea, redoubted man at Armes
> Leades in the troopes.

We also have a glimpse of how Lee appeared from the brightly-coloured folios of the Almain Armourers' Album, which show three of Lee's suits of armour and their garniture.*(Figs. 5a & 5b, 6a & 6b, 7a & 7b).* His first suit of armour was decorated with gilt chevrons and eagles reaching for bright suns. His second suit, made some time after 1580, was decorated with bands of etched and gilt strapwork linked with quatrefoils and shows a lanneret holding a heron's leg. His third suit of armour, probably made around 1586 was field armour and still exists virtually complete in the possession of the Armourers'

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[59] Josuah Sylvester, *Bartas: his Devine Weekes and Workes* (London, 1605). Laelius was the name given to Lee by Sidney in his *New Arcadia,* identified in S. Watson and J. Hanford, 'Personal Allegory in the Arcadia: Philisides and Laelius', *Modern Philology*, xxxii (August 1934), pp. 1-10. Sylvester's use of the name in 1605 would suggest that its association with Lee was recognised by contemporaries. Rabican was the name of Astolpho's horse in *Orlando Furioso*, but its use here is more a literary compliment to Lee than an accurate reflection of the name of Lee's horse.

[60] George Peele, *Polyhymnia* (London, 1590), RSTC. 260.

Fig. 6 a

Sir Henry Lee's second armour

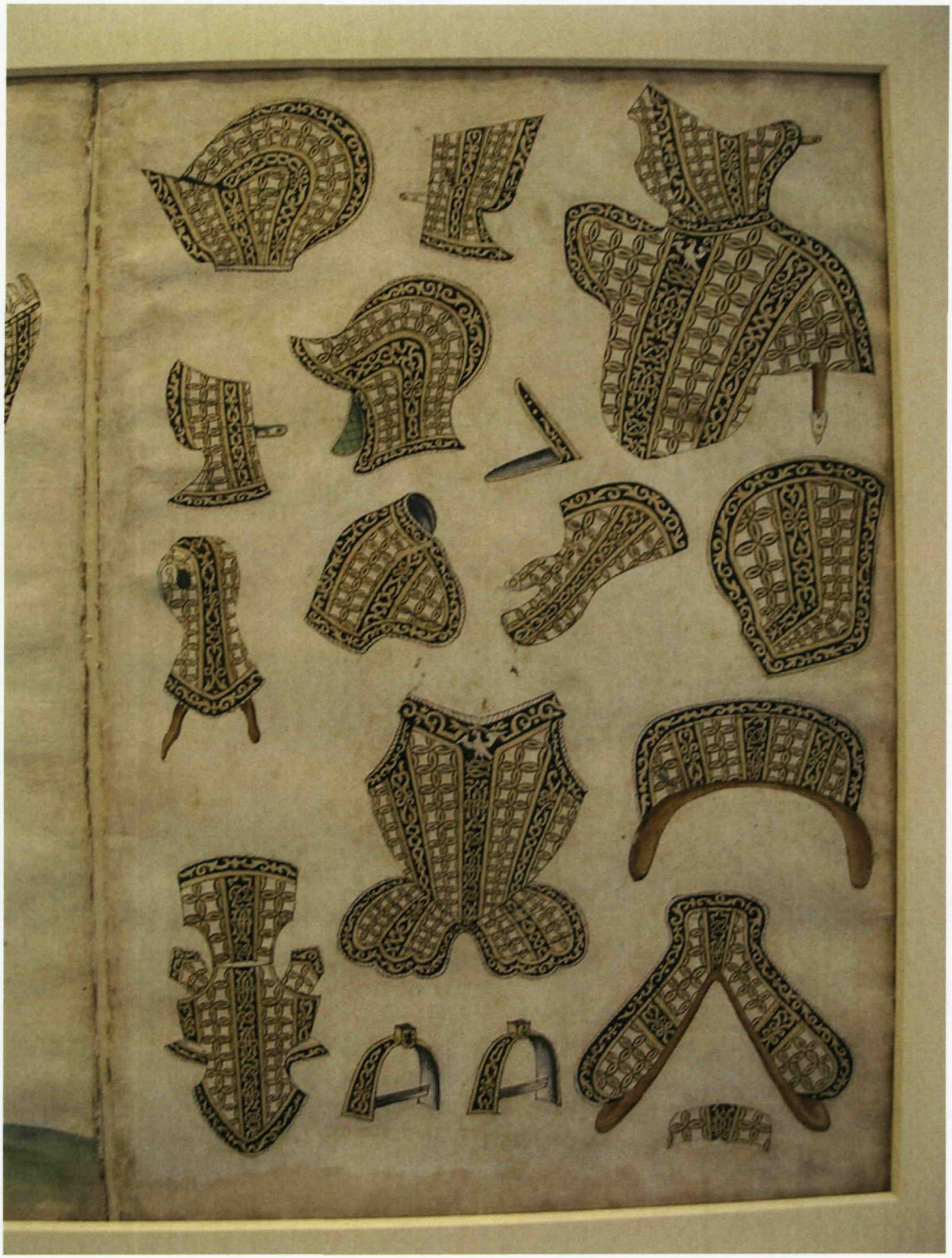

Fig. 6 b

Sir Henry Lee's second armour – garniture

Fig. 7 a

Sir Henry Lee's third armour

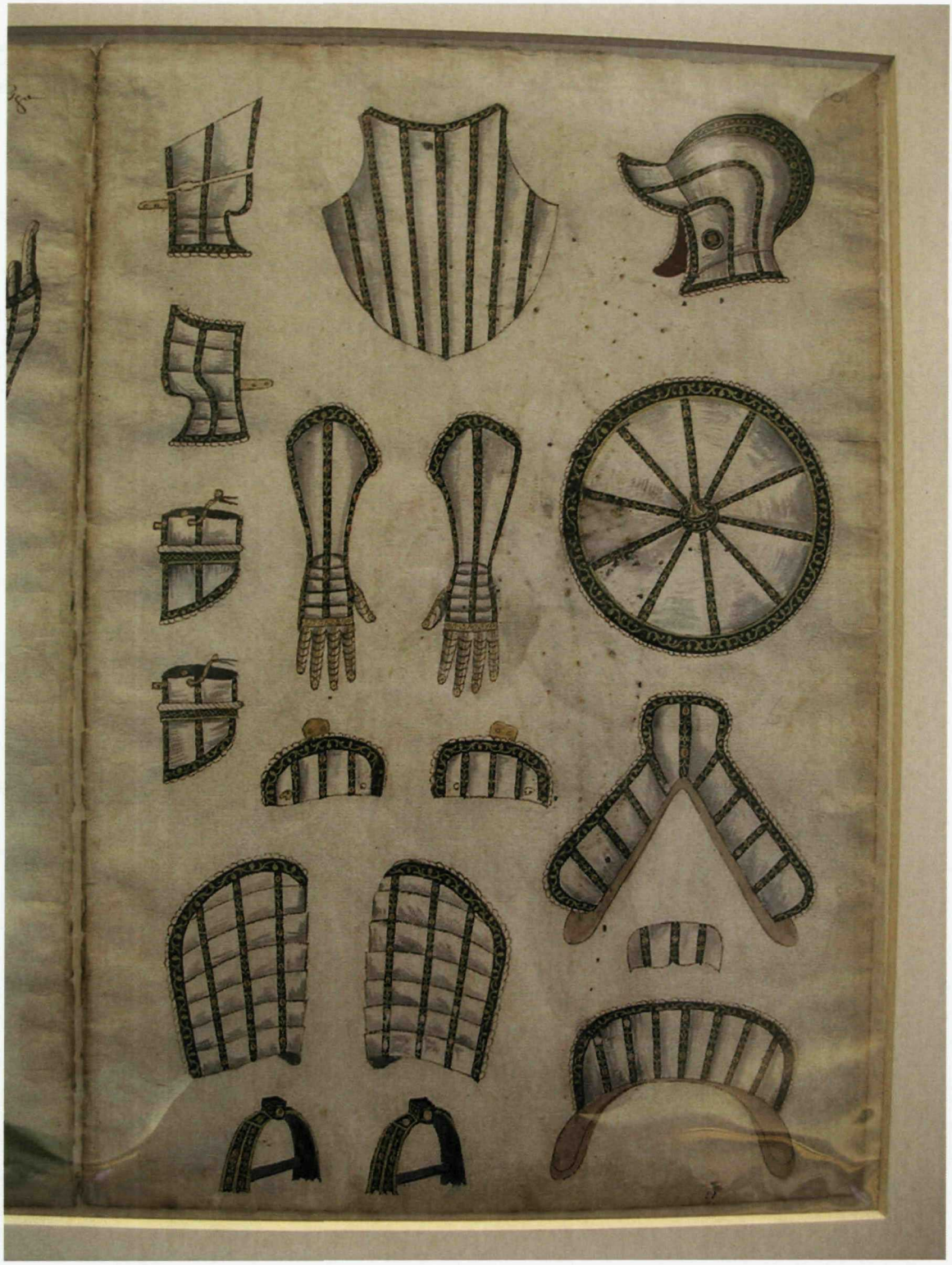

Fig. 7 b

Sir Henry Lee's third armour – garniture

and Brasiers' Society. Despite the illustration shown in the Album, there is no sign of it ever having been decorated and no tournament garniture was made for this suit. Lee would have been mounted on 'great horses' and a later letter refers to his 'saddles of tawny velvet'.[61]

Lee was more than just the instigator of and leading challenger in the Accession Day tournaments. He acted as impresario, putting together or collaborating with other participants to devise an entertainment for the Queen that reflected loyalty, chivalric values, sporting prowess, Renaissance allegory and good humour. The chief evidence for Lee's role, apart from later laudatory accounts, is the miscellany of texts in the Ditchley manuscript which were obviously used at the Accession Day tournaments.[62] In his twenty years of influence over the event, the tournaments increasingly combined chivalric sport with the use of tournament texts and addresses to the Queen. Frances Yates sees Lee weaving a 'chivalrous romance' around the Queen, beginning with his entertainment during her 1575 progress to Woodstock and continuing through the texts of the Accession Day tournaments to Lee's retirement tilt in 1590 and his entertainment for her at his home in Ditchley in 1592.[63] In so doing, Yates maintains, Lee created a new form of entertainment. The texts in the Ditchley manuscript are, however, mostly undated and can only occasionally be put into context by internal evidence. Nor is it clear that Lee himself was the author of the texts. Yates and other writers, such as Alan Young, are prepared to affirm that Lee was the author without offering any actual proof.[64] Katherine Duncan-Jones gives a more satisfactory suggestion, contending that many of the 'tiltyard devices', including Arundel's challenge as Calliphisus and Sidney's *Fortress of Perfect Beauty* were probably the result of collaborative efforts.[65]

If Lee did indeed create a new form of entertainment, it is interesting to speculate whether his innovations were the result of collaboration with Philip

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[61] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 f. 160.
[62] BL, Add. MS, 41499 A.
[63] Yates, *Astraea*, p. 96-7.
[64] Young, *Tournaments,* pp. 152-154.
[65] Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney,* p. 205. Lee's authorship of the poem that marked his retirement tilt in 1590 'My Golden lockes are to silver turned' is agreed on by many, see Thomas Clayton, 'Sir Henry Lee's Farewell to the Court: Text and Authorship', *English Literary Renaissance,* iv, 2 (Spring, 1974), pp. 268-275.

Sidney and Edward Dyer, both courtiers, poets and *protégés* of the earl of Leicester. Lee and Edward Dyer had worked together at Woodstock from 1572, when Lee obtained the reversion of Dyer's patent as Steward. Both were heavily involved in the entertainment for the Queen's visit to Woodstock in September 1575 and there is evidence that both not only contributed to its text but took part in the dramatic action.[66] Philip Sidney was in the Queen's entourage on that occasion, and it may have been his first meeting with Lee and Dyer. Dyer became a member of what Sidney termed the *Areopagus* with Sidney's boyhood friend Fulke Greville, writing poetry together from the late 1570s. Lee had travelled with Sidney, Greville and Dyer on embassy to the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague in Spring 1577, and despite the age difference, friendships developed on that journey. Lee appears to have been not a little influenced by the charismatic younger Sidney and unlike his earlier travels, there is no evidence that Lee kept Burghley privately abreast of events on the journey.[67] In subsequent years, Sidney and Lee tilted together, Sidney gave Lee a manuscript copy of his *Old Arcadia* and they shared a lodging at Theobalds during the royal progress in 1583.[68] After Sidney's death at Zutphen in 1586, it was Lee who would stage the first public English tribute to him at the Accession Day tournament that year.[69]

THE CREATION OF A TOURNAMENT ENTERTAINMENT – A CONJECTURAL CASE-STUDY FOR 16-17 NOVEMBER, 1577.

How was a collaborative tournament entertainment devised? Lee has not left us an orderly collection of documents, but if one puts together the documents possibly relevant to the 1577 November tournament - a tournament score cheque, texts in the Ditchley manuscript, other texts accredited to Philip Sidney and Edward Dyer, and the testimonies of foreign

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[66] For Lee's role at Woodstock, and in the Woodstock entertainment, see below chapter three.
[67] J.M. Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney 1572-1577* (New Haven, 1972) pp. 478-9. At forty-four, Lee was probably chosen by Burghley as a more mature, steady companion to accompany the impressionable twenty-three year-old Sidney and his friends, and the absence of Lee's letters is interesting. It is possible that Lee even concealed things from Burghley. Languet, Sidney's mentor and former tutor in France suggested that Sidney was attempting to marry the sister of John Casimir of the Palatinate and 'Monsieur Ley was privy to the scheme'. Sidney's marriage into a foreign ruling house would have been anathema to Elizabeth.
[68] Cecil MS, 140.31.
[69] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 7.

ambassadors, a picture emerges which, if only conjectural, can give us a fair indication how a tournament entertainment might have been assembled under Lee's hand.

The score cheque held by the College of Arms and dated 1577 in the contemporary hand of Robert Cooke, Clarencieux King of Arms is usually considered to be the first one existing for the Accession Day tournaments and the first to name Philip Sidney as making his debut as a tilter.[70] *(Fig.8)*. A closer look shows that, like other documents in Cooke's hand, this has been wrongly dated and is in fact the missing score cheque for the *Fortress of Perfect Beauty* tilt in May 1581, as recorded by Henry Goldwell. Woudhuysen, while recognising the list of participants, makes the somewhat improbable suggestion that Sidney staged two completely identical tilts in 1577 and 1581. What has not been previously noted is that, if the score cheque was correctly dated, the earl of Arundel in 1577 would have been the seventy-five year-old Henry Fitzalan; a little old for tilting even by Lee's standards.[71] A November tournament was held, however, in 1577; the French ambassador M. de Castelau, writing to Henry III on 24 November, mentioned that the 'Sieur de Havré, brother of the Duc d'Ascot' had just watched the *'ung tourney de gentilz-hommes qui couroyent en lice'*.[72]

We have no proof that Philip Sidney tilted on this occasion; but, at some point around that date, he would have made his debut in the tiltyard as a novice. Sidney drew on his early experiences when he wrote *New Arcadia* sometime after 1580, in which Philisides tilts against the older Laelius in the tournament.[73] *(See Appendix Five)* Laelius, identified as Lee,

> was known to be second to none in the perfection of that art, ran ever over his head – but so finely, to skilful eyes, that ... he showed more knowledge in missing than others did in hitting.

By 1584, the only year for which a score cheque exists definitely showing Lee tilting against Sidney, Sidney had ceased to be a novice in need of fostering

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[70] Young, *Tournaments,* p. 154; Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney,* p. 275.
[71] Lee himself tilted until the age of fifty-seven. Henry Fitzalan, born in 1502, was earl of Arundel until his death on 24 Feb. 1580, when his grandson, Philip Howard, inherited the title.
[72] TNA, PRO, 31/3 fo. 27. The 'Duc d'Ascot' was Philipe de Croy, Duke of Aarschot, governor-general of Flanders. Robert Cooke, Clarencieux herald, misdated several tournament documents.
[73] Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,* ed. M. Evans (Harmondsworth, 1977), ii, 21 pp. 351-355.

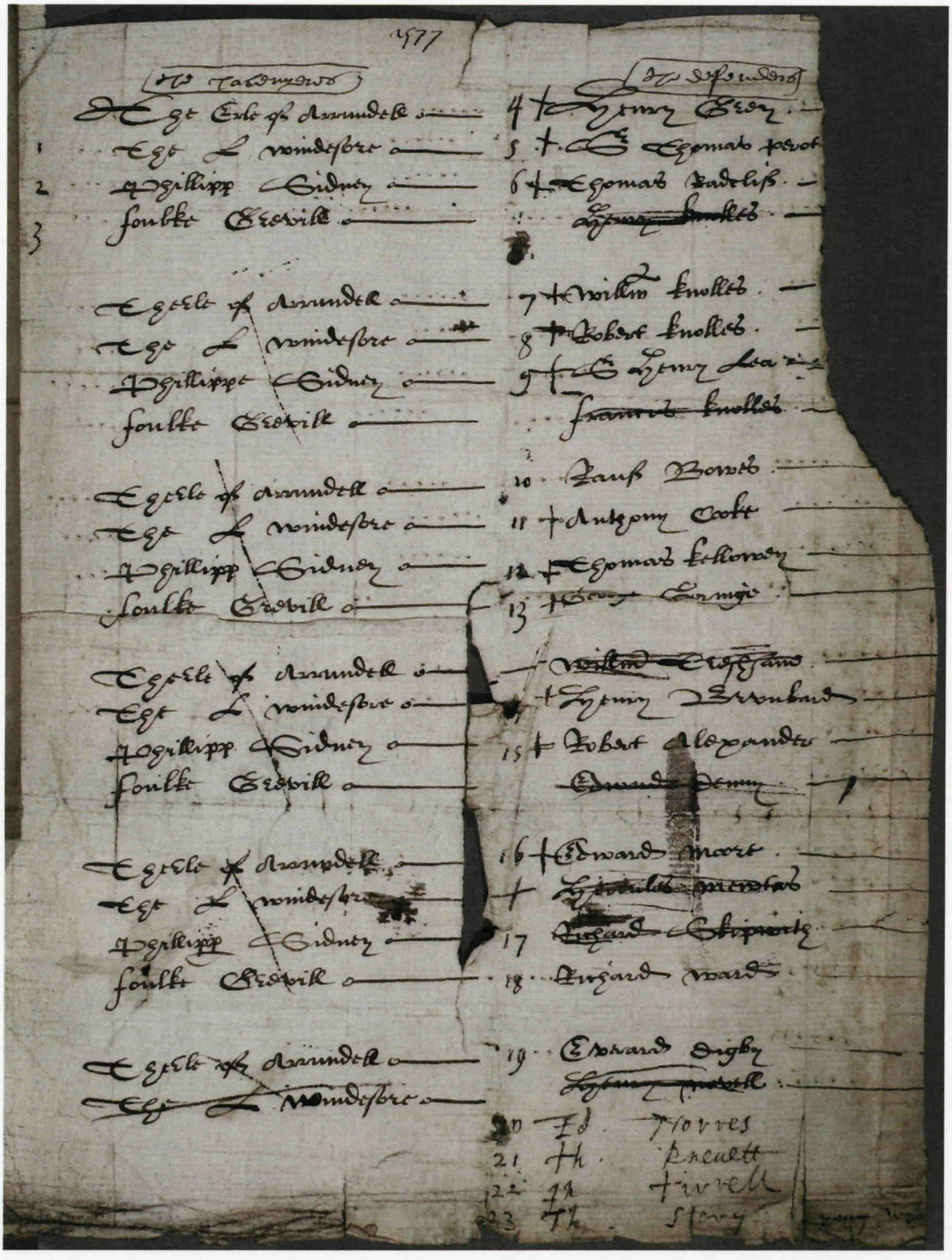

Fig. 8

Score cheque 1577 (?)

care. This suggests that Sidney first tilted against Lee at some point between 1577 and 1580. As a friendship had developed between Sidney, Dyer and Lee during the embassy to Prague in 1577, there is no reason why they should not have collaborated to devise the November tournament of that year.

A study of the tournament texts which are still extant adds to the picture. There is in the Ditchley manuscript, an unpublished text of an entertainment much in the same style as that held at Woodstock in 1575.[74] The tale is narrated to the 'most excellent princesse' by a hermit on behalf of a 'homely rude Companye ... of Shepherds & heardsmen, breaders of Cattell & followers of the plough', led by 'a worthy Knight as Constant in faith as variable in fortune ... clownishly clad'. Dyer had already played the hermit in 1575 at Woodstock and Lee's own motto, *Fide et Constantia,* would identify him as the knight, as does the later reference to his vow. The knight, we are told, had become disenchanted with the Court despite his love for 'the Mistress of the place' and took himself away to the 'simple hermitage' of the narrator.[75] Later, he withdraws 'in a little lodge', and by 1577, Lee held four lodges at Woodstock.[76]

The knight's rustic neighbours later come to him with news of 'a holidaye wich passed all the pope's holidays & that shold be kept the seaventeth day of Noueamber'. The Knight 'rememberinge then the vowe he had made ... to sacrifice yearly the strength of his arme, in honor of her that was Mistress of his hart' would have hurried towards the Court, had he not been stopped by his neighbours, 'makinge merye with this homely melody' and desiring to accompany him. They claimed that ' so shall we see for the Spence of a few pence the godliest ladye ... so shall we see Justinge and we will just too'.[77] When the knight tells them that 'this noble exercise apperteynes not to men of your birth', they, reply, 'we know not of pedigrees, perhaps we come as gentle blood as some of them', possibly a humorous

[74] BL, Add. MS, 41499A ff. 2-3v.
[75] The text relates that the knight 'cast his eie one such a Jewell as took his eies (with the best eies besides that happened to see it)'. Leicester was known to the Queen in their correspondence as her 'eyes'. It is probable that this entertainment performed before Leicester as well as the Queen, as Leicester often acted as a Judge for the Accession day tournaments.
[76] See below chapter three.
[77] The 'spence of a few pence' suggests that, from early days, the general public were admitted in to see the tournaments for a fee. It is debateable how many 'rustics' would have dismissed spending 'a few pence' so lightly.

reference to the current practice of obtaining fabricated pedigrees from the College of Arms.[78] The rustics insist that the hermit accompany them to put their petition case to the Queen, that 'they might have leave to morowe, among the noble gentlemen, to rune if they cannot Tilt ... at the Quintyne'. The quintain was a rustic version of tilting at a stuffed Turk's Head, and Elizabeth had seen local countrymen running at the quintain during her stay at Woodstock in 1575. The whole tale is too long for use during an actual tournament, and the reference to tilting on the morrow suggests that it was an entertainment held the day before the tournament, perhaps as a Saturday evening entertainment at Court on 16 November.

The rustic characters in this play reoccur in the poems in the Adam Ottley manuscript, recognised as Sidney's and designed to be used during a tournament.[79] The poem *Philisides the Sheapheard good and true* was 'to be said by one of the Plowmen after that I [Sidney?] had passed the tilt with my rusticall musick'. The line 'Sing neighbour sing, here you not say this Sabboth day' confirms that the poem could have been written for 17 November, which, in 1577, was a Sunday. Woudhuysen is swift to point out that the only other relevant occasion that 17 November fell on a Sunday was 1583, when Sidney definitely did not tilt.[80] Even if this reconstruction of the events of 16-17 November 1577 is erroneous, it nevertheless gives a template for the tilt in Sidney's *New Arcadia,* a fictitious representation of a tournament with its origins in reality. If the reconstruction is more than mere conjecture, it would suggest the textual development in the Accession Day tournaments was the result of collaboration between Lee, Dyer and Sidney, and that Lee should receive more recognition as a poet. It would also suggest that, from relatively early in Elizabeth's reign, the Court entertainments for 'Crownation Day', especially when they fell on a week-end, would stretch over several days.

[78] Even Sir Henry Sidney, Philip Sidney's father, had been prepared to pay Robert Cooke, then Chester Herald, to prepare a pedigree proving Sidney descent from the fictitious Sir William de Sidenie c.1151-1208), CKS (Penshurst Papers) U1475 T4/1-25; U1475 F15

[79] Poems AT19, AT21 and AT Ot., see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney,* pp. 413-15.

[80] CA MS, M4 bis f. 30a.

CHANGES IN THE ACCESSION DAY TOURNAMENTS.

Under Lee's benign aegis which lasted until 1590, the Accession Day tournaments retained their initial purpose of good sport and good public entertainment in the Queen's honour. A number of factors, however, were combining from 1588 to change the nature of the tournaments, and these reflected the increasing domination of the event by the Queen's new favourite, the earl of Essex. Elizabeth was notoriously reluctant to change the old guard of her advisors at Court and many of the rising younger generation at Court who had taken part in the Armada emergency now found they had no further outlet for their military aspirations or even their new armour. For some, the tournament was the only arena where both could be aired in public.

Several of these tensions showed themselves in the spectacular tournament in November 1590 that marked Lee's retirement, and it says much for Lee's powers of showmanship that he withstood the competition from the younger generation for self-promotion. Sir Henry Lee, his courses run, remained silent until the end of the tournament. Then in a pageant full of allegory and music, he offered up gifts and his own armour to the Queen, 'beseeching she would take the earl of Cumberland for her Knight, to continue the yeerely exercises'.[81] Yet Lee and Cumberland, despite the Queen's gift of magnificent Greenwich armour, were close to being upstaged by Essex.[82] Essex is described by George Peele in *Polyhymnia* as appearing

> ... all [in] Sable sad,
> Drawn on with cole-blacke steeds of duskie hue;
> In stately Chariot full of deepe deuice
> ...this great Champion
> Young Essex, that thrice honourable Earle
> Yclad in mightie Armes of mourners hue. [83]

Whether Essex was still in mourning for the dead Sidney, or for the loss of his own popularity with the Queen after his recent secret marriage to Sidney's widow, was not clear. Certainly, he resented Cumberland being named as 'the Queen's Knight' instead of himself; a later Hilliard miniature depicts Essex with the Queen's favour, her glove, tied to his arm over his armour. Another

[81] J.C. Nichols, *Elizabeth,* iii, p. 49.
[82] The Queen's gift of armour to Cumberland, one of the finest ever produced by the Greenwich armourers, is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York MMNY 32.130.6.
[83] Peele, *Polyhymnia.* (RSTC. 260).

of the Essex coterie was also drawing attention to himself on 17 November 1590. Sir Charles Blount, lover and later husband of Essex's married sister, Penelope Rich, was wearing her colours very prominently in the tiltyard and he is described in *Polyhymnia* as 'Rich in his colours, richer in his thoughts, Rich in his fortune'. Adoration of the Queen on her special day did not appear to be a priority among this younger group of courtiers.

From 1590, Essex dominated the tournaments, especially those held on 19 November, and Alan Young observes that this became more 'Essex Day' than a commemoration of England's victory over the Armada.[84] On 19 November 1594, and again in 1596, Essex single-handed challenged all eighteen opponents. Essex's attempt to promote himself before the Queen by staging an entertainment during the 1595 tournament was received badly, but it is indicative of how he viewed both himself and the occasion that he believed it acceptable to delay the jousting on the Queen's Accession Day tournament for his own ends. Essex made the tournament popular with other younger members of the peerage, with the effect of driving up the cost of participation as they vied with each other for self-promotion. Sir Henry Lee, by royal command, continued to attend the tournaments on 17 November as a judge, on one occasion appearing as ' a pore faythfull feeble knight yet once yor fellowe in Armes'.[85] Accession Day tournaments continued to be held on 17 November until 1603, when the accession of a new monarch changed the date to 24 March. They became an outdated form of entertainment at Court and ceased to be held after 1624.[86]

WHAT WERE THE PURPOSES OF THE ELIZABETHAN TOURNAMENTS?

The purposes of the Elizabethan tournaments have been the subject of much debate among historians, with the discussion focussing primarily on the relatively few tournaments that were held specifically for political ends. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly reminds us that the tournaments in general existed for three purposes: training for warfare, Court entertainment and propaganda.[87] Public tournaments, however, could involve several thousands of people,

[84] Young, *Tournaments,* p. 37.
[85] BL, Add. MS, 41499A, ff. 1-1v.
[86] See scored and unscored cheques in College of Arms CA MS M4bis.
[87] Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumpall Shews* , p. 13.

actively participating in the combat, organizing the event, watching from the Court areas or merely being part of the appreciative crowd. Any one tournament could conceal a variety of agendas. Even the crowd of London citizens had their own reasons for being there - it was a good day out and unlike the public theatre which was rapidly gaining popularity, the Accession Day tournaments were the only occasions where the people could pay to be entertained by members of the Court. Courtiers were very aware of this; the earl of Essex exploited this to raise popular support for himself while other less agile courtiers were careful not to make complete spectacles of themselves before the common crowd.

Obviously, Sir Henry Lee's primary purpose each 17 November was to honour his Queen and celebrate her accession day. A close reading of Lupold von Wedel's account of the 1584 Accession Day tournament shows that, fundamentally, it was an exuberant public spectacle, the ultimate celebration of the Queen's Day and a superlative London reflection of the hundreds of smaller celebrations that were being held all around the country. In this massive display of public diplomacy, Elizabeth herself only played the passive role of observer; von Wedel's account dwells far more on the crowd and the participating knights than on the Queen's actions. Lee's intention each year was to stage an entertainment to amuse and praise his Queen; as her champion, he would defend her honour – not that anyone at the tournament would have dreamt of impugning it. Laudatory phrases naturally abounded while Lee was in charge; he calls it 'this English holiday or rather Englands happie daye'.[88] In 'leading in the troops' for the tournament, traditionally the monarch's role, Lee took care not to usurp the Queen's position as the focus of the occasion.

Accession Day tournaments were great public affairs, and the government of Elizabeth I was very aware of the value of propaganda. As the threat from Spain became more imminent, Burghley was quite prepared to use any public opportunity to foster loyalty to the regime and to the Queen

[88] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 1.

personally. Historians have always disagreed over the existence and the dating of a 'cult of the Virgin Queen'.[89] Roy Strong and Frances Yates initially suggested that a deliberate cult was fostered by Elizabeth's government using portraiture, literature and Court pageantry, and they credited Lee and the Accession day tournaments with playing a major role in the creation of this cult. J.E. Neale made much of 17 November 1558 on the four-hundredth anniversary of that date, Carole Levin has seen the Queen as 'the master-builder of her own public image', while Susan Frye sees the creation of the royal image as the result of interplay between the Queen and her subjects, not necessarily at public tournaments. Helen Hackett has correctly suggested that much of the evidence for a cult comes from late in the reign and Susan Doran, on the evidence of portraiture, argues that the term 'cult' is inappropriate and denies an orchestrated campaign of image-making for propaganda purposes. Evidence can be found to support ideas contained within these varying theories, but if a 'cult' was deliberately sponsored by the government or by the Queen herself, it existed more in the last decade of the reign when national unity was paramount, the succession was obviously in doubt and when the Queen was attempting to control public images of herself.[90]

Lee certainly created an occasion that could be used for propaganda, if the Queen and her Councillors so desired. The overall spectacle of the cream of the Queen's knights, sumptuously dressed with accompanying trains which they themselves funded, jousting in the Queen's honour in front of an immense crowd of loyal Londoners demonstrated national loyalty and martial skill to any of the invited foreign ambassadors and visitors. The developing format of the Accession Day tournaments reflected what Simon Adams has described as 'the growing formality of ceremonial' in Court culture in the 1580s, which perhaps masked a fear that the Elizabethan political and

[89] See Yates, *Astraea,* pp. 88-111; Strong, *Cult,* pp. 129-34; J.E. Neale, 'November 17th', *Essays in Elizabethan history* (London, 1958), pp. 9-20; C. Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 27; S. Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford, 1993); Hackett, *Virgin Mother*, p.8; S Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power: The Portraits of Elizabeth I', in S. Doran and T. Freeman, eds., *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke, 2003) pp. 171-200.

[90] Dasent, *APC* 1596-97, p. 69.

religious settlement was under threat and needed to be publicly defended.[91] But if the government was deliberately making propagandist use of the event, it was strangely amateur about it. Despite the great crowd that came to watch, the government put little money into the event.

Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly stresses that, on the Continent, court tournaments were held specifically for propaganda purposes, publicising events such as coronations, weddings and christenings that reinforced the continuity of the dynasty. Lavish tournament books were printed before the event, often reflecting activities that never actually took place.[92] 'The purpose of the festival-book', claims Watanbe-O'Kelly, was to 'present the festival with a certain slant ... to suit the political purpose of the moment'. In England tournament books were certainly produced; in 1588, Master of the Revels Edmund Tilney was paid ten shillings for 'the fayre writing of all the devices on the 17 daye of November ... in two copies for the Queene', and Philip Gawdy sent a copy home to his father 'gyven to me that day that they rann at tilt'.[93] The books were not produced in large numbers; Tilney's evidence suggests they were hand-written and it is difficult to discern what format they took, as none of them has survived. Whereas the more political tournament texts such as *The Fortress of Perfect Beauty* were rapidly printed and circulated, what surviving individual texts or 'devices' that were used in Accession Day tournaments still remain in manuscript. Even Segar lamented in 1590 that 'all the speeches, emblems, devices, posies and other complements' used at the tournaments, for 'want to observation, or lack of some sufficient man to have set them presently down, cannot be recovered'.[94]

Although the whole occasion was for the public glorification and laudation of the Queen, Elizabeth did not process or show herself in public as she did on entering her capital or opening Parliament, two of the other activities usually undertaken in November. She merely sat at the window of her chambers with her ladies, and was visible to very few. If the Accession Day tilts were arranged chiefly for propaganda purposes, it is interesting to

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[91] S. Adams, 'Eliza enthroned?' in *Leicester and the Court* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 37-8.
[92] H. Watanbe-O'Kelly, 'The Early Modern Festival Book: Function and Form', *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (2 vols.,Aldershot, 2004), i, p. 9.
[93] Feuillerat, *Revels*, p. 391; Philip Gawdy, *Letters of Philip Gawdy 1579-1616,* ed. Issac Jeayes (London, 1906), p. 25.
[94] Segar, *The booke of honor and armes,* p. 102.

consider the effects of the poor November light and winter temperatures on the event. The tilting usually started at one o'clock after the Church service of thanksgiving; little would be seen by the crowd after darkness fell around four o'clock, and the barriers and prize giving were later moved into the Banqueting House for the private entertainment of the Court in the evening. If one analyzes the tournament texts for references to the Virgin Queen, one must also query how many people in the crowd of twelve thousand could actually hear them and understood the classical allegories. Susan Doran is quite correct when she points out that there was little attempt by the government to control what was said or depicted in the Accession Day Tournaments; the Queen appeared to trust the loyalty of Lee and others to use their common sense on this public occasion.[95]

If the government did not obviously use the tournaments to further a 'cult of the Virgin Queen', there was, however, one specific occasion when Burghley used the fame of the participants for propaganda purposes. At the height of the Armada crisis in 1588, a 'Copie of a letter' was published in England and on the Continent, purporting to have been sent to the Spanish ambassador Bernardino Mendoza by an English Catholic informant giving a 'true' account of the defeat of the Spanish Armada from English eyes.[96] The real author was Burghley himself and the account showed much to the 'surprise of the Catholic writer', that the majority of the aristocracy and gentry of England had risen to defend the country against the Spanish. Among the named heroes are many names that appear on the tournament cheques of 1585,1586 and 1587 - the earl of Cumberland, Thomas Gerard, Thomas Vavasour, Charles Blunt, Henry Nowell, William Hatton, Robert Carey, and Arthur Gorges and William Harvey 'not to me known but here about London spoken of with great fame'.[97] The account contains many inaccuracies but shows that Burghley was prepared to use the fame of the jousters to drive home his point that all the gentlemen of England, even the Catholics, had risen to defend their Queen. Overall, the Accession Day tournament was

[95] Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power' in Doran and Freeman, eds., *The Myth of Elizabeth,* p. 192.
[96] William Cecil, *The copie of a letter sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza, ambassadour in France for the King of Spaine* (London, 1588) RSTC 15412; BL, Lansdowne MS, 1157; John Stow, *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England* (London, 1598) RSTC. 23328, pp. 413-415.
[97] Cecil, *Copie,* p. 28. Among the inaccuracies contained in the letter is the fact that Robert Cecil fought against the Armada.

sufficiently important to the government for it to be chosen in an extended form as the permanent commemoration of the victory over the Spanish in 1588.

Individual jousters derived a marked degree of personal satisfaction from their participation in the sport, an element which cannot be evaluated, and is seldom discussed. The ultimate occasion was the November tournament, when some twenty-four knights rode out before the Queen, the Court and a crowd of around twelve thousand spectators. What it must have been like to have been one of that number is seldom chronicled; Philip Sidney comes closest to giving us a description in *Astrophil and Stella.(See Appendix Five).* This was something to which the courtier gentleman aspired; excellence at the tilt was advocated in the best courtship manuals and young gentlemen sought to emulate the heroes of chivalric romance, from Mallory's *Morte D'Arthur to* Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso.*[98] The cult of chivalry was venerated in European courts in general in the sixteenth century – 'an honour cult that promoted jousts, tournaments, portraiture and literature of knightly romance'.[99] Not every man at Court had the ability to tilt, and many prominent courtiers were wisely reluctant to participate. Ultimately, jousting was the premier sport at Court, and to be one of the exclusive group who rode out on 17 November was, if only momentarily, to be among the gods.

Other advantages the jousters enjoyed were the strong sporting camaraderie that existed among them and the *entrée* into privileged circles that the sport gave them. Lee, a courtier gentleman with few direct family connections to the aristocracy, jousted alongside the cream of the peerage and developed lifelong friendships. In 1571, Lee tilted with Charles Howard, the future Lord Admiral and Christopher Hatton, the future Lord Chancellor; by 1572 he had developed a personal relationship with Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England.[100] Lee received visits from Robert

[98] Castiglione wished his courtier 'to be an accomplished and versatile horseman ... he should put every effort and diligence into surpassing the rest just a little in ... the tilt and joust [and] in tourneys'. Castiglione, *Courtier,* p. 63.
[99] J. Adamson, ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe* (London, 1999), p. 19.
[100] The close friendship between Lee and Norfolk is evidenced by Norfolk's behaviour to Lee on the scaffold in 1572 and is discussed below in chapter four. See Strype, *Annals of the Reformation,* ii. (2)

Dudley, earl of Leicester as a friend at Quarrendon, tilted at Dudley family weddings, acted as godfather for Leicester's illegitimate son and frequently hunted with Leicester at Kenilworth. These friendships probably arose through their mutual association with the tournaments. Tilting until the age of fifty-seven, Lee enjoyed personal connections with several generations of young courtiers, including Sidney and Essex. The jousting fraternity could be a somewhat volatile group, composed as it was of ambitious young warriors, and Richard McCoy sees Elizabethan tournaments as a 'class safety valve, allowing a socially sanctioned and carefully regulated release of aggressive energies'.[101] This was truer of later tournaments; under Lee's aegis, antagonism between tilters did not appear to spill over publicly into the Accession Day tournaments. The tilting fraternity was no easy group to keep in line, but the quarrel between the earl of Oxford and Philip Sidney of August 1579, for example, did not prevent them tilting side by side in January 1581. Arthur Gorges' quarrel with Lord Windsor in 1580 that saw him sent to the Marshalsea prison for brawling in the Presence chamber, did not prevent them tilting at the same tournament that year, and Oxford and Thomas Knyvett tilted together in 1581, despite a deadly quarrel over Oxford's seduction of Knyvett's cousin Anne Vavasour.

Tournaments could give courtier gentlemen a momentary chance to present themselves to the Queen in public, as a *persona* of their own choosing - Stephen Greenblatt's 'self-fashioning'.[102] Lee himself appeared as Elizabeth's personal tournament champion, a role that existed solely in the fantasy world of the tiltyard. His favourite *personae* were military: he appeared as 'a straunge forsaken and dispayringe knight ... in hewe of greene' in 'Sir Henry Lee's Challenge before Shampanie' in 1576 or as the black knight who escorted the 'wanderinge knights' who had been absent from the tournament a year before in November 1584.[103] In 1590, he adopted the role of soldier turned hermit from Ramon Lull's *Ordre of Chyualry*, and

461; William Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Elizabeth, late Queen of England* (London, 1629), p. 178.
[101] McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood*, p.24.
[102] Stephen Goldblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980).
[103] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. ii.

later appeared at the tilts as the hermit who instructs the younger knights in the 'order of chivalry'.[104] This latter role was not mere play-acting for Lee; he fulfilled it in a practical demonstration of his knowledge of the tenets of chivalry.

The Accession Day tournaments also gave another specific group of courtier gentlemen the opportunity to present themselves in public as loyal knights of the crown. The Court included a number of gentlemen who were either openly Catholic, or who had Catholic affiliations, and a surprising number of these jousted. Lord Windsor and Philip Howard, earl of Arundel were notable jousters, although Arundel eschewed the sport after his conversion to Catholicism in 1581. William Tresham jousted in 1581 before his flight to Paris in 1582 to join other recusants, and the names of the known Catholics, Arthur Gorges and William Cornwallis appear on the score cheques. Among other Catholics, Thomas Gerard, brother of the Jesuit John Gerard, jousted on fourteen occasions between 1584 and 1602; Everard Digby, with a father imprisoned for recusancy, jousted seven times between 1581 and 1591; George Gifford jousted six times and Henry Nowell eleven times. Thomas Vavasour, with Catholic family affiliations, was a frequent jouster when not in active military service abroad. Attitudes to religion at Elizabeth's court were mixed, and changed depending on the threat from Spain; as a general rule, Catholics who were known to be loyal to the crown were tolerated. Degrees of loyalty could vary within one family however, and many Catholic gentlemen welcomed the chance to distance themselves in the Queen's eyes from their recusant relations. At the tournament, they could publicly declare their allegiance.

Overall, the cost of participation to individual jousters, who needed armour, horses, an entourage and a present for the Queen, was more than what they might gain in material terms. What Sir Henry Lee gained financially will be discussed below; most tilters received no reward other than the symbolic prizes for 'him that justid best'. Sir Christopher Hatton received a suit of armour from the Queen in 1564, but he enjoyed a special relationship with Elizabeth. Cumberland received his stupendous suit of Almain armour

[104] Lull, *Ordre of Chyualry*. See below chapter three.

from the Queen in 1590, but his position as Queen's Champion contributed more to his debts than his fortune. It would appear that the ordinary courtier gentleman gained little and could spend much.

The Accession Day tournaments also enhanced the role of the College of Arms. A major part of the College's income derived from their jurisdiction over tournaments, and any increased popularity in these events would benefit the College. At that time, the College was the subject of much criticism from the aristocracy, in that the Heralds were providing the much sought-after coats of arms for newly-risen gentlemen, often fabricating an armigerous descent from fictitious forebears. The Duke of Norfolk, as Earl Marshal, had introduced unpopular innovations in 1568 to stop this practice, but Norfolk was executed for treason in 1572 and not replaced as Earl Marshal. Accusations of inefficiency and disorganization at the College followed in 1570s. In 1571, shortly after the Accession Day tournaments began, Richard Lee, first cousin to Sir Henry Lee, became Portcullis Pursuivant, progressing to Richmond Herald in 1585 and Clarencieux King of Arms from 1594 to 1597. He was therefore perfectly positioned to liaise with his cousin and to encourage public tournaments, which would enhance the reputation of the College of Arms.[105] Another member of the College who appreciated both the propaganda value of the tilts and Lee, was Sir William Segar, who rose from Portcullis Pursuivant to Somerset Herald in 1589, Norroy King of Arms in 1597 and Garter King of Arms by 1604. It was Segar who produced the first printed account of Sir Henry Lee's vow to initiate the Accession Day tournaments in his *Boke of honor and armes* in 1590. By that date, Lee was well-established as the leading proponent of the tournament and Segar's descriptions of his chivalric virtues could well have been an attempt to reflect glory onto the College by association. Segar's later *Honor military and civille* in 1602 coincided with criticisms of the Heralds' practices from Norfolk's brother, Lord Henry Howard.

[105] 'Lee' was a common surname, and the many second marriages within Sir Henry's family make exact relationships difficult to determine. Richard Lee's crest, used on CA score cheques, confirms that he was from a cadet branch of the Lee family. He is not to be confused with Sir Henry Lee's half-brother, Richard Lee.

Another use for the Accession Day tournaments was to keep the military aspects of life in the public eye, to provide a purpose and income for the armourers during the long years of peace and to give courtier gentlemen at least the illusion they could acquit themselves adequately on the battlefield. Traditionally, tournaments were seen as training for combat; Lee's *Memoriam Sacrae* defined their purpose as 'treininge the Courtier in those exercises of Armes that keepe the Person steeled to Hardinesse, That by Softe Ease Rusts & Weares'. Lee always regarded himself as a soldier 'having had the use of Arms both in earnest and sport all the days of my life'.[106] His contemporaries were divided over whether or not tournaments were genuinely any training for warfare. Segar was an advocate of 'the ordinary exercises in Armes'; Francis Bacon, despite assisting Essex with his entertainment in 1595, believed that nobles should be ornaments of the Court rather than commanders of armies. He was sceptical about tournaments, writing that 'these things are but toys to come among serious observations ... since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegancy rather than daubed with cost'.[107]

Present-day historians are also divided over the efficacy of tournaments, with Sydney Anglo, Richard Barber and Juliet Baker dismissing them as mere ceremonial theatricals, and Malcolm Vale and Roy Strong emphasising their usefulness as training for war.[108] Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly argues the skills demonstrated in the later sixteenth-century tournaments were vital to the changing nature of warfare across Europe. The increasing use of firepower and handguns, for example, called for greater skill in controlling lighter, better-trained horses on the battlefield, and this argument is borne out by the contemporary interest in horsemanship among jousters.[109] Leicester, as Master of the Horse from 1559 to 1581, imported foreign strains to improve native horse breeding and brought the Italian Claudio Corte to England, to train and exercise horses 'for skirmish, for battell and for combate

[106] Cecil MS 117.3. (HMC Salis. XIV p. 182), (29 July 1601 Lee to Sir John Stanhope, Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen).
[107] Quoted in Jean Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth* (Woodbridge, 1980), p. 11.
[108] Anglo, 'Archives of the English tournament' pp. 153-162; Barber and Baker, *Tournaments*; M. Vale, *War and Chivalry* (London, 1989) p. 63; R. Strong, *Art and Power*, p. 12.
[109] Helen Watanbe-O'Kelly, 'Tournaments and their relevance for Warfare in the Early Modern Period', *European History Quarterly*, xx (London, 1990), pp. 451-463.

... [which] standeth him in steed for the exercise of the turneie and all other feates of arms'.[110] Corte's *The Art of Riding* was published bound together with John Astley's *The Art of Riding* in 1584, at the behest of Henry Mackwilliam, former jouster, Gentleman Pensioner and owner of one of the most spectacular armours in the Almains' Album.[111] Like Corte, the Italian riding master, Malatesta, writing in 1600, saw no distinction between cavalry riding in war and riding in tournaments. Leicester's nephew, Philip Sidney, expert at the joust and eager for battlefield experience, made frequent reference to horsemanship in his sonnets and Elizabeth's three Masters of the Horse, the earls of Leicester, Essex and Worcester, were renowned jousters.

If jousting was not directly training for warfare, many jousters saw themselves as soldiers and were eager for military action. It is also possible that the Accession Day tournaments were a way of 'show-casing' themselves as possible military commanders in order to win lucrative commissions. William Tighe has noted the number of Gentlemen Pensioners of Elizabeth's court who jousted, but has not gone on to identify their military careers.[112] If one unites the annual score cheques for 17 November in the College of Arms with brief biographies of the tilters, even a cursory inspection reveals that many tournament participants saw active military service.[113]

Sir Henry Lee and at least four of his companions at Edinburgh Castle in 1573 jousted and Philip Sidney died as a result of wounds received at the battle of Zutphen in 1586. Edward Denny, who saw active service in Ireland from 1574 to 1588, jousted in 1578, 1579, 1581, 1583, 1584 and 1587. Edward Norris, one of the six soldier sons of Rycote, jousted in 1578, 1579, 1581, 1583 and 1584, following an earlier family tradition set by his brothers William and Henry. Ralph Lane, who jousted in 1583, became the disastrous military governor of Roanoke. Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, who jousted in 1583 and 1584, led the celebrated English cavalry charge at Zutphen in September 1586 where he unhorsed the general of the enemy horse and took him

[110] Claudio Corte, *The Art of Riding* (London, 1584). RSTC. 5797.
[111] John Astley, *The Art of Riding* (London, 1584). RSTC. 884.
[112] W. Tighe, 'The Gentlemen Pensioners in Elizabethan Politics and Government', (doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1983).
[113] For this exercise, the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* has been used alongside CA MSS, M4, M4bis and Portfolio of Tournament cheques.

prisoner.[114] Friendships begun in the tiltyard continued on the battlefield; Philip Sidney resigned his governorship of Bergen op Zoom 'to my lord Willoughby, my very special friend' in 1586, and later, as Elizabeth's commander-in-chief in the Netherlands, Willoughby befriended and promoted Thomas Vavasour, who had tilted with him in 1583, and on four other occasions. Vavasour led a company of Yorkshire men to the Netherlands in 1585 and served at Brill until 1591. For several regular jousters like Vavasour, absence from the Accession Day tournaments was caused only by active military service abroad.

It was Essex who attempted to bring the tournament to the battlefield. On the English expedition to Portugal in 1589, he offered to fight all-comers in Lisbon in honour of his mistress, Elizabeth, and at the siege of Rouen in 1591, he challenged the enemy commander to single combat. Jan Dop gives an interesting Dutch view of 'Eliza's Knights' on the battlefield, claiming that their admiration for knightly heroism made them unsympathetic to the new breed of professional soldiers fighting in the Low Countries.[115] He argues that Leicester's failure to achieve success there reflected the gulf between military practice and the 'courtly ideals of heroism' and quotes Philip Sidney's romanticised but severely misplaced heroism on the battlefield at Zutphen in 1586 as illustrative of 'how disastrous a sudden transition from games of war to the real thing could be'.

Were tournaments the place to make political points before the Queen and Court? Private attempts by Leicester and Sidney to use tournaments for this purpose had met with little success, and the public Accession Day tournaments were emphatically not the place for political comment, as the circumstances in which they were staged militated against any political point being understood by many. This makes the events of the Accession Day tournament of 1581 puzzling and if a political point was being made, it still remains obscure.

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[114] It was said that Willoughby's 'plumes [were] pluckt awaie from his head, & his Armes bebattered with Blowes, but he emerged safe and famous' - Thomas Churchyard, *A true discourse historicall of the governours in the Netherlands* (London, 1602), p. 104. (RSTC. 17846).
[115] Dop, *Eliza's Knights* p. 89.

The impending marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou made 1581 a year of tensions at Court, and Lee had already been involved in the private tournaments staged by Arundel and Sidney. Anjou himself arrived in England on 31 October, and on 17 November, he was watching the tournament with the Queen from her window. A list of tilters exists in the Bodleian library, clearly marked by Robert Cooke, Clarencieux King of Arms, as 'Thys be the names of the noblemen and gentlemen that for the honor of the Queene's ma[jes[tie did their endevors at the Tylt at Westminster on the xvij day of November ... the xxiiij yeare of the reigne of queene Elizabeth'. [116] Thirteen couples were due to tilt, and the list gives the names of the first four couples as the earl of Arundel and Lord Windsor, Henry Grey and Henry Windsor, Sir Henry Lee and Philip Sidney, and Fulke Greville and Ralph Bowes. The clear implication is that all eight had intended to tilt, indeed, Lee had a major responsibility for the event. A similar list held at the College of Arms, however, tells a different story. The list is annotated in a hasty, different hand, crossing out names and it is clear that Arundel, Lord Windsor, Grey, Lee, Sidney, Greville and Edward Norris withdrew from the lists at the last moment.[117] *(Fig. 9)*. The College also holds an obviously hastily-compiled score cheque for 1581, showing the first couple who actually tilted as Thomas Perott and Thomas Ratcliffe.[118] *(Fig. 10)*. This list rapidly deteriorates into jottings, and Sir Henry Lee's name appears again, crossed through. Cooke again annotated the score cheque, 'Al these on bothe papers dyd Rone on the Quenes day the xvij November of 1581'.

Clearly something unusual was happening. Individual knights did occasionally withdraw during a tournament with injuries, but if seven of the principal tilters withdrew, it would have been unprecedented in the whole run of score cheques. Apart from the obvious expensive preparations that would have been made, such actions would have incurred a financial penalty. Was a political point being made? The fact that the Duke of Anjou was to be present at the tournament had been known for weeks and as he and the Queen merely sat at the window of her apartments, their proximity would not

[116] Bodleian MS, Ashmole 845 f. 165.
[117] CA MS, M4 i.
[118] CA MS, M4 vi.

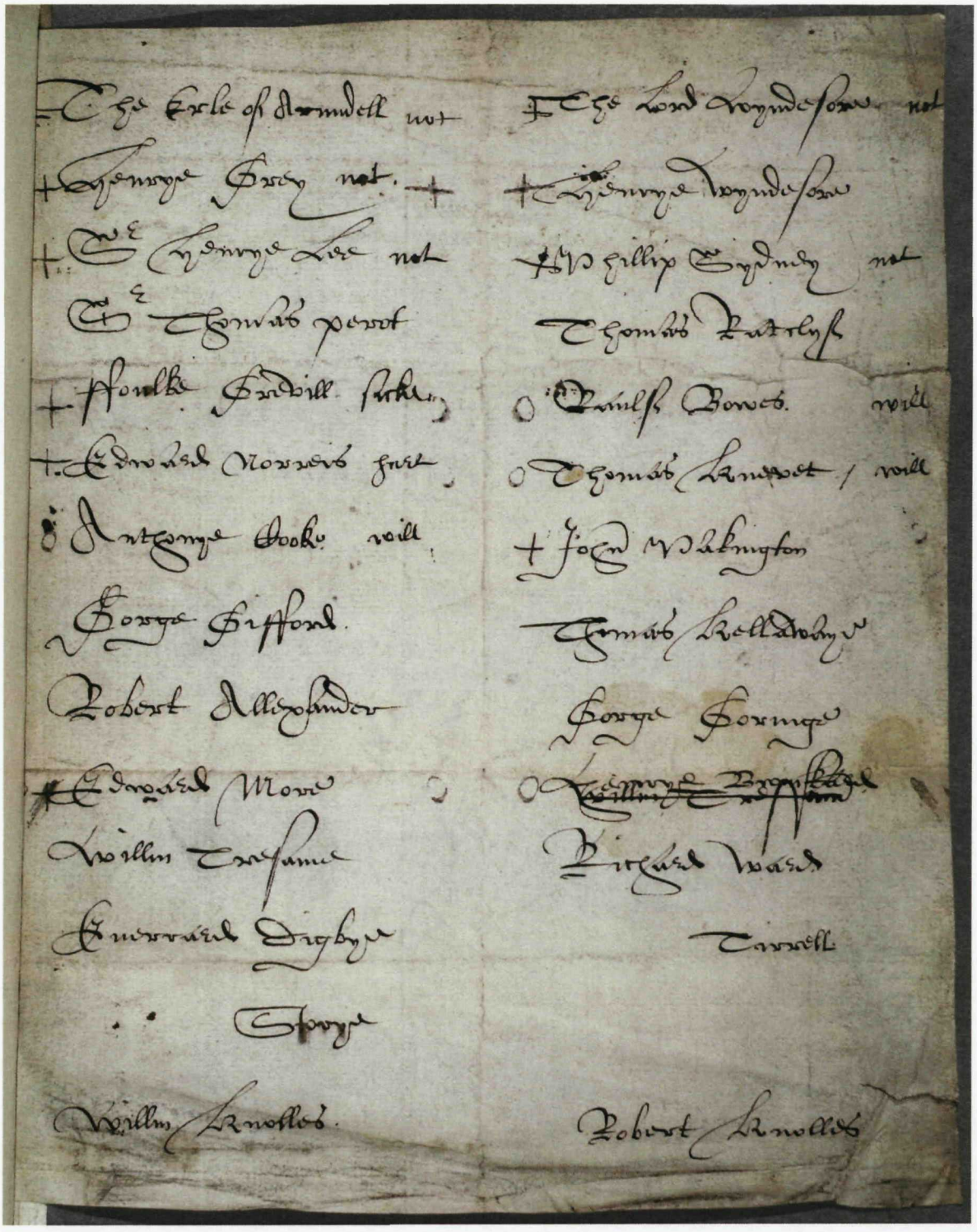

Fig. 9

Tilting list 1581

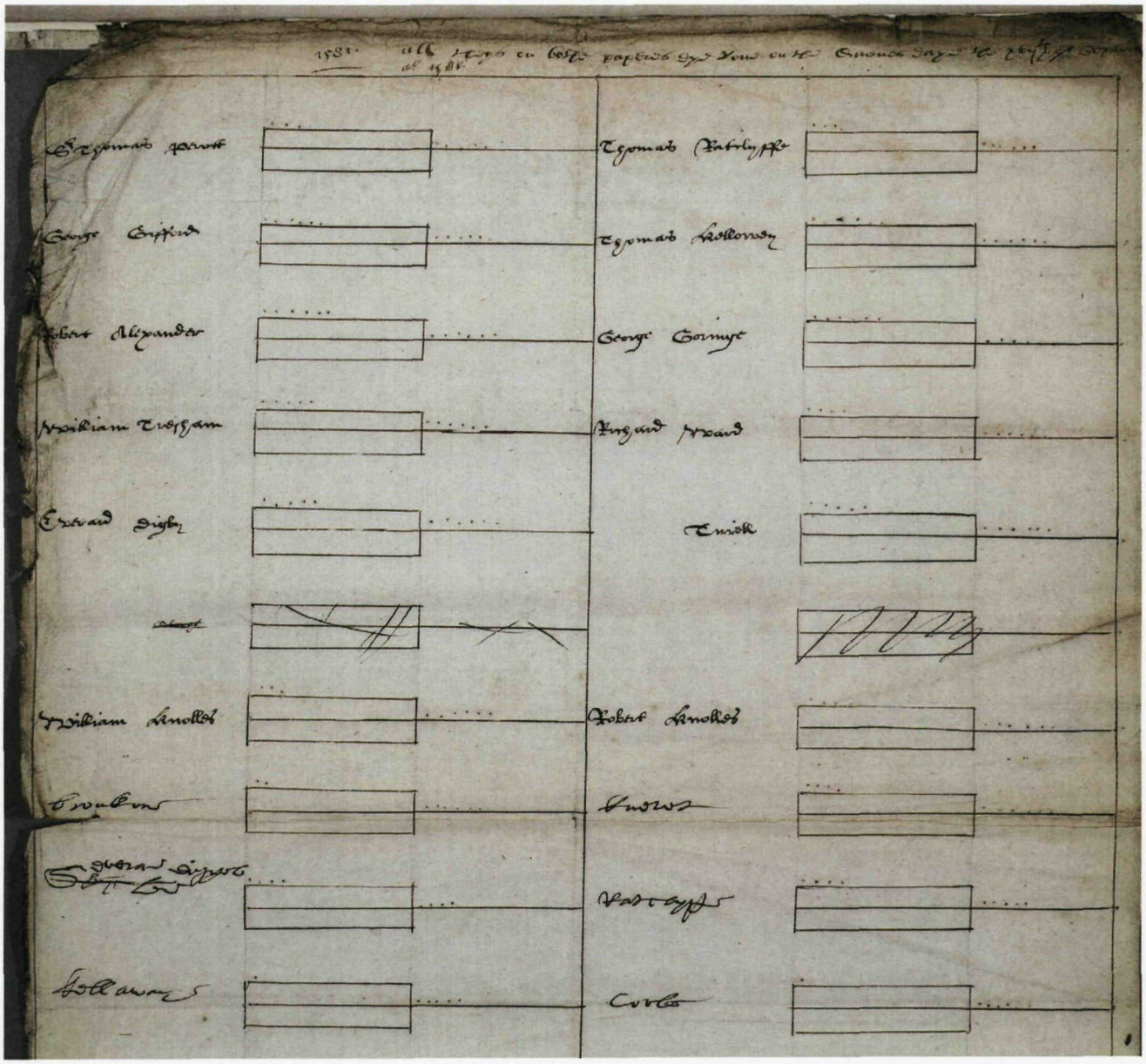

Fig. 10

Revised score cheque 1581 (detail)

have been obvious to the crowd. The 'Four Foster Children of Desire', all of whom scratched from the tournament, had made an earlier presentation in May 1581; besides, Arundel and Lord Windsor favoured the French match if Sidney and Greville did not. The Queen gave Anjou a ring in token of betrothal, but this was not until 22 November, and all sources agree that the move was unexpected.[119] The gesture could not have been foreseen on 17 November.

The explanation could lie in an event other than the proposed French marriage. The Jesuit priest Edmund Campion had arrived secretly in England in June 1580, only to be captured on 17 July 1581. Campion was incarcerated in the Tower of London, and was questioned secretly in Leicester House by Leicester and members of the Privy Council, possibly in the presence of the Queen, in an effort to make him recant his Catholicism. When he refused, Campion was returned to the Tower and was repeatedly racked. He underwent numerous interrogations, some of them public and valiantly defended his faith. On 14 November, he was again racked, and arraigned on a charge of conspiracy to overthrow the Queen. There was much indignation at Campion's treatment; Leicester tried to improve Campion's lodging in the Tower, and Sidney, who had met Campion in Prague in 1577, asked Anjou to intervene, a request that was ignored.[120] Arundel, watching Campion's public interrogation at the Tower, became converted to Catholicism. Lord Windsor, already a Catholic, was sympathetic to Campion. On 20 November, Campion was found guilty at his trial, and eleven days later was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

If the last-minute withdrawal from the tilt on 17 November was a protest against the treatment of Campion, the actions of Sidney, Arundel, Lord Windsor and even Greville who was Sidney's closest companion are at least understandable. The reasons for the withdrawal of Henry Grey and Edward Norris of Rycote are less obvious, but the withdrawal of Lee, as Queen's

[119] M.P. Holt, *The Duke of Anjou and the politique struggle during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 161.
[120] Anjou had earlier refused to intervene to save the lives of some thirteen Catholic recusants sentenced to death.

champion is very strange.[121] Lee had been with Sidney in Prague in 1577, and may have met Campion, although there is no evidence whatsoever that Lee had Catholic sympathies. Possibly Lee's very atypical action was influenced by the charismatic Philip Sidney - or Lee might have been attempting to deflect possible royal wrath at the hasty actions of Sidney and the young tilters by showing that their opinions were also held by older men. Tilters with known Catholic affiliations such as George Gifford, Everard Digby and William Tresham did not withdraw from the tilt; perhaps the question of joining a protest against the treatment of Campion came a little to close to home for them. Ironically, Sir Henry Lee was present officially as Master of the Armoury at Campion's execution on 1 December 1581. His conformist acceptance of the conditions of his official position is typical of his actions, but makes his refusal to tilt on 17 November even more of an aberration.

To date, the incident defies explanation; it has never been mentioned in print and deserves more detailed research. It is possible that Cooke's comment on the score cheque signified that all the tilters did, in fact, run, though what arguments were put to them have been lost. Of course, a simpler explanation might be that Robert Cooke, yet again, mislabelled his paperwork, as he had with score cheques for 1572 and 1577.

Another purpose for the tournaments, argue historians such as Mervyn James and Richard McCoy, was to act as an outlet for thwarted aristocratic pride, a 'resolution of the conflict between obedience to the monarch and aristocratic militarism and autonomy'.[122] If these arguments are genuinely relevant to the tournaments, they refer to those held after Lee's retirement in 1590 and to nobles such as the earls of Essex and Southampton rather than courtier gentlemen like Lee. For many years, very few members of the peerage tilted in public. If one looks at the scored cheques for tournaments between 1571 and 1581, the majority of the tilters were not even knighted.[123] Lee stands out as one of the few knights participating, with usually the earls of

[121] Henry Grey was brother-in-law to Lord Windsor, and was possibly sympathetic. Norris is marked down as 'hurt' and this could have been accurate.
[122] McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood*; M. James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986).
[123] In the 1579 February tilt, fourteen of the sixteen participants are named as 'Mr'.

Oxford and Arundel, and Lord Windsor representing the upper echelons of the nobility. In 1583, the aristocracy were solely represented by the earl of Cumberland and Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, and Lee was the only knight. The remaining twenty-one tilters were untitled, hardly supporting McCoy's claim that tournaments were for the 'glorification of aristocratic militarism, honour and autonomy'. The earl of Essex first appears on the tilting lists with Cumberland from 1586. As we have observed, changes were occurring at Court and while Lawrence Stone's reference to 'a whole generation of high-spirited young aristocrats in open rebellion against the conservative establishment in general and Lord Burghley in particular' is somewhat sweeping, it is true that the later tournaments were increasingly dominated by members of the peerage including the earls of Essex, Southampton and Bedford who had been Burghley's wards.[124]

From 1590, a greater number of nobles appear on the November tournament cheques. In 1590, Essex, Cumberland, and Lords Strange, Burke and Compton ran with four knights and fifteen untitled gentlemen. By 1594, Essex was joined by the earls of Sussex, Southampton and Shrewsbury, with Lords Mountjoy, Compton, Sandys and Norris. In 1597, seven peers were tilting, with seven knights and eight untitled gentlemen. The growing number of knights possibly reflected Essex's predilection for creating knights on the battlefield, with a personal loyalty to him and against the Queen's wishes. The Accession Day tournaments, held before an immense London crowd, afforded Essex his greatest public platform for exposure as a popular hero, if only for a few hours. Whether his behaviour there, and that of the other peers was, as McCoy claims, 'a cultural resolution of ... the conflict between honour and obedience ... and duty to right royal majesty' is highly dubious.[125]

If such a conflict existed, it had little to do with Lee. Lee was no member of the peerage - he came from a long line of land-owning gentry and social advancement for both the Wyatts and the Lees had come from service to the Tudors. Lee was keely aware of his standing as a knight and a gentleman, but did not labour under the aspirations or frustrations of those who, like Sidney and Essex, sprang from more aristocratic blood.

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[124] Stone, *Crisis*, p. 265.
[125] McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood,* p. 3.

CONCLUSION.

Overall, Lee's twenty-year influence over this much debated form of Court entertainment was substantial. Alan Young rightly claims that 'no-one did more by way of example and organising influence to establish the essential character of the Elizabethan tournament'.[126] Lee ensured the continuation of the tournament in England, long after it had become outmoded on the Continent. The Accession Day tournaments, funded by the participants in the Queen's honour and amateur in the best sense of the word, stand in marked contrast with Catherine di Medici's government-funded *Magnificences* in an increasingly war-torn France.[127] Were the tournaments organised by Lee an anachronism or a forward-looking development on an earlier theme? Their military use might be debatable with the growing use of artillery firepower, but tournaments generally looked back to a more chivalric 'golden' age which still appeared to hold Western Europe in thrall even in the late 1590s. The concept of rules and manners on the battlefield still held an appeal. The argument still rings true, that *Don Quixote*, in which 'Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away', would not have received such universal acclaim in 1606, had the spectacle of tilting knights not enjoyed such a wide currency in Europe.[128]

And what did Sir Henry Lee get out of the tournaments? It is difficult to believe that he was operating entirely from self-serving motives. In the early 1570s, Lee's prowess in the tiltyard brought him into favour with the Queen, and his creation of the Accession Day tournaments brought initial rewards from the Queen, culminating in his appointment as Master of the Armoury in 1580.[129] Participation in the tournament, however, even for a man trained from youth required physical fitness, strength, agility and considerable financial outlay. Although he might not have known it, by 1580 Lee had received all the material benefits that he was going to get and at forty-seven, he would have been quite justified to rest upon his laurels. Yet Lee continued to 'lead out the troops' for another ten years, which cannot really be explained in financial terms. His participation in the sport probably cost him more

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[126] Young, *Tournaments,* p. 164.
[127] See F. Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London, 1959).
[128] W. Byron, *Cervantes: A Biography* (London, 1979).
[129] See chapters three and four below.

financially than he gained in royal favour, but his personal satisfaction appears to have been great. The annual Accession Day tournaments gave him both a very public outlet for his creative and sporting abilities, and a reason for coming to Court when he personally was one of the main attractions. His influence over the event brought him into contact with at least two generations of courtiers of all ranks, the majority of whom he could number as personal friends. It is interesting that when he was elected as a Knight of the Garter in 1597, long after he had retired from the sport, many of the votes he received were from friends with whom he had tilted.[130] Lee created an annual occasion in the Queen's honour that, despite the changing demands on ceremonial at the Elizabethan court, was both enjoyable to all and celebrated the growing confidence of the Elizabethan political and social elite in their society.

[130] See chapter three.

CHAPTER THREE

'THE QUEEN'S WELL-BELOVED & FAITHFULL SUBJECT & SERVANT' THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIR HENRY LEE AND ELIZABETH I 1570 – 1603

The tradition of service to the crown, beyond the usual expectations that a gentleman would serve his monarch and the commonweal in his locality as an MP and JP, ran strongly in Sir Henry Lee's family and Lee showed every indication of wishing to continue it. At some point around 1569, Lee came into favour with Elizabeth I, and he remained in her service as 'the Queen's well-beloved and faithfull subject and servant' until 1603.[1] Initially there were many signs of royal favour; he became Steward of the Queen's Manor at Woodstock from 1572 and Master of the Armoury in 1580, as well as receiving several financially advantageous patents. Although he retained these appointments until his death, no further public offices were forthcoming after 1580 and by the last decade of the reign, Lee was actively complaining about the cost of his commitments. Lee's attitude to his Queen and his service to her over some thirty years can be gleaned from the way he fulfilled his responsibilities, from his letters on the subject to a variety of courtiers and from the various entertainments he prepared for Elizabeth at Woodstock. It is also possible to glimpse the Queen's attitude to Lee and other gentlemen in her service, and compare the progress made by Lee with other courtier gentlemen whose careers were more successful.

In the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, there had been little opportunity for Lee to serve at Court, and it was only after his return from Italy in 1569 that he was singled out for royal favour with concomitant rewards. What caused the change in his fortunes? The most obvious answer is that, by 1569, Sir Henry Lee was exactly the type of courtier who appealed to the Queen. If the evidence of the 1568 Antonis Mor portrait is reliable, Lee was an attractive, athletic man, outstanding at the hunt and the tilt. His foreign experience had made him at ease with royalty and nobility, he had some literary skill and was a capable, amiable courtier who was an asset to any social scene. He was

[1] Lee is so described in *CPR* 13.Eliz.I Part VI. no. 2056; TNA, PRO, C. 66/1076 and in TNA, PRO, DL/42 f.102 - his 1575 patent to manumit villeins.

well connected at Court, and, like many other favoured courtiers, related to the Queen, through the Knollys family. He had independent means and made few obvious demands for a lucrative position at Court. Any hint of association with the previous reign had long been lived down and his willingness to abandon a wife in Buckinghamshire was no less than the Queen expected. There were many young courtier gentlemen who could claim some of these virtues; but by 1569, Lee was a man in his prime, attractively described in his *Memoriae Sacrum* as having returned from Italy 'charged with the Reputation of a well formed Travailour & adorned with those flowers of Knighthood, Courtesie Bounty & Valour'.[2] The Antonis Mor portrait gives us another clue to his popularity with the Queen. Among the motifs shown on Lee's shirt is the armillary or celestial sphere. In addition to this being an astronomical instrument, the device was used symbolically in many ways - for the courtiers revolving around the Queen as their sun and deity, and as a symbol of the tournament. It was used as such by Lee in his famous Ditchley portrait of 1592 and in the miniature portrait of Cumberland as Queen's champion. Its depiction on Lee's shirt in 1568 would be a graceful statement of his devotion to Elizabeth, even if the portrait was intended for private use. Lee came into favour with the Queen because she enjoyed his courtly virtues, coloured as they were by foreign experience, and the muscular flattery of his Accession Day tournaments.

Gentlemen of Lee's social status could advance themselves at Court by seeking positions within the royal household, although in a predominantly female establishment, the opportunities were few. They could also join the elite band of Gentleman Pensioners, the Queen's personal bodyguard. There is no evidence that Lee ever sought either mode of service, and he lacked the training and inclination to pursue a career in government based on legal and administrative expertise, as had Nicholas Bacon or William Cecil. Lee would never achieve the same relationship with the Queen as Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, or in later years, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, but men of Lee's rank were achieving great favour and position in Elizabeth's Court. Thomas Heneage, son of a Lincolnshire landowner, became steward of Hatfield in

[2] Chambers, *Lee* p. 304.

1561and rapidly became a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber by 1565, receiving offices, lands, leases and reversions almost every subsequent year. Camden described him as 'a man for the elegancy of life and pleasantness of discourse born ... for the Court'.[3] Heneage became Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber by 1570, was knighted in 1577 and eventually was Vice-Chamberlain of the Queen's Household in 1587. Thomas Sackville was the son of the immensely wealthy Sir Richard Sackville, a Privy Councillor, and rose to become Lord Buckhurst and eventually earl of Dorset in 1604. Christopher Hatton, the son of a modest gentleman with moderate resources, was, like Lee, a notable tilter and took part with Lee in the 1571 tournament. He became keeper of the parks at Eltham palace, and Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in 1572. Like Heneage, he received very tangible rewards for his service at Court, eventually becoming a Privy Councillor and Lord Chancellor. The advancement of all three men depended on their personal relationship with the Queen, and just how far they would go was as yet uncertain in 1569. Whether Lee saw himself among their ranks is unknown, but clearly there were opportunities for courtier gentlemen to advance themselves.

Before 1570, there is no evidence that Lee was actively seeking royal appointments that would bring in financial rewards. On 5 October 1570, however, Lee lost more than three thousand sheep in a great flood and this necessitated his search for a remunerative position.[4] The financial loss of his livestock was quoted as the Queen's reason for granting him a licence to export wool in January 1571, and this was the first document which described Lee as 'the Queen's well-beloved & faithfull subject and servant'.[5] On 10 August 1572, Lee received some personal gift from the Queen, mentioned in a letter from Lord Burghley to Leicester.[6]

> I here send your Lordship a bill signed by the Queen's Majesty for Sir H. Lee which the Q[ueen's] Mai[es]tie meaneth to bestow upon him

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[3] P. Hasler, *H[istory] o[f] P[arliament], The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, ii. (London, 1982) p. 292.

[4] Holinshed, *Chronicles,* IV, p. 257; Thomas Knell, *The declaration of such tempestuous and outrageous fluddes as hath been in divers places of England* (London,1570), RSTC. 15032. This is discussed below in chapter five.

[5] TNA, PRO, C.66/1076.

[6] SP12/89/3. In Elizabeth's reign, it was possible for noblemen to have armour made at Greenwich, which needed a warrant under sign manual.

unawares to himself and therefore recommend me to take some care that it might be sealed and so her Mai[es]tie might have it to give him.

The nature of this bill is unknown; Chambers prosaically suggests it was the licence Lee received that year to export 500,000 woolfells for ten years.[7] This may have been a profitable gift but hardly the token of personal favour planned by Elizabeth for Lee that Burghley's phraseology suggests. In the absence of a better explanation, one possibility is that this was the royal warrant necessary for Lee to use the Almain Armourers at Greenwich. Lee's first suit of armour had been a plain German harness probably made in Augsburg; the decoration and garniture which made the armour more suitable for tournament use were added later in Greenwich by Jacob Halder, later Master Armourer.[8] Ian Eaves, on the evidence of the chronological arrangement of the armour in the Almain Armourers' Album, places the modification of Lee's first armour in the period 1571-75.[9]

Lee continued to receive financial favours and patents throughout the decade, although in practical terms, it is debatable whether many of these were immediately profitable. The Queen was always prepared to use patents and licences to reward her favourites financially, but the implementation of these favours was very much in the hands of their recipients. The more sensible courtiers often sold them to a third party for the ready money much needed to maintain appearances at Court.

LEE AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF WOODSTOCK.

Lee's principal appointment as a royal servant was as Steward and Parker at the Queen's manor of Woodstock, Oxfordshire, a royal manor since the reign of Ethelred II (978-1016). Its proximity to the forest of Wychwood meant that hunting was the main attraction for the monarch, and its healthy location ensured that it was often used when plague was rife in London. Tournaments had been held there in medieval times, and remnants of the

[7] TNA, PRO, C. 66/1093.
[8] V&A, *Almain Armourers' Album*, D599 and D599A, 1894.
[9] I. Eaves, 'The Greenwich Armour and locking gauntlet of Sir Henry Lee', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society,* xvi.3 (1999), p. 153.

tournament ground may have survived to Lee's time.[10] Henry VII had ordered a major rebuilding of the house, although when Elizabeth was imprisoned here in 1554-5, in the custody of Sir Henry Bedingfield, Woodstock was said to have been 'for many years decayed and prostrated'.[11] The famous graffiti she scratched on a window, 'Much suspected of me, Nothing proved can be', became an object of curiosity in Lee's time and was later noted by both Thomas Platter and Duke Bracciano.[12] Despite her earlier imprisonment there, Woodstock was a favourite residence for Elizabeth on summer progress and she visited it with her Court on five occasions between 1566 and 1592.

Lee lived at Woodstock from 1571, when he purchased the patent of Steward of Woodstock originally granted to Sir Edward Dyer in 1570.[13] On 28 November 1573, the Queen granted him a reversionary lease of the offices of Steward and lieutenant of the manor of Woodstock for life, with the offices of keeper of all the parks and woods on the manor. His position gave him an annual exchequer fee and considerable perquisites, which grew as he acquired additional offices. Lee's thirty-eight year stewardship of the whole property was one of the longest and most formative in its history; his activities as Steward are documented in a virtually unbroken set of annual exchequer returns, duplicated by those of the Woodstock Comptroller, George Whitton.[14] Lee's duties at Woodstock were threefold: he administered the house and estate for the purposes of royal hunting, he dealt with problems with manorial tenants, and most importantly, he received the Queen when she visited there, providing lodging, sustenance and entertainment for the Court.

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[10] The V[ictoria] C[ounty] H[istory] for Oxfordshire IV. p. 436 mentions the death of John, Earl of Pembroke in a jousting accident in 1389, quoting *Polychronicon Radulphi Higden* (Rolls Ser.), ix. 219-20.

[11] H.M.Colvin, ed., *History of the King's Works* (6 vols., London, 1982), iv, ii p. 351.

[12] Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino, *Journals of two travellers in Elizabethan and early Stuart England*, ed. Peter Razzell (London, 1995), p. 226; Cecil Papers 82.80 (HMC Salis.X p. 427 (2 Dec.1600).

[13] The patents for this had originally been granted to Sir Edward Dyer in 23 June 1570, but Dyer, perennially short of money and out of favour with the Queen from 1571 to 1573, had allowed them to pass by purchase to Lee until Dyer's death or his forfeiture or surrender of the patents. The reversionary lease of 1573 meant that they would eventually pass to Lee in his own right. Dyer lost his offices at Woodstock in 1603 at the accession of James I and the patent passed outright to Lee. See below chapter five for a full discussion of Lee's finances with relation to Woodstock.

[14] TNA, PRO, E101/671.

Lee's 'exile' to Woodstock seems a strange move for an ambitious courtier who knew that advancement relied on proximity to the monarch. Both Hatton and Heneage held similar positions at the royal houses of Eltham and Hatfield respectively, but both chose to delegate their practical administration to subordinates. For a man of Lee's temperament and talents, the decision to administer Woodstock personally was, in the early 1570s at least, understandable. Woodstock was one of the ten favoured royal residences and its stewardship had always been an office coveted by courtiers. Lee welcomed the Queen and Court there on the summer progress in 1572, 1574 and 1575, and it was not obvious until several years had passed that Woodstock would not enjoy regular royal visits.

The outdoor life suited Lee better than the corridors of Whitehall. Woodstock, some fifty miles from London was blessedly plague-free throughout Elizabeth's reign and sufficiently close to the capital for her to receive the Privy Council and foreign ambassadors there.[15] Hunting was a passion of Elizabeth's, and one she shared with Lee; at Woodstock she could hunt in Wychwood and also in Woodstock's own deer park which Lee developed and enlarged.[16] Above all, the Stewardship of Woodstock afforded Lee intimate informal contact with Elizabeth when on progress, something that was granted to very few courtiers in London. Residence at Woodstock did not cut Lee off from friends at Court; it was near enough to Leicester's estates at Kenilworth to exchange visits, and the manor was a convenient staging post for royal officials travelling between London and Ireland or Wales.[17] It was also conveniently linked by Akeman Street to Lee's own lands at Quarrendon. Lee was not necessarily resident at Woodstock for the whole year; he joined the Queen on summer progress each year, maintained his lodgings at the Savoy in London and came to Court for the tournaments and for commitments as Master of the Armoury.

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[15] 'Chaucer's House' on the edge of park at Woodstock, was leased by St. John's College as an alternative residence when plague came to Oxford, which it did for more than a year 1571-72.
[16] Elizabeth's ability to overstretch the rules of hospitality became legendary after she outraged Lord Berkeley by hunting most of his deer during her stay at Berkeley Castle in 1574. Lord Berkeley threatened to destroy his herd himself so the Queen did not have the pleasure of doing so; see Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the politics of ceremony* (Amhurst, 1999), p. 149.
[17] See for example HMC MS, De L'Isle and Dudley I, pp. 262, 263 - stable accounts of Sir Henry Sidney 12 Oct 1574, 21 Dec. 1574. Woodstock appeared a convenient night's stop between Ludlow and Kingston.

Lee's primary role at Woodstock was the maintenance of the manor and the deer park. Woodstock was a royal residence capable of housing the Court, and comprised a substantial set of buildings, with chapels, stables, tennis courts and outbuildings which appeared to be in constant need of repair and reconstruction.[18] Within the park were four lodges, High Lodge, New Lodge, Bladon Lodge and Gorrel Lodge, all held by Lee by 1577. As Woodstock's main purpose was for royal recreational hunting, imparking or enclosing manorial land for the extension of the deer park had been practised for several decades. In 1576, Lee enlarged an area of park near High Lodge known as the Straights, which he then imparked by building a stone wall at a cost of £309, the new enclosure being known as Queen's Park.[19] In 1577-78, Lee felled forty oaks on the estate for fencing.[20]

The well-being of the deer herd itself was of paramount importance and Lee maintained a herd of some 2000 to 3000 to provide sport for the Court and venison for its table. There appeared to be a well-established policy of exchange between deer parks; in November 1577, Lee received some thirty-six live red deer of various ages from Leicester's park at Kenilworth, which had in turn received stock from Lee's brother Robert at Hatfield Chase, Yorkshire.[21] The newly-fashionable red deer were unpopular with the residents of New Woodstock, who later complained they were over-running the countryside.[22] Local co-operation was important - in the bad winter of 1579, the Privy Council instructed Lee to buy stover or fodder locally, 'for the nourishing of the deer ... where it might best be spared without the great hurt of many, especially the porer sort'.[23]

Awareness of local sensitivities was vital to Lee in his second role at Woodstock, that of dealing with the problems that arose on the manor, especially with the tenants. Lee's family had long been highly successful landowners in Buckinghamshire and he was prepared to use all his

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[18] New Lodge and Gorrell Lodge were built 1572-73.
[19] HMC Salis.II p. 390, (draft to Lord Treasurer for payment of £309 for building a wall enclosing certain additions to Woodstock Park, 9 July 1576).
[20] TNA, PRO, SC6/Eliz.I/1825. Lee probably also had some responsibility for the breeding of hunting dogs and deer herds for royal gifts or for stocking other royal parks. Lee's brother Robert exercised a similar position at Hatfield Chase, Yorkshire.
[21] C[entre for] K[entish] S[tudies], (Penshurst Papers), U1475E.93, ff. 12v,17v.
[22] TNA, PRO, E101/670 f. 28.

experience in the Queen's interests. Unlike the majority of Court appointees, Lee did not view his position as a sinecure and he was the first Steward for some time who was prepared to make the administration of Woodstock his main priority. The Stewardship, however, had been held largely *in absentia* by three generations of the Chamberlayne family from 1508 to 1570 and certain situations had developed which Lee found impossible to reverse.[24] In addition, irregularities on a royal property were often referred to a higher authority and Lee's decisions could be over-ruled by Burghley. Lee, as Steward, had immediate responsibility for manorial demesne land that was retained by the lord of the manor for his own use. Much of the manorial land outside the demesne was let out to freehold or leasehold tenants in villages and townships within the manor, and these latter tenants tended to be better educated and more outspoken on the subject of their rights.

Lee's problems with Woodstock's township tenants began in 1576 when a common was enclosed and a road diverted. Some forty or fifty tenants travelled to Windsor to make their complaints known to the Queen and appealed noisily to her as she passed by in public. Not unnaturally, the Queen was offended and commanded the men to depart or be punished. As Lee had not already dealt with this problem, it fell to Burghley to hear the tenants' complaints and make a judgement.[25] Burghley's enquiry revealed the existence of a more complicated problem. As on most English manors, in addition to demesne and leasehold or freehold land, a third category of manorial land existed at Woodstock, the bury land. This was demesne land, temporarily surplus to the lord's requirements and rented out to tenants for a short period of time. In 1576, Lee discovered that the Queen's tenants were encroaching on the bury lands in a more permanent way than manorial practice permitted, and took steps to remove the offenders. The tenants

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[23] Dasent, *APC* XI, p. 45. (9 February 1579).

[24] Sir Edward Chamberlain, Steward from 1508-1543 was accused in the Star Chamber of exhorting money from the tenants. His son Sir Leonard Chamberlain, who shared the office from 1532 and held it until his death in 1561 pursued an extensive military career which included holding the governorship of Guernsey. His son Francis Chamberlain held the office from 1561 to 1570, while also being active elsewhere. The office was granted to Edward Dyer in 1570, who was more ambitious for a Court career.

[25] HMC Salis. II p. 141.

themselves claimed they had been awarded bury land in the past, as compensation for freehold and leasehold land lost by a previous imparking.

On 26 January 1577, six named tenants sent a written petition directly to Burghley, challenging Lee's authority 'as well for themselves as for other of their neighbours'.[26] They complained that 'her Majestie's tenants ... have been lately discharged from the occupation of ... the burrye land' and that they had held 'the said Burrie land ... jointlie with their sayd customarie land ... time oute of mind'. Burghley requested Lee to prepare a legal case and Lee sent the Woodstock accounts on 13 February 1577 showing that, by custom, the bury land had been kept in hand or let out at will by the Steward.[27] He also itemised the encroachments on the bury lands. Certain tenants had done very well out of their allegedly illegal activities - Lee claimed that 'the cause of the welthe of such as be riche is the bury land and the great poverty of the rest is that they have none or very little therof'. Burghley ordered an independent survey of the manorial lands to be drawn up, which was duly presented in November 1577.[28] In January 1578, the tenants at Woodstock protested their readiness to obey Burghley and they sent their title to the bury lands to him in February 1578.[29] Lee suggested that Burghley consult George Whitton, Comptroller of Woodstock since he and his family had held that position for more than a century.

The affair dragged on tediously. In March 1579, Burghley obtained the offices of keeper of the garden and the meadows at Woodstock for Lee, possibly in an attempt to placate him, but by May 1579, Lee's patience was wearing thin. He sent six men to speak in person to Burghley, protesting that he had 'spent his time and consumed much ... I complain to few though I might complain more'.[30] Lee listed the damage done by the tenants' encroachments;

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[26] BL, Lansdowne MS, 25 no. 91 f. 191. Chambers suggests that the imparking mentioned was Lee's 1576 imparkment of the Straights. The tenants' letter makes it it clear that this was not the case, and their claim springs from a much earlier imparkment. 'time out of mynde'.
[27] BL, Lansdowne MS, 25 no. 96 f. 199.
[28] BL, Lansdowne MS, 25 no. 92 ff. 191-192 - the survey of Thomas Moryson, Clerk to the Pipe in the Exchequer.
[29] BL, Lansdowne MS, 27 no. 46 f. 190.
[30] BL, Lansdowne MS, 25 no. 96 ff.196-197v; BL, Lansdowne MS, 27 no. 45 ff. 94-5. Yardland in this context was probably the land around the manorial buildings. Poor tenants had the right to graze animals on bury land between Michaelmas and Martinmas each year.

> on the bury grounds they will have no tree standing ... [they are] destroying the quick mow that no show thereof appear ... [they have] sawn great trees clean by the roots ... they claim the yard land as many acres as pleaseth them besides the copyhold land and bury land, they will enclose the great wastes as pleaseth them without lease or order. They will till up demesne land at their pleasure never before plowed, to the great hindrance of the rest of the poor inhabitants which were wont with their cattle to have relief there.

Typically, Lee protested that 'they offer her Majesty great wrong in claiming that [land], that seemeth her just inheritance'. The six men sent to Burghley gave a good account of themselves; in 1580 Burghley decided to grant bury lands to the occupiers for reasonable fines and Lee was forced to accept this.[31]

In seeking 'the perservacyon of her Majestie's inheritance and the performance of that duty', Lee had exercised his office at Woodstock far more rigorously than had been the practice.[32] He himself had been enclosing demesne land for the development of the deer park, but was rightly incensed at any attempt by the tenants to do likewise with the bury lands. Lee himself, even as a private landowner of twenty-five years' experience, had had little experience in dealing with recalcitrant tenants. Buckinghamshire was sheep-rearing country; Quarrendon itself had been enclosed by Lee's grandfather and by 1563 numbered only four families. Even Quarrendon's own 'Berryfield' was usually leased to one tenant for grazing purposes.[33] Lee's apparent ineptness in dealing with this situation illustrates that practices varied across the country with the type of landholding, and a conscientious newcomer would do well to tread carefully, even when safeguarding the Queen's rights.

No sooner was this problem was resolved than Lee was faced with another result of the Chamberlains' lax stewardship, but on this occasion, he had the support of Burghley and the Privy Council. The long absence of an efficient steward and lieutenant at Woodstock had meant that Woodstock's Comptroller had enjoyed great power and influence, and the coming of a new resident Steward with close Court connections was viewed unfavourably. The Comptrollership had been held by the Whitton family for at least four

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[31] VCH Oxon. xi. p. 276.
[32] BL, Lansdowne MS, 25 no. 96 ff. 196-197v.
[33] ORO Dil X/h/1.

generations and in Lee's time was held by George Whitton, lord of the manor of Hensington, near Woodstock. Lee and Whitton worked together amicably over the problem of the bury lands, but relations between the two men deteriorated and in December 1580, Whitton's resentment of what he saw as interference by a Court favourite resulted in his bringing an official complaint against Lee.[34]

Whitton was also prepared to rake up old quarrels; in a letter to the Privy Council, Whitton referred to a ten-year old quarrel over a stolen buck and some pasties, and declared that Lee had said he would 'make me weary of my office'. Whitton also itemised more recent injustices; Lee, he claimed, had kept him from the lucrative wardship of the Spelsbury woods for six or seven years, and withheld allowances due to him as Comptroller. Lee had shown much malice, he wrote, and he had been forced to bear various quarrels with Lee's servants 'on account of Sir Henry's great countenance'. Lee was quite prepared to answer what he regarded as libellous clamours with chapter and verse, and did so in a reply to the Privy Council.[35] George Whitton had earlier complained about the influence of men like Lee who had powerful friends at Court and should not have been surprised when he found himself committed to the Marshalsea prison 'for exhibiting a complaint against sir Henrey Ley, Knight'.[36] The case went before the Privy Council, who, although ruling against Whitton, requested that Lee, as the Queen's servant should 'content himself with the imprisonment of the said Whitton ... and his submission [apology], which their lordships, tendering very much the credytt of the said Sir Henry, thincke to be sufficient'.[37] In the circumstances, it is interesting that Lee sat on a Parliamentary committee on the bill against slanderous libelling in February 1581.

Such was the notoriety of the case that in 1584, it was quoted in an attack upon the earl of Leicester. In *A copie of a letter*, usually referred to as *Leicester's Commonwealth,* Leicester was erroneously accused of forcing George Whitney [sic] 'to forgo the Controllership of Woodstock [on] ... behalf

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[34] *CSPD* Addenda 1580-1625 pp. 26-7. The original in SP12 is badly damaged.
[35] *CSPD,* 1547-80 p. 691.
[36] Dasent, *APC* XIII, p. 93 (20 June 1581).
[37] Ibid.

of Sir Henry Lee'.[38] The anonymous author obviously recognised the relationship between Leicester and Lee, and while listing Leicester's many alleged transgressions, quoted not only the Whitton case, but that of the bury lands at Woodstock. Despite numerous wrangles between Lee and Whitton, both men continued to serve at Woodstock until Whitton's retirement in 1600, when his nephew replaced him at Lee's request.[39] It might have been these two arguments however, that prompted Lee to seek his own property in the vicinity of Woodstock in May 1581, and by 1583 he had bought the nearby manor house at Ditchley.[40]

WELCOMING QUEEN AND COURT TO WOODSTOCK.

A more enjoyable aspect of Lee's work at Woodstock was his duty to welcome the Queen and her Court to her own manor, and to provide suitable entertainment. Elizabeth had already visited Woodstock on 26-31 August 1566, she stayed there on two occasions in 1572, on 27 August and 7-19 September, and Lee was at pains to make the palace more comfortable before her visit during the period 24 July to 2 August 1574. New windows were cut in the Queen's Presence Chamber and Privy Chamber, and there was enough work to be done modifying and improving the manor for Woodstock to maintain its own resident stonemason.[41] There was much to recommend Woodstock as a convenient stopping place; it was the Queen's own property, she was not there as a guest and Lee ran the manor solely for her convenience and delectation. Lee's wife made no appearance at Woodstock and there was no danger of a hostess antagonising Elizabeth.[42] Lee knew how to combine the skills of the countryman with the accomplishments of the courtier; in addition to hunting, he provided flattering, but not sycophantic dramatic entertainment. Woodstock's more relaxed, predominantly male ambience made the manor a favourite with Elizabeth.

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[38] Anon, *Leicester's Commonwealth: The Copy of a letter etc.* (1584) ed. D.C. Peck (Athens, Ohio,1985) pp. 122-3.
[39] Cecil MS, 69.9. (HMC Salis. XVIII. p. 356).
[40] ORO Lee1/3a. (9 May 1581).
[41] TNA, PRO, E101/670 f. 26. Anthony Damary was the resident stonemason at Woodstock from c.1570 until 1605.
[42] Lady Anne Lee would either have been at Quarrendon or with her mother at West Drayton.

Many of these factors can be identified in Elizabeth's visit to Woodstock from 29 August until 3 October 1575. The Queen's progress that summer, the longest of the reign, had been in the planning stage since February, with Shrewsbury being chosen as the final destination. The highlight of the progress was the Queen's visit between 9 and 27 July to Kenilworth Castle, home of her favourite Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. In 1575, the war in the Netherlands and possibility of a French marriage for Elizabeth made the political situation tense, and Leicester was eager to use the Queen's visit to further his own political and matrimonial ambitions. Over eighteen days, he presented entertainments in what Susan Frye describes as 'nearly every allegorical, narrative and festive form conceivable', written for the occasion by George Gascoigne and others.[43] Despite the expense lavished on the hospitality, the 'intense Dudley-centred devices' did not please the Queen, and the last two entertainments were severely curtailed. Gascoigne published the entire text of the entertainments immediately after the Queen's visit, and it appears that the masque of *Sir Bruse sans Pitie* had originally included a military skirmish, for which Leicester had commissioned a new suit of armour from Greenwich.[44] In the event, neither this military spectacle, which possibly reflected Leicester's military ambitions in the Netherlands, nor the *Masque of Zabeta* which advocated marriage, was performed. Elizabeth left Kenilworth early, with the unfortunate Gascoigne running alongside her coach, on the earl's commands, attempting to deliver 'some Farewel worth the presenting'.

The Queen's Progress then took her west, but she got no further than Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire when plague in Worcester forced her to turn homewards. 15 August was the first recorded date when Woodstock was mooted as a stopping place on the 1575 progress; it appears that Lee did a

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[43] Frye, *Elizabeth I* p. 62. Gascoigne collaborated with William Ferrers, William Hunne and William Patten in producing the texts.

[44] E. Blakeley, 'Tournament Garniture of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester', *Royal Armouries Yearbook,*2 (1997) pp. 55-63. Gascoigne published all the entertainments originally planned for the visit in *The Princely Pleasures at the Courte at Kenilwoorth* (London, 1575) and we also have an account known as *Laneham's Letter* (London, 1575) RSTC. 15190.5, likewise published immediately after the Queen's visit. See also Elizabeth Goldring, 'Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Leicester for Kenilworth Castle', *Burlington Magazine,* CXLVII, 1231 (Oct 2005) pp. 654-60; Frye, *Elizabeth I,* pp. 56-78, Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth* pp. 119-142; McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood,* pp. 43-46.

formidable job in preparing for the royal visit in a bare fourteen days.[45] Plague was also rife in London, so the Queen and Court remained at Woodstock from 29 August until 3 October, and were joined by the new French Ambassador, Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de Mauvissière and the outgoing Ambassador, Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénélon. Burghley and other members of the Privy Council journeyed to Woodstock and Leicester hastened to be near what he called 'our heaven on earth'.[46]

As well as arranging the hunting, Lee was expected to put on some kind of entertainment for the Court. Here he had to tread a fine line between his devotion to the Queen and his long friendship with Leicester, as Lee had witnessed the embarrassing curtailment of Leicester's planned devices at Kenilworth. In the event, Lee chose a format he knew well – a chivalric display. There is evidence that a tournament had originally been planned at Woodstock for Mayday 1575, and a proclamation had been drawn up by the Heralds, on behalf of 'two strange knyghtes', possibly Dyer and Lee, to challenge 'all nobellmen and gentyllemen at Armes ... to Tylt, cours of the fiels, Turnoy and barryers'... at your maujestyes royall palace of Woodstocke'.[47] This tournament was never held, but by the time the Queen and Court reached Woodstock on 29 August, it had been subsumed into the entertainment that Lee offered to his sovereign. At Kenilworth, the military skirmish promoting Leicester as the chivalric hero had been cancelled. Was Lee showing how a narrative framework for chivalric display should be couched, or merely, at short notice, utilizing trappings unused by Leicester?

The first day of Lee's entertainment told the tale of Hemetes the Hermit, and was one of a number of 'devices' performed during the stay.[48] As

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[45] *CSPD*, 1547-80 p. 502 (15 August 1575). I am grateful to Simon Adams for making this point at the 'Kenilworth Revisited' conference at Kenilworth in September 2005.
[46] *CSPD* 1547-80 p.503 (6 Sept).
[47] CA MS, Portfolio 23a. The precise wording suggests that a chivalric challenge was included in whatever entertainment had been offered to Elizabeth during her ten-day stay in 1574, and also that Lee was already sufficiently confident of his tenure at Woodstock and his tournament prowess by 1574 to issue such a challenge for the following year.
[48] The Ditchley manuscript is usually known as 'Sir Henry Lee's Devices, etc. before Queen Elizabeth I', BL, Add. MS, 41499A. The text for this analysis is taken from ff. 4a-5b and BL, Add. MS, 41499B, Dillon's Victorian transcription. I am grateful to Gabriel Heaton for making his transcriptions of the 1575 Woodstock and 1592 Ditchley entertainments available to me in advance of their publication in the new edition of J. Nichols *The Progresses ... of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, forthcoming).

the Queen approached Woodstock, she came across a scene of combat between two knights, Contarenus and Loricus, who battled before Gaudina, daughter of Occanon, Duke of Cambia. On Elizabeth's appearance, the fight was stopped by a blind hermit, Hemetes, who brought the group before her and narrated the story. The two extant manuscript copies of the entertainment both begin at the same line, 'he speaketh to two Knights that foughte there', and clearly some formidable display of arms preceded the narrative.[49] The Queen sat in 'a fine Bower ... covered with greene Ivie, and seates made of earthe with sweete smelling herbes', while a simple tale of thwarted love and chivalry unfolded.

Two star-crossed lovers, Gaudina and Contarenus, had been parted by Gaudina's father until Contarenus 'should fighte with the hardyest Knighte and see the worthiest Ladie of the world'. Deprived of her lover, Gaudina travels to the grotto of Sibylla the prophetess, where she meets Loricus, a knight played by Lee himself, who in vain loved a matchless lady, 'a pearle, as his heart onely esteemed'. Gaudina and Loricus also meet the blind Hermit, Hemetes, possibly played by Edward Dyer, once 'a knight of renown', but now 'cast into a corner', by a Lady in 'the shape of a tygresse'. Sibylla prophesies that all will be resolved when the three travellers reach 'a place, wheare men were moste stronge, women moste fayre, the countrey most fertyll, the people most welthy, the government most just and the Princes most wourthy'. There, two knights will fight and 'the most virtuous lady in the world shal be theare to look on ... a ladie in whome enhabiteth the most vertue, learnyng and beawtie.' Hemetes then proclaimed that the prophecies had indeed just come true; Contarenus had fought Loricus 'the hardyest Knighte' and the Queen's arrival, as the 'worthiest Ladie of the world' had fulfilled the last condition. In the play, the lovers Gaudina and Contaranus are reunited before Elizabeth and Hemetes regains his sight. The message of Woodstock was simple - the mere presence of Elizabeth was enough to resolve all dilemmas.

If the spotlight is turned away from the Queen and the entertainment as a whole, and onto Loricus who appears to gain nothing, what clues can be

[49] BL, Add. MS, 414199A and BL, Royal MS, 18A xlviii ff. 1-37, quoted in Nichols, *Elizabeth,* i, pp. 553-582. The later 1592 Ditchley entertainment, referring to this production, comments that 'the rest were Iusts & feats of armed knights', BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 13r.

gathered as to the character and motivation of his *alter ego*, Lee himself? One assumes Lee took the part of Loricus willingly; there was no necessity to assume the role under any duress and he already had a major role as host at Woodstock. Was Lee merely presenting an entertainment, or was he taking the opportunity to fashion a role by which he wished to be known to Elizabeth? Did Lee devise the piece himself? The precise reasons for the entertainment and its authorship have long been debated.[50] A.W.Pollard, in the first modern printed version of the piece in 1910, asserted that it was 'contrived at Leicester's behest in order to allay the overbearing marriage suit made at Kenilworth'. J.W. Cunliffe contested this, stating that the Woodstock devices were directed not by or for Leicester, but against him. Charles Baskervill argued that many of the devices and speeches used at Kenilworth were echoed at Woodstock, and suggested it was 'designed to restore Leicester to the Queen's favour through evidence of a more self-effacing spirit'. More recently, Susan Doran agrees that this was an entertainment prepared by Leicester, 'supervised by Leicester's client, Sir Henry Lee'. George Gascoigne, the principal author at Kenilworth specifically denied authorship when he presented the transcribed text to the Queen in 1576.

The oldest manuscript copy remained in Lee's home at Ditchley Park until 1932, and Frances Yates asserts that Lee was indeed the author.[51] As an experienced host, Lee knew what message he wanted to put across, and what was most appealing to the Queen, but whereas certain other poems are definitely attributed to Lee, recent scholarship has shown that the text of Hemetes the Hermit was probably the work of Robert Garrett, Reader of Rhetoric at St. John's College, Oxford.[52] Given the limited time span Lee had to prepare everything for the Queen's visit, it is highly likely that he delegated the creation of the actual text to the nearest candidate, from a college with

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[50] A.W. Pollard, *The Queenes Majesty's Entertainment at Woodstock,1575* (Oxford, 1910), p. 24; J.W. Cunliffe, 'The Queenes Majesties Entertainment at Woodstocke', *PMLA*, xxvi (1911), pp. 130-131; C.R. Baskervill, 'The Genesis of Spenser's Queen of Faerie', *Modern Philology,* xviii, 1 (May, 1920), pp. 49-54; S. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London, 1996), p. 69. Gascoigne's manuscript transcription is BL, Royal MS, 18A xlviii ff.1-37 and is reproduced in Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, pp. 553-582. The first printed version of the text appeared in 1585.

[51] Yates, *Astraea,* p. 97.

[52] G. Heaton, 'The Queen and the Hermit: the Tale of Hemetes, 1575', in P. Beal and G. Ioppolo eds., *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing* (London, 2007), pp. 87-115. Lee's brother, Cromwell Lee, was a fellow of St. John's, as were three of Lee's later chaplains at Ditchley.

which Lee had close links. But if the words themselves were Garrett's, the devisor of the piece must nonetheless have been Lee, given his close identification with Loricus.

The Tale of Hemetes is the earliest datable text associated with Lee and Gabriel Heaton makes the convincing suggestion that Lee deliberately presented himself in his self-constructed role of Queen's personal tournament champion.[53] In the entertainment text, Loricus is not afraid to describe himself as 'the hardyest knighte', as befits the Queen's champion. He confesses he 'loved a Ladie' and desired 'he mighte but love her without lokinge for rewarde'. Finding no favour, he 'made a straunge assay', turning to one of the Queen's attendants, 'a new mistress that lived every day in her eye', in an attempt to provoke jealousy from his true Lady. Thereafter,'he lefte his owne country and betooke himself to travel and to armes', a reference to Lee's Italian journey and his recent military service in Edinburgh. Loricus's only aim was 'to deserve that reputation, as this greate and noble mistress wold but think hym worthy to be hers thoughe she woule never be none of his'. If Loricus genuinely wished to serve his lady without looking for reward, his desires were fulfilled, at least in the entertainment. While Hemetes regained his sight, and the lovers Gaudina and Contarenus found each other, Loricus's only reward in the play was some good advice from Hemetes. 'Knight' he was counselled, 'prosecute thy purpose, it is noble, learning ... not to fear ... to take paine, remembering nothing notable is woon without difficulty'.

If Lee created the role of Loricus for himself, he also created a role for the Queen as the matchless unattainable lady he wished to serve. The success of the piece relied on the Queen accepting both her role and Sir Henry Lee as her knight. Lee had already seen at Kenilworth that the Queen could refuse to accept the message of an entertainment, but on this occasion Elizabeth was charmed with the tale of Hemetes. Unlike other entertainments offered to her, it bore no reference to her marriage, her religion or her foreign policy, and Lee's implied request merely to serve her typifies the very undemanding nature of the relationship between Lee and his Queen. Lee's

[53] Ibid.

role as Queen's Champion became central to his career, and he would 'lead out the troops' in her name on 17 November each year until 1590.

Was this the first time that Lee had put forward the imaginative proposition that he should be the Queen's tournament champion? The 1575 Woodstock visit was the first occasion where the text survives of a major entertainment staged by Lee for the Queen and her Court; if an entertainment had been staged for the royal visit in 1574, no record survives other than the tournament challenge. The texts in the Ditchley manuscript are undated and make it difficult to see whether he had claimed the role of Champion on an earlier occasion. The position could have been implied by Lee's actions in an Accession Day tournament, but the entertainment at Woodstock in September 1575 gave him the perfect opportunity to put his request directly to the Queen before the whole Court. The *milieu* of Woodstock was more conducive to a request from Lee than a public tournament in London in November, where the principal focus was on the jousting.

By 1575, Lee was sufficiently confident of his supremacy at the tilt to make his claim in superlative terms as 'the hardieste knyght'. The entertainment, which Heaton suggests had a more complex chivalric frame than anything before associated with Lee, was played before a Court conversant with the allegorical references.[54] The Queen, in holiday and possibly even birthday mood, viewed a simple entertainment specifically designed to flatter her in the sunshine of a September day, and Lee, in his privileged position as her host, could believe it would find royal favour. Lee also revealed his confidence in his position by including oblique references to circumstances known only to the Court. When the Woodstock entertainment appeared later in pamphlet form, the preface advised that 'if you mark the words with this present world or were acquainted with the state of the devices, you shoulde finde no lesse hidden then uttered'. Lee's reference to his having a possible mistress from among the Queen's ladies 'that lived every day in her eye' was bold, and shows that Lee was sufficiently in favour to risk mentioning these things before the Queen.[55]

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[54] Heaton, 'The Queen and the hermit', p. 91.

[55] Lee gave no clue whatsoever who this court lady might have been and there is no reference to any liaison before his long-term affair with Anne Vavasour after 1590, see below chapter six. Chambers

Lee's direct dramatic involvement as Loricus ended with Hemetes' tale; what was said later was of little concern to Lee, except in his role as overall host. The entertainment continued; at the end of the first day, Hemetes led the Queen to the new banqueting house, built around the trunk of an oak, which was hung with garlands for the Queen's ladies and many curious pictures. The narrator did not include an explanation of the allegorical references in the pictures which intrigued the visiting French ambassadors and 'were hard to understand without some knowledge of the inventors'. The 'Queen of the Fayrys' appeared to Elizabeth as she feasted, the first definite sighting of this key character in Elizabethan literature.[56] As Elizabeth left for her lodgings after dinner that night in 1575, she heard a song 'of greate inuention', coming from inside the oak tree, possibly composed by Edward Dyer.[57]

The entertainment continued on the second day, but in a far different vein from the simple tale of the hermit. Now the reunited lovers Gaudina and Contarenus agreed to renounce their love for reasons of state, declaring 'you must regard the common weales good plight and seek the whole not onely one to saue'. Gaudina returned home and Contarenus requested that he might go abroad to seek knightly quests elsewhere. Susan Doran contends that Leicester, having renounced his desire to wed Elizabeth for the sake of his country, was pleading to be allowed to lead an army to the Low Countries.[58] Although the second day's entertainment appeared to be well thought of, Chambers dismisses it as 'a tedious piece' and it certainly had little in common with the simple tale of Hemetes. The Queen had requested that the Hermit's tale 'should be brought to her in writing', and this was rapidly seized upon by George Gascoigne as a way of restoring himself in royal favour after his Kenilworth debacle. Gascoigne's transcription of the entire

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suggests it could have been Lady Susan Bourchier, who was present at Woodstock. If so, the affair was amazingly discreet.

[56] Chambers in *Lee,* p. 269 suggests that the undated 'message of the damsel of the Q of fayries' in BL, Add. MS, 41499A ff. 1v-2 refers to an earlier entertainment for Elizabeth at Woodstock in 1572. See also Chambers, *Lee,* p. 88; Matthew Woodcock, 'The Fairy Queen in Elizabethan Entertainments', C. Levin, J. Eldridge Carney & D. Barrett-Graves eds., *Elizabeth I: Always her own free woman* (Ashgate, 2003), pp. 97-119.

[57] Bodl. MS, Rawlinson Poet. 85, f. 7 ascribes the lines to 'Mr. Dier'; in BL, Harleian MS, 6910 f. 169, they are anonymous; Chambers, *Lee* p. 90.

[58] Doran, *Monarchy,* p. 69.

entertainment was presented to the Queen on New Year's Day 1576, together with his somewhat pretentious translations into Latin, French and Italian.[59]

Clearly the first day's entertainment was the more acceptable, but one doubts if Cunliffe was right to suggest that it was inspired by hostility to Leicester, Lee's long-time friend. A far simpler explanation is that Lee devised the tale of Hemetes for his own ends, giving Leicester the opportunity in the second day's entertainment to show himself in a more 'self-effacing' light. Historiographical arguments may rage over the meaning of the second entertainment, but Lee's message had gone forward on the first day.[60]

LEE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE QUEEN - 1575-1590.

After the 1575 visit, the Queen continued to favour Lee. In 1577, he was included in the embassy sent to the Emperor in Prague and in 1580 he became Master of the Armoury at the Tower of London. Shortly before 1580 he received a substantial loan from the Queen, which he possibly used to purchase Ditchley in 1583. From 1576 onwards, Lee's name appears on the rolls of the New Year's gifts the Queen gave to select courtiers; in return, Lee gave the Queen intricate gifts that often made imaginative reference to his service. In 1576, after the triumph at Woodstock, he gave the Queen 'A booke of golde, with leaves in it of paper and parchment'. In 1577, he gave a 'cap of vellate with xlviij pence of gold'; in 1578 'a juell, beinge a garlande of golde with leaves, and the walnutts in the myddes, with a betterfly pendant of sparks of ophalls and rubyes'. His 1581 gifts was 'a launce-staff of goulde, sett with sparkes of dyamondes and rubyes'. In 1585, he gave 'a bodkin of golde, with a pendant, being a hunter's horne, and a buck in the midest of it'.[61]

If Lee shared Loricus' desire to love the Queen 'without lokinge for rewarde', he would in the long run have his wish. After 1575, Elizabeth did not return to Woodstock for seventeen years; hardly a deliberate snub to Lee, as she made no summer progresses whatsoever between 1578 and 1591. Lee merited no mention in official documents after 1580 until his appointment in

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[59] Gascoigne's presentation copy is BL, Royal MS, 18A xlviii ff.1-37.

[60] See the debates over the Kenilworth and Woodstock entertainments in Frye, *Elizabeth I*, pp. 56-78; Doran, *Monarchy*, p. 69; Doran, 'Juno versus Diana', pp. 257-274.

[61] New Year's gifts are listed from various sources in Nichols, *Elizabeth,* ii and also in Chambers, *Lee,* p. 267.

December 1587 as General of the Horse in the north of England under the earl of Huntingdon. He continued to lead out the knights as the Queen's Champion each Accession Day and received New Year's gifts from the Queen, but these were largely formulaic 'gifts of plate', and seldom came from the Queen's own hands. After his appointment at the Armoury, Lee gained neither promotion nor favour from the Queen, but his lack of advancement was reasonably typical of the way Elizabeth treated her servants, especially among the gentry. Simon Adams makes the point that the Queen used office as a reward rather than a means of advancement; once a courtier was appointed to a position of royal service, he was expected to continue there, often at his own expense.[62] This was certainly true of Lee; however generous the Queen might have been to Lee in earlier years, he was still expected to fulfil his positions decades afterwards. Only in his self -appointed role as her champion was he allowed to retire, and even then at the somewhat advanced age of fifty-seven.

It is striking that at the tournaments, Lee frequently adopted the image of a knight divorced from the Court. Rejection of the Court and its corrupt values for the purer virtues of the country was a constant trope in Renaissance literature; Lee, based as he was at Woodstock, had more right than most to appear as the outsider. In the texts recorded in the Ditchley manuscript, he appears as the loyal servant who returns only once a year to fulfil his vow to tilt in the Queen's honour.[63] In 1571 and in 1576 he appeared as 'the green knight', a reference to his hunting *persona* or to the classic opponent of Sir Gawain. In the entertainment possibly staged on 16 November 1577, Lee, a 'knight ... constant in faith' flees the Court for the wilderness, where

> ther was ... no whisperinge of lie to breed or feed factions ... no odd fellowes or intelligencers, that carye all newes in ther bosomes & bees in ther brayenes ... no sarvants to Ambition, that intangle themselves oft in ther owne snares.

This was a somewhat pointed criticism in an entertainment intended for the Court. On other occasions, he appeared as the 'straunge, forsaken and

[62] Adams, 'Eliza Enthroned?', p. 28.
[63] BL, Add. MS, 41499A ff. 1-16.

dispayringe knight' or as 'a knight that warrs against hope and fortune'. This recurring image suggests it was Lee's own choice, possibly reflecting how he saw his relationship with the Queen. Gabriel Heaton suggests that Lee's tournament *personae* revealed his frustration at having no greater reward for royal service than his position at Woodstock.[64] Lee's choice of role, however, continued after his appointment as Master of the Armoury, and it is more probable that Lee genuinely preferred to serve the Queen as a soldier, as the organiser of her hunting or at the tournament, even though it curtailed his advancement.[65] His lack of patience with the Court is a recurring theme, and the condemnation of certain types of courtiers in the 1577 entertainment suggests that Lee had sufficient confidence in his own position at Woodstock to voice it.

The role that Lee gives the Queen in the tournament texts is also interesting. Although Elizabeth was cast in roles possessing all possible virtues in the private Court entertainments, it is noticeable that in the texts directly associated with the public November tournaments the tone is less personal. She is naturally addressed as 'most noble ladye', but few compliments are addressed to her personally; the emphasis is more on national celebration and loyalty. There is reference to 'this English holiday, or rather England's happie day', celebrating 'yr highness entrance into government'.[66] Elizabeth is the 'most honoured owner of all trew englishe harts'. Lee proclaims that 'his hart is at libertie to paye the homage of his love', but the stress is on the devotion of the knights, not the nature of its recipient. The texts associated with the tournaments, however, were limited to one hearing only, with the main focus of the occasion being the jousting and it was fundamentally understood that the entire day was in Elizabeth's honour.

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[64] G. Heaton, 'Images of a Champion: The Tiltyard Personae of Sir Henry Lee', unpublished paper presented at *Courts, Courtiers and Courtliness in the Tudor Age Conference,* Kingston University, 9 September 2004.

[65] Lee's appointment as Master of the Armoury is discussed below in chapter four. This necessitated visits to London but not residence at Court.

[66] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 1.

THE QUEEN AS 'GODDESS': SIR HENRY LEE'S ENTERTAINMENTS IN 1590 AND 1592.

Until 1590, there is little evidence in the texts associated with Lee that endorsed the concept of 'the cult of the Virgin Queen' - his addresses to Elizabeth were little more than what would be expected to a reigning monarch. In Lee's last tiltyard entertainment in 1590, however, and in his 1592 entertainment at Ditchley, the imagery that Strong and Yates associate with the 'cult of Elizabeth' began to appear. Elizabeth was addressed as 'Goddess'; there were references to the sacred powers of her virginity and although Lee never used the names, the literary and artistic association of the Queen with the mythical figures of Cynthia, Diana, Astraea and Bellophoebe date from this time. We also begin to see a deeper dimension to Lee in these later texts. We have seen him as soldier, as countryman, as jouster and as devisor of tournament spectacles, but the imagery associated with these two entertainments reveals a Lee who had knowledge of contemporary symbolism, emblems and iconography at his fingertips. It is a dimension to Lee that will be observed later when discussing his gardens and his portrait collection.[67]

On 17 November 1590 Lee staged his retirement from his position as Queen's champion, as part of the Accession Day tournament. Too wise a showman to attempt a dramatic presentation while the jousting was actually in progress, he remained silent until it had ended. Then, as a bonus for the onlookers and with all eyes upon himself, he caused a pavilion of white taffeta to arise from the tournament ground, 'like unto the sacred Temple of the Virgins Vestall'.[68] Within the pavilion was an altar, tended by three virgins - the fourth virgin being Elizabeth herself.[69] A Crowned Pillar 'embraced by an eglantine tree' stood before the door of the temple and bore a script which addressed Elizabeth as *Felicissimae Virgini.* While all attention was on the

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[67] See below chapter six.

[68] Segar, *Honor,* Nichols, *Elizabeth,* iii p. 49.

[69] The reference to Elizabeth as a Vestal Virgin was implied in the portrait *Queen Elizabeth with a Sieve* by Quentin Metsys the Younger, c.1583. In Plutarch's *Triumph of Chastity*, Tuccia, one of the four Vestal virgins proved her purity by carrying water from the Tiber to the shrine of Vesta in a sieve.

scene, Lee caused Mr Hales, one of the Queen's musicians, to plead his case before the Queen in a song of Lee's own composing.[70]

> His golden locks, time hath to silver turned
> (Oh time too swift, and swiftness never ceasing),
> His youth 'gainst age, and age at youth have spurned;
> But spurned in vain, youth waneth by increasing.
> Beauty, strength, and youth, flowers fading bene,
> Duty, faith, and love, are roots and ever green.
>
> His helmet, now, shall make a hive for bees,
> And lover's songs shall turn to holy psalms:
> A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
> And feed on prayers, that are old age's alms.
> And so from court to cottage he departs,
> His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.
>
> And when he sadly sits in homely cell,
> He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,
> Blest be the hearts, that think his sovereign well,
> Cursed be the souls, that think to do her wrong.
> Goddess, vouchsafe this aged man his right,
> To be your beadsman now, that was your knight.

The verses expressed Lee's situation and devotion to the Queen exactly and were rich in imagery. The Crowned Pillar supporting an eglantine rose had long been a favourite device symbolising devotion to the Queen and was a frequently-used trope for Elizabeth. Leicester had used it as an *impresa* in 1559 as *Te Stante Virebo* -'With you standing, I shall flourish'.[71] The reference to a 'helmet [which] now shall make a hive for bees' would have been recognised by the *cognoscenti* as an image used in the popular Alciati's *Emblemata* and also used in Geoffrey Whitney's recently-published *Choice of Emblems.*[72] Lee addresses the Queen as Goddess; before this he had cast her as the fairest Queen but had hesitated to confer divinity upon her. At the end of the song, the three Vestal virgins offered Lee's costly gifts to the Queen, including a 'vaile of white' again betokening sacred virginity. Lee symbolically offered up his own armour at the foot of the crowned pillar,

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[70] T. Clayton, 'Sir Henry Lee's Farewell to the Court' - Text and Authorship, *English Literary Renaissance*, iv, 2 (Spring, 1974), pp. 268-75.
[71] CA MS, M6, f.56b. The device first appeared in Claude Paradin's *Devises Heroiques*, published in 1551 and expanded in 1557.
[72] Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata* (Augsburg, 1531) was republished in many popular editions in the sixteenth century; Geoffrey Whitney, *Choice of Emblems* (London, 1586) p. 138. RSTC. 25438.

relinquishing his right to fight and humbly beseeched the Queen to take the earl of Cumberland for her new Champion. Lee then donned the habit of a hermit, adopting the well-known image in Lull's *Ordre of Chyualry*.

In 1592, Lee returned to his new *persona* when Elizabeth and the Court came on progress to Woodstock from 18 to 23 September, after a long absence. During this stay, Elizabeth visited Lee's own home at Ditchley, four miles from Woodstock, and what Chambers calls 'the Ditchley entertainment' was staged over two days.[73] Despite the long-standing claims by owners of Ditchley that Elizabeth actually stayed there, Sir Thomas Heneage's accounts as Treasurer of the Chamber suggest that it is highly unlikely that the Queen did any more than dine there and see part of the entertainment. If the Queen was to reside at a house, it was standard practice for Simon Bowyer, Gentleman of the Chamber and a team of eight yeomen and grooms to spend eight days preparing her apartments, at a cost to the Chamber of £8 17s 4d.[74] This was done for Woodstock in September 1592. 'The said Simon Bowyer' was, however, only given two days 'for making ready a dinner house at Sr Henrie Leyes at Ditchley' at a cost of 39s 4d, with no mention of apartments being prepared. At the same time, Bowyer and his team were paid 39s 4d 'for the making ready a standing at Sr Henrie Leyes for the hearing of an oration for her Ma[jes]tie' and a similar amount for a standing for Woodstock. This confirms the view that the entertainment was held at the two locations.

The Ditchley entertainment was more involved than the brief narrative that followed Lee's retirement tilt, and both the text and the portrait of Elizabeth that was integral to the performance were rich in the imagery of her as Virgin and Divine Being. The theme of the entertainment was the struggle between Constancy and Inconstancy, and if it lacked the innovative narrative

[73] Unlike the earlier 1575 Woodstock entertainment, the principal part of the text remained only in manuscript until 1936. Some parts of it were included in *The Phoenix Nest* (1593) RSTC. 21516. The principal source is the Ditchley MS, (BL, Add. MS, 41499A) and Dillon's nineteenth century transcription. (BL Add. 41499B). Short extracts from the text also exist in the Ferrers MS transcribed by William Hamper, 1821, reproduced in Nicholls, *Progresses* and in Petyt MS, 538, XXXIII ff. 299-300. Text drawn from all three was first printed in Chambers, *Lee* (1936) and Wilson, *Entertainments*, pp. 119-42. Here I have quoted from Dillon and a new transcription by Gabriel Heaton for the new *Progresses ... of Queen Elizabeth I.*

[74] TNA, PRO, E351/541 f. 166v (Thomas Heneage's accounts).

and freshness of the 1575 Woodstock entertainment, it was full of riddles and allegorical references to amuse an older, wiser and perhaps more sedentary Queen. In many ways, it can be regarded as a sequel to the earlier entertainment and several hands appear to have contributed to the text. Richard Edes, an Oxford cleric associated with Lee, is named as the author of the specific dialogue between Constancy and Inconstancy, but the heart of the entertainment contains phrases reminiscent of those used by Lee in both his tournament texts and his letters. The subject matter on both days was intensely personal to Lee to the point of self-indulgence; he himself played a major role as the Old Knight and there is little doubt that he devised the piece. It tells us much about the relationship between Lee and his Queen that he saw an entertainment based largely on his own career as acceptable to Elizabeth and the Court.

On the first day, the Queen was led through a magic grove where knights had been turned into trees and their ladies into leaves through their inconstancy. She then came across an old knight, cast into an enchanted sleep through his disobedience to the Fairy Queen. Here, Lee, as the Old Knight, recalled the entertainment of 1575 when 'the fayrie queene the fairest queene saluted' and continued its tale. A principal feature in the tale of Hemetes the hermit had been the 'enchanted pictures', which hung around the hermit's cell. The Fairy Queen had commanded the old knight to keep the pictures all together, acting as their guardian in that place, 'euer to tarry neuer to depart'. But Lee, as the Old Knight 'whome in elder tyme she dearly loued' confesses that he too had been inconstant in his devotion;

> but loe unhappie I was ouertaken
> by fortune forst a straunger ladies thrall
> whom when I saw all former care forsaken
> to fynd her out I lost meeself & all
> through which neglect of dutie 'gan my fall.

Much of this was daringly autobiographical. Lee had long been estranged from his wife, and Lady Lee was dead by 1590. By then Lee had begun his long-term liaison with his mistress Anne Vavasour, originally one of the Queen's gentlewomen of the Chamber who had given birth to the earl of Oxford's son in the Maids' chamber at Court in 1581. It is not known when

her relationship with Lee began, but by 1590, Anne was a permanent fixture at Ditchley. She was probably not present for the Queen's visit.[75]

The narrative suggests that the pictures had been preserved from 1575 and magically transported to Ditchley. Little is known about the 1575 pictures, but a magnificent full-length portrait of Elizabeth by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger was commissioned by Lee around 1592, and its enigmatic nature suggests that it played a major role in the first day's entertainment. (*Fig. Eleven).* If other pictures were used, their association with Ditchley has long disappeared. Lee's dramatic presentation required a very large portrait as an integral part of the entertainment, to be visible to all the onlookers and to contain the amount of symbolism needed. The 'Ditchley portrait', the largest ever painted of Elizabeth, is oil on canvas, a relatively new medium for England in 1592, and was possibly influenced by the huge canvases prepared for pageants by the Flemish Chambers of Rhetoric. Gheeraerts, trained by his father Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder and the Flemish artist Lucas de Heere, had been a member of the chamber of St Luke in Antwerp. On Lee's instructions, Gheeraerts had placed riddles and puzzles in the portrait and as the text suggests, these were not easy to construe;

> Many there were that could no more but vewe them,
> Many that ouer curious nearer pried
> Manie would conster needes that neuer knewe them
> Some lookt, some lyked, some questioned, some aymed
> One asked them too who should not be denied.

Only the Queen, as 'Ladye or Goddesse', had sufficient power to interpret her own portrait and rescue her enchanted courtiers.

The puzzles in the portrait were many and were echoed in the text. Elizabeth, in a dress similar to the one she wore to the Thanksgiving celebrations after the Armada in 1588, descends upon a map of southern England, her feet alighting at Woodstock and Ditchley.[76] This was possibly a depiction of one of the new Sheldon tapestry maps, again showing Lee's innovative imagination. With gloves in one hand against the cold, and fan in

[75] For a full discussion of Lee's relationship with Anne Vavasour, see below chapter six.
[76] The sketch of the Thanksgiving celebrations by an unknown artist is now in the Royal Library, Windsor Castle and is similar to an engraving by William Rogers in the British Museum. The dress subsequently appeared in several portraits of the Queen, notably in Elizabeth in procession to Blackfriars in 1600 in the style of Peake.

Fig. 11

The Ditchley portrait of Elizabeth I

the other against the heat, the Queen dispels the 'darksom bandes' of stormy night and 'flying cloudes of vaine conceites' shown behind her, and *'coelumque, solumque, beauit'* - 'blesses both heaven and sun' as the sunshine breaks through.[77] Here Lee was making a direct reference to the contemporary identification of Elizabeth with the 'Woman Clothed by the Sun' in the Book of Revelations.[78] Helen Hackett has accurately noted the similarity to a ballad of 1587 which declared

> As Shyning Sunne recleeres the darkned Skye
> And foorth recalles eche thing, from shiv'ring Shrowds,
> So hath our Second Sunne, both farre and nye
> by brightening Beames, outcleered erronious Clouds.

The image was repeated in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* of 1590.

> In widest ocean she her throne does rear
> That over all the earth it may be seen
> At morning sun her beams dispredden clear.

Elizabeth wears a red rose, often the sign of the Virgin Mary; her dress is adorned with pearls, sapphires and especially garnets, the symbol of her own constancy. Unlike the knights and ladies whom she is to rescue, Elizabeth was true to her own motto, *Semper Eadam* - always the same. Elizabeth also wears one earring, fashioned as an armillary sphere, recalling the motif Lee portrayed on his sleeve in his portrait of 1568.

If the Queen found riddles in the portrait itself, there were more in the sonnet and in the *imprese* inscribed on it. The portrait itself was substantially cut down by subsequent owners, and the sonnet, designed to be enigmatic, is doubly so with many of its lines truncated. What can be read continues the image of the sun overcoming the thunder, and the fruitfulness of 'this ile [set in a] 'boundless ocean'. The Latin *imprese,* although damaged, are usually construed as 'She gives and does not expect', 'In giving back she increases' and particularly 'She can but does not take revenge'.

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[77] Camden records that Lee had earlier used *coelumque, solumque, beauit'* as a tournament *impresa*; Camden, *Remaines* (London, 1605), RSTC. 4521.

[78] The Book of Revelations 12, v. 1-2; Maurice Kyffin, 'The Blessedness of Brytaine', quoted in Hackett, *Virgin Mother,* p. 133; Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene,* Book II, canto 2, 40 (London, 1590).

Lee was an expert with *imprese,* and the last of the Latin mottoes gives a clue to the whole entertainment. Lee, while stressing his devotion to his Queen, had no real intention of relinquishing his illicit mistress who remained at Ditchley until Lee's death in 1611. Despite his misalliance, there is little evidence that Lee was in disgrace with the Queen in 1592; indeed the royal visit to Lee's home in Ditchley would argue against it. Lee made his fault the main import of the first day's entertainment, deliberately putting the Queen in a magnanimous and miraculous light. He made it clear that the Queen could have exacted revenge for his wrong-doing, and was therefore twice as glorious for disdaining to do so. He also pre-empted any adverse reaction by the Queen in claiming

> So kind is loue, then being once conceaued
> It trusts agayne although it wer deceaued.

By the evening of the first day's entertainment, the 'captive Ladies, captive Knights' had been freed by the quick wits of the 'Heavenlie Goddesse'; the portrait, as often happened in the Queen's progresses, remained *in situ* as a vivid memorial to an ephemeral event.

The second day's entertainment was again heavily autobiographical. Lee reverted to his 1575 *persona* of Loricus and a chaplain narrated what had happened to him since that date. It appeared that Loricus had

> consorted with coragious Gentlemen, manifesting inward joyes by outward justes, [giving] the yearly tribute of his dearest loue', [and spending] the florishe of his gladest dayes, crauing no rewarde els but that he might loue and might be knowne to loue. [At last] he retired his tyred lymmes ... in this Countrye ... where he kept a [verie] Court in his owne bosome.

Lee was quick to draw attention to 'the miserie of his bodie, whos roof was rough with the moss of gray hayers'. Exactly the same age as Elizabeth, Lee frequently contrasted his decrepitude with the perennial youth of the Queen. The chaplain was relating that Loricus was dying when, suddenly, his Page appeared with news that the Queen's presence had brought about his master's recovery, hence endowing Elizabeth with godlike-powers over death. On his recovery, Loricus presented a 'simple Legacie' to the Queen. Lee had learned an important lesson at Leicester's entertainment at Kenilworth in 1575; when the Lady of the Lake had attempted to give Elizabeth the castle

and all its lands, the Queen replied somewhat tersely that she thought she already owned it. Lee now bequeathed to Elizabeth, not Woodstock which she owned, nor Ditchley, which was his, but 'The Whole Manor of Love', ungeographically delineated, but with 'meadowes of greene thoughtes, pastures of feeding fancies, rivers of flowing fauers, orchards stored with apples, fishing for daintie kisses' and 'spanniells of kindenes'.

How far did these texts, presented to Elizabeth over the span of some twenty years, genuinely reflect Lee's attitude to the Queen? It is well to remember the circumstances in which they were conceived. The texts were not designed for publication or even for circulation and study over several years. Texts of entertainments that found a printer, such as Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth* or the earl of Hertford's 1591 Elvetham entertainment did so because their patrons wanted to circulate their political point as widely as possible, and often they did not accurately reflect what had occurred.[79] The 1575 text of Hemetes the Hermit was unique in that it was presented to the Queen in manuscript form at her specific request, and it was Gascoigne who sought to benefit from it, not Lee. The full text of Lee's 1592 Ditchley entertainment had to wait until 1936 to appear in print, and the majority of tournaments texts still remain in manuscript.

Texts designed for Court entertainment would usually have been performed once, for a quite specific audience and for a specific occasion and location.[80] They were topical; many references are lost to us now and their recovery only speculative. These texts do not rival Sidney's *Arcadia,* Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Shakespeare's plays, and laboured attempts to subject them to detailed literary criticism is to mistake their very ephemeral nature. Lee's message to the Queen throughout the texts was simply one of faithfulness, devotion and service. His private sentiments appear to be equally as straightforward. There is no indication that he ever corresponded with the Queen personally; he mentioned her often in his seventy private letters that do survive and in all but one, discussed below, the sentiments he

[79] George Gascoigne published 'The Princely pleasures at the courte at Kenilworth' (London, 1576). An unique copy of this was destroyed in 1879, but the text was reprinted in *The whole workes of George Gascoigne Esquire* (London, 1587).

[80] *Gorboduc*, first performed at the Inns of Court in 1562, was unusual in that it was subsequently performed at Court.

voiced echoed those in the literary texts. His attitude to the Queen was largely unchanging over some thirty years, and leaves little doubt that what he said in public genuinely echoed his private thoughts.

LEE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE QUEEN 1593 – 1603.

Despite the success of the 1592 visit, the Queen never returned to Woodstock. She did, however, order a major programme of modernisation to be carried out on the property from September 1593 until May 1595, and this was overseen by Lee. The building work was surveyed by a William Spicer, although Burghley decreed that Spicer would 'in noe sorte medle with the money'.[81] Much of the £800 laid out on the two-year programme was spent on the fashionable new plasterwork in the principal rooms and Privy Chamber, for which Spicer recruited local Oxford craftsmen, and even Lee's High Lodge was given a new hall at this time.[82] Although documentary evidence indicates that Lee was heavily involved in this work, the Queen's continued absence from Woodstock explains why he chose to spend more time at Court in London after 1595.

Many Elizabethan courtier gentlemen, having achieved a certain standing in their younger days at Court, later opted to devote more time to their own estates if the Queen would allow it. Lee reversed the practice, spending more time in London after his retirement and seeking a more lucrative Court position. Promotion was rare in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, but the deaths of two prominent office holders in the Queen's household created rare opportunities for advancement. The great pluralist Sir Thomas Heneage died on 17 October 1595, leaving his positions as Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber, Keeper of the Records at the Tower, Keeper of Waltham Forest, Vice Chamberlain and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster vacant. These attracted much speculation and lobbying among prospective contenders, and Lee's candidature was backed by Burghley and

[81] TNA, PRO, AO 1/2483/300 Roll 300 of Sir Henry Lee, Keeper of Woodstock House covering 24 Sept 1593 – 31 May 1595. See also TNA, PRO, E351/3363; Colvin, *King's Works,* IV. ii. p. 353.
[82] C. Gapper, 'Plasters and Plasterwork in city, court and country 1530-1640'(doctoral thesis, University of London, 1998).

Sir Robert Cecil. The gossip at Court caused contemporaries some amusement; Rowland Whyte, London agent for Sir Robert Sydney, brother of the late Sir Philip, wrote to his master at Brill on 19 October 1595 confirming Heneage's death and reporting that there were 'many great sutors' for his positions.[83] Sir Robert Cecil, he reported

> stands for the chancellorship of the duchye; [Sir John] Stanhope, [Sir Walter] Rawleigh, who is come in secret neare the Court ... [and] Sir Hen. Leigh wold be Vice-Chamberlain, and ... my Lord Essex desires Waltham forest. I doe not know who shall have the treasurership of the chamber.

The last position was rapidly filled by Stanhope, but the other positions remained vacant. On 27 December 1595, Whyte reported to Sydney that

> I was at Court this morning, where nothing is so much thought upon as dancing and playing. Some are there, hoping for preferment, as my Lord North and Sir Henry Leigh. They play at cards with the Queen, and yt is like to be all the honor that will fall unto them this yeare. [84]

On 19 July 1596 Sir Francis Knollys, Treasurer of the Household, died, and his son Sir William Knollys, rapidly complained to Cecil on 26 July 1596, that, despite his assiduous lobbying, the Queen had decided to award his father's position to the card-playing Lord North. [85] Rumour had it that she was minded to make Knollys Vice-Chamberlain and appoint 'Sir Harry Lea' to the position of Controller of the Household which had been vacant since 1590. Knollys protested that he would rather be Controller than Vice-Chamberlain, 'for as I desire to continue my father's place if it be possible, so will I ... shun to be Vice-Chamberlain'. In the event, North became Treasurer of the Household, Knollys became Controller and the office of Vice-Chamberlain remained vacant. In February 1598, Rowland Whyte again informed Robert Sydney in code that

> Sir Henry Leigh came to Court 7 days ago, and was private with 900 [Burghley] and 200 [Cecil]. I hear he is encouraged to stand to be Vice-Chamberlain. Lord Essex ... may not be against Sir Hen. Leigh. [86]

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[83] HMC de Lisle and Dudley, II p. 175; Collins, *Letters,* i. p. 175.
[84] HMC de Lisle and Dudley, II p. 205; Collins, *Letters*, i. p. 386; HMC Salis.V. p. 523. Lord North's household books often record the amounts that he lost to Elizabeth playing cards—'Lost at play with the Queen £32'—and he never failed to present her with a New Year's gift of £10 in gold in a silken purse; see F. Bushby, *Three men of the Tudor Times* (London,1911), p. 105.
[85] HMC Salis. VI pp. 287-288.
[86] HMC de Lisle and Dudley, II pp.321-22; Collins, *Letters,* ii. p. 89

Once again, Lee was destined to be disappointed - the office of Vice-Chamberlain continued vacant for another three years when it was filled by Stanhope. Although it is interesting to see what patronage Lee enjoyed, one wonders whether, at sixty-five, his candidature was serious. The work could be onerous, but the previous two Vice-Chamberlains, Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Thomas Heneage, had enjoyed considerable royal favour to the point of friendship. The position guaranteed access to the Queen in the Privy Chamber; it carried a seat on the Privy Council and a prospect of considerable financial gain - all things attractive to Lee. Lee's efforts to secure a position had necessitated greater attendance at Court; in 1598, he was named at the head of a list of '58 principal Gentlemen of value and service that have ben and are usually in Court'.[87] He also headed a similar list of the same date for Buckinghamshire, of 'principal gentlemen that dwell usually in their contreis'.

Lee's increased attendance brought him into contact with the brightest star in the late Elizabethan Court, Robert Devereux, earl of Essex. Essex, stepson to Lee's long-time friend, the late earl of Leicester, had made his first appearance on the tournament field in 1586, and dominated the Accession Day tournaments after 1590. In many ways Essex, high in royal favour, filled the place left in Lee's affections by the death of Sir Philip Sidney, as the chivalric hero of the tournament and a young man of considerable promise. Lee followed Essex's military career closely, and his letters to him reveal a personal warmth. Lee also continued his long friendship with Lord Burghley, and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, notwithstanding a degree of rivalry between Cecil and Essex. In 1596, Burghley proposed Lee as a member of the Order of the Garter, and although Lee received only Burghley's vote that year, he received nine out of the ten votes of nobles in the Order in 1597.[88] The Knights of the Garter might elect a candidate to join their ranks, but the Queen had the last word on the matter and could use her veto. The ever-busy Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sydney on 27 April 1597 that

[87] TNA, PRO, SP12/269 f. 46; Penry Williams, 'Court and Polity under Elizabeth I', in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), pp. 372-375.

> there were 5 knights of the Order made, the Duke of Wurtemberg, Lord Hunsdon, Lord Montjoy, Lord Th. Howard and Sir Ha. Leigh. Lord Essex, as I have heard, was earnest with his companions for the election of Sir H. Leigh; then had much ado to bring the Queen to consent. [89]

Lee was undoubtedly a gentleman, a knight and a royal servant of long-standing, but membership of the oldest chivalric Order in Christendom was limited to twenty-four and rarely included men who had neither noble blood nor had been ennobled.[90] The Queen allowed few honours in the last decade of her reign, and with a keen sense of social precedence, was only reluctantly persuaded to award Lee this highest chivalric accolade. Frances Yates makes the salient point that Elizabeth, at least in the early years of her reign, used membership of the Order to bind members of the nobility to her.[91] Clearly, in the Queen's eyes, by 1597 there was very little more to be gained from appointing Lee to the honour.

Lee's election to the ranks of the Garter Knights elevated his standing high above other courtier gentlemen of his time and, at sixty-four, he made the most of the occasion. The annual St. George's Day ceremonies had developed into a great public spectacle, with the 'splendid cavalcade' of the new knights riding to Windsor for the feast on 22 April, with the investiture of the new Knights in St. George's chapel and the procession of the Queen and her Knights around the Castle courtyard on 23 April. Sir Henry Lee rode from Charing Cross to Windsor with a train of two hundred retainers, all dressed in blue, and was duly invested on 23 April. *(Fig.Twelve)*. This was the pinnacle of his chivalric career, and it was a matter of great personal regret to him that his health, which made him leave Windsor immediately after the investiture, allowed him to attend so few of the feasts after 1600.

Lee was also an observer of the somewhat turbulent relationship between Essex and the Queen. Essex, the royal favourite and a man of great ambition, was becoming increasingly frustrated with his lack of military success against Spain and what he saw as his deteriorating influence over

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[88] BL, Add. MS, 36768, (Register of the Order of the Garter).
[89] HMC de Lisle and Dudley, II p. 271; Collins, *Letters*, ii. pp. 45-6.
[90] One of the few was Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor of England, who was made a Knight of the Garter in 1588.
[91] F. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London, 1972), p. 8.

Fig. 12

Sir Henry Lee in Garter robes by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

Elizabeth in the Council. In a famously stormy debate in the Council Chamber in July 1598, Essex turned his back upon the Queen, provoking her to box his ears. He reached for his sword in the royal presence, only to be held back by Lord Howard, and left the room after forcibly speaking his mind. Essex acrimoniously withdrew from Court, and Lee was among the many who wrote to him on this occasion.

Letters often reveal more about the writer than the subject, and if the spotlight is turned away from Essex and his quarrel, what Lee wrote tells us much about his own attitude to the Queen.[92] It is therefore worth looking at Lee's letter of August 1598 as a whole. *(See Appendix Six)*. It is interesting to compare it with the more famous missive to Essex from the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Egerton.[93] Egerton was a lawyer and argued like one; he reminded the earl that he was failing in his

> indissoluble dutie which you owe to your most gratious soveraigne, a dutie imposed upon you not by nature and policie only but by religious and sacred bond.

He quoted advice from Seneca, and pointedly commented that 'the difficultie, my good Lord, is to conquer yourself'.

Lee's letter to Essex is more personal and reveals greater intuition in handling both an intransigent peer and a Tudor monarch. He acknowledges, like Egerton, that Essex's 'honor is more deare unto you than yor lif', but clearly understands the Queen both in her body politic and body natural. He reminds Essex that

> she is your sovereigne, with whom you may not treate upon equall conditions ... consider ... how great she is with whome you deal, how willing, with how little yielding, to be conquered, what advantage [you have] by yielding when you are wronged.

Lee here demonstrates a keen knowledge of the female psyche. Essex had formerly castigated the Queen's female qualities in government, now Lee is subtly showing him how to play on them.[94] Lee's arguments are varied; Essex was ambitious for Court preferment and Lee reminds him, after the

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[92] BL, Add. MS, 48126 f. 97.
[93] BL, Add. MS, 48126 ff. 99-99v.
[94] In 1597, Essex had told the French ambassador de Maisse that he 'laboured under two things at Court, delay and inconstancy, which proceeded chiefly from the sex of the Queen'; *A journal of all that*

recent death of Burghley on 4 August, 'what opportunities [the Queen's] late loss and the State's present necessity may give you'. Lee's closing sentence again shows his understanding of Elizabeth as a woman when he writes 'whatsoever peace you make, use no means but yourself, w[hi]ch will be ... more acceptable to her'. This is one of the longest and the most personal of Lee's letters and demonstrates both considerable affection for Essex and an appreciation of his damaged pride. It is also one of the few surviving letter where Lee presumes to give any kind of advice.

In his role as mediator, Lee also wrote to Cecil on 27 August 1598, asking for his 'love and friendship to a man of more worth [Essex]: now is the time for you to show and he to accept'.[95] Lee had already informed Essex how Cecil had 'made reporte of your lordships good service in counsel', and was keen for both men to 'leave circumstances apart'. Regrettably, unlike Essex's spirited reply to Egerton, no letter to Lee has survived.[96] It was, however, Essex's physical weakness rather than his political arguments that occasioned a reconciliation. In September 1598, Essex succumbed to a bout of fever and Elizabeth seized the opportunity more as a woman than as a monarch. She sent her own physician to tend her turbulent favourite and Essex returned to Council on 10 September, having an audience with the Queen two days later.

In 1600, Lee himself was driven to display an opinion of the Queen far removed from his usual deference. The Queen's insistence on a royal progress that summer had been unpopular with many members of the Court and Lee wrote irascibly to Cecil on 13 June, complaining that

> her Majesty threatyns a progress, and her comyng to my houses ... I wolde be most proud as oft before tyme, if my fortune answered my desire, or part of her hyghness many promises [had been] performed ... my estat withowt my undoyinge cann not bere yt, my contynionce in her Cowrt has bin long, my charge grete, my lands sowld and debts not small, how this wyll agree with the entertaining of such a prynce, y[ou]r wisdom can best judge. [97]

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was accomplished by M. de Maisse, Ambassador in England, trans. by G.B. Harrison and R.A. Jones (London, 1931), p. 115.

[95] Cecil MS, 63.70. (HMC Salis. VIII p. 320).

[96] T. Birch, *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1581 till her death* (2 vols., London, 1754). ii. pp. 384-387.

[97] Cecil MS, 80.24. (HMC Salis. X p. 180).

Although Lee was not alone in attempting to avoid the burden of a royal visit, the letter is very uncharacteristic, especially since Woodstock was the Queen's own property. At the time, Lee was heavily in debt through his building programme at Ditchley and Quarrendon, and had failed to obtain the lucrative position of Vice-Chamberlain at Court, the very office which was responsible for royal progresses. Lee was sixty-seven, and was also suffering badly from gout that year, as his other letters testify. The letter appears to reflect more a momentary fit of pique than a considered opinion, but Lee escaped lightly. The Queen went elsewhere on progress, and Rowland Whyte informed Sir Robert Sydney from Oatlands on 30 August 1600 that

> this gracious souverayne of ours ... meanes to kill many stags and buckes er she remove from these hunting cowntreis. Her body endures more travel than they can that attend her.[98]

Lee had warned Essex in his letter of August 1598, that if he caused the Queen 'to forget her powers and yield in her affection to that w[hi]ch she is unwilling to doe, your peace cannot be without a matter of newe difference, in that she will hardlie forget to what unequal conditions you brought her'. [99] Lee's advice proved percipient. Essex failed to secure the late Lord Burghley's Mastership of the Court of Wards, and his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and his military career in 1599 was dogged with disaster. When he deserted his command in Ireland and burst into the Queen's chamber at Nonsuch Palace on 28 September 1599, his fall was imminent. Later the same day, Essex was arrested, and although the terms of his confinement were eased in the succeeding months, he had lost the Queen's favour. Denied access to Elizabeth and facing financial ruin, Essex and his group of followers embarked on an attempt to raise London to his support on 8 February 1601. Essex was arrested, tried for treason on 19 February and executed on Tower Green on 25 February 1601. Through these unfortunate eighteen months, no letter from Lee to Essex survives, if one was ever written, and Lee was more taken up with his unsuccessful attempts to keep his own unfortunate cousin, Thomas Lee, out of trouble.[100]

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[98] HMC de Lisle and Dudley ii; Collins, *Letters,* iv. p. 280.
[99] BL, Add. MS, 48126 f. 97.
[100] See below chapter six.

Lee's relationship with the Queen in her last years appeared more affected by his own poor health than by any association with Essex. He seldom came to Court, and only referred to Elizabeth's passing in March 1603 in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, describing his 'grieved and wandering spirits ... since the calling from us of our most dread and gracious sovereign'.[101] The Queen's Personal Champion, always at pains to stress her youthfulness compared to his twisted old age, was to outlive his sovereign by some eight years.

CONCLUSION.

Sir Henry Lee, like Heneage and Buckhurst, was what Steven May terms 'a working royal servant' as opposed to the largely ornamental courtiership practised by Edward Dyer and the earl of Oxford.[102] He was not a royal favourite in the sense that Leicester, Essex or Hatton were; he was a courtier gentleman who enjoyed the Queen's favour, especially in the decade from 1570 to 1580. After 1580, he fell more into the conventional category of having achieved a position in royal service, and being expected to remain there with no more pecuniary favours. The substantial financial benefits he received in the early years had largely ceased by 1580, and by 1600 Lee was in no doubt that his service had cost him more than he had gained. He was aware that, like many of the Queen's servants, he could ruin himself in the Queen's service without recompense. Despite his attempts to secure the Vice-Chamberlainship somewhat late in life, Lee appears to have been well-satisfied with his roles at Woodstock and at the Armoury, which he administered personally and with some relish. He was unique in that he personally created a role for himself as the Queen's tournament Champion, and decided how best to serve his Queen, in positions he found conducive.

In his public relationship with Elizabeth, Lee comfortably subscribed to the Petrarchean and Platonic trope of the constant lover who remained ever faithful although he loved in vain. In his 1575 Woodstock entertainment, rejection of Loricus by his Lady had already been scripted in. Within the

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[101] Cecil MS, 99.56 (HMC Salis. XV p. 9) (Lee to Cecil 27 March 1603).
[102] S. May, *The English Courtier Poets: the poems and their contexts* (Columbia, 1999), p. 63.

concept of courtly love, the Queen was the unattainable mistress, goddess and saint; obedience and devotion to such a one could allow proud men to accept the demands and control of a female monarch while maintaining their self-respect in a patriarchal society.[103] The relationship between male courtiers and the Queen was multi-layered and complex. John Guy has defined the 'essence of Elizabethan politics' when he wrote that 'to succeed at Court, politicians had to pretend to be in love with the Queen'.[104] While this is a somewhat cynical view, many men at Court fundamentally saw the Queen as a female in need of masculine advice and guidance. There were few, like Burghley or Cecil who were prepared to accept her as a female employer; some like Egerton found it easier to see her as the monarch *per se*. Lee, no politician and one of the least demanding of her courtiers, could also see her essentially as a woman and the intuition he reveals in his advice to Essex in 1598 is an indication of Lee's age and maturity. Given how little evidence there is of Lee enjoying female company before his relationship with Anne Vavasour, it might also be indicative of the education he himself had been receiving since 1590.

In private, Lee was an accomplished courtier to whom the Queen was accustomed and with whom the Queen had grown old. They were both born in 1533, and shared many of the inherent prejudices, manners, memories and habits of an earlier age. Decades of service created a comfortable if undemanding relationship between them which availed Lee little financially, but ensured he was welcome to join the Queen at cards. Lee might declare himself in public as the knight 'whome in elder tyme she dearly loued'; in fact it was his sheer longevity that made him an agreeable companion to the Queen as they mutually moved towards their seventh decade. Elizabeth enjoyed the company of young men around her, but still remained more comfortable with the families she knew well. Elizabeth's lovers could and did age; she would remain ever young.

> Times yong howres attend her still
> And her Eyes and Cheekes do fill
> With fresh youth and beautie;

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[103] Hackett, *Virgin Mother,* p. 79.
[104] J. Guy, 'The 1590s: The second reign of Elizabeth I?' in J. Guy. ed., *The reign of Elizabeth: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 3.

All her louers olde do growe
But their hartes they do not so
In their Loue and duty. [105]

In Lee's retirement, the Queen would play cards with him, accept his company, deny him any promotion and begrudge his appointment to the Order of the Garter. It was no wonder that he grew uncharacteristically tetchy when threatened with yet another royal visit. But the best testimony to Lee's private attitude to the Queen comes from his 1598 letter to Essex, where he unerringly credits Elizabeth not only with the greatness of a Queen but with the human qualities of a woman.

How successful, therefore, was Lee? What ultimately set Lee apart from other courtier gentlemen of his status was his election to the Order of the Garter in 1597 – an accolade that came more from the acclaim of the peers of the realm than from a reluctant Queen. Financially, he benefited little from royal service; he received no titles and his most famous role was self-made. His experience was not untypical of others who made their careers in royal service; his loyalty and uncomplaining devotion to his royal mistress lasted longer than most. Perhaps Lee, in his *alter ego* as Loricus had already grasped the reality of the situation when he entertained Elizabeth in 1575. Hemetes gives 'this advyse ... Loricus, thy end wilbe reward, at least most reputation, with noblest women.' The message was clear: Lee, in serving his mistress, must appreciate that service was its own reward. His recompense was honour and reputation, but little else.

[105] Francis Davison, 'To Cynthia', *A poetical Rhapsody* (London, 1602), p. 119. RSTC. 6373. The verses were sung at the 'shew on horseback' presented by the earl of Cumberland, Mayday 1601 or 1602.

CHAPTER FOUR

MASTER OF THE ARMOURY 1580-1611

In June 1580, Sir Henry Lee received his patent as Master of the Armoury following the death of Sir George Howard, and he held this position until 1611. As with his stewardship at Woodstock, Lee chose to exercise his authority in practical terms, accepting the responsibilities of an office which, in other hands, could have become merely ceremonial. Although this gave him wide powers over armour provisions throughout the country, he also inherited major and often intransigent problems that typified crown service in late Elizabethan England. Many crown officials with whom he dealt were poorly paid, and relied on entrenched corruption and peculation to supplement their wages. The London guilds had vested interests, and entertained high expectations of royal servants associated with their trade. Above all, Lee experienced the Queen's notorious reluctance to spend money on the upkeep and development of her armoury, at a time when not only the nature of warfare was fundamentally changing in Europe, but when England was actively engaged in conflict.

THE WORK OF THE ARMOURY.

The Office of the Armoury and the Ordnance Office had both evolved in the early fifteenth century from the Privy Wardrobe, with accommodation in the Tower of London. The first Master of the Ordnance was appointed in 1414, and an official solely responsible for the armour appeared in 1423. It was not until 1462 that the title of Master of the King's Armoury was used, but the position rose in importance when Henry VIII established the royal armoury workshops at Greenwich in 1515. Under the Tudor monarchs, men who had distinguished themselves in warfare and in tournaments were usually appointed to the office. Sir Richard Guildford, who held the post from 1485 until 1506, and his son and successor Sir Edward Guildford were both responsible for the military logistics of provisioning wars against France, and Sir Edward acted as Master of Ceremonies for Henry VIII's tournaments. Sir John Dudley, soldier, admiral, expert tilter and later Duke of Northumberland, was Master from 1533 to 1544 and Sir George Howard, a veteran jouster with military experience in France and Scotland held the position from 1559 until

his death around 1580.[1] Sir Henry Lee, with both military and tournament experience, admirably fitted the career profile of his predecessors.

The Master of the Armoury was responsible for maintaining stores of armour and small weapons in the south of England, sufficient to equip an army both for the growing threat of invasion and for service abroad. The premier southern arsenal was the Tower of London, and Lee's own Exchequer accounts described the task as

> yssuing and defreyinge ... in provyson of Armes, for kepinge and repayringe the armoure and other habiliamentes remayninge in the Severall stores within the Tower of London, ... Hampton court, the castle of Windsore and at Portsmouth ... repayring of arms sent to her Ma[jes]ties shippes ... and repayring the Armoury made at Grenewyche.[2]

The Master, who had his main office in the White Tower, was assisted by a deputy who did the day-to-day administration. There was a clerk of the Armoury and some eighteen armourers at the Tower, while the smaller armouries had their own keepers. The office carried an Exchequer fee, with additional payments for the armoury at Greenwich and rents for various tenements adjacent to the Tower.[3] The Master had accommodation near the Tower and Lee made regular visits to London, although it is unclear how much of his time was spent in the Armoury. Little actual armour was made at the Tower, and the armourers were mainly occupied in maintaining both the existing stores and the rich tournament armour deposited there by the monarch and various noblemen.

Lee was thorough in the performance of his duties as Master; the Armoury accounts from May 1580 were well-kept for the first time in the reign and rendered each Michaelmas and Easter. They record over a period from 1 May 1580 to 31 December 1610 the issuing of arms and personal armour to the army

> corseletts, jackes of plate, morryons & other sortes of Armour ... the provysion of swordes with gardes and hangers and carradge therof by

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[1] Sir George Howard owned one of the expensive tilting armours in the Almain Armourers' Album. Sir Thomas Darcy was Master of the Armoury from 1544 to 1553, followed by Sir Richard Southwell, who was persuaded to relinquish the position in 1559.

[2] TNA, PRO, E 351/2963 iii, 1580-1601 and iv,1601/2-1610. Also TNA, PRO, AO1/2299/3; AO1/2299/4. Hull, a safe distance from the Border, served as premier arsenal for the North of England.

[3] BL, Harleian MS, f. 7457.

land and sea for furnishinge of the forces in Ireland late servinge her highness there at severall tymes. [4]

Materials for repairing and cleaning armour at the Tower were provided 'nyppers, piches, foundheaded nayles, mollheaded nayles, coffer buckles, greate buckles, mydle buckles, small buckles, oyle'.[5] The Armoury also furnished certain articles for use in the Court tournaments, such as tilt staves, vamplates, coronels and some swords.

The principal part of the equipment the Armoury supplied to the common soldiers, other than that purchased abroad, was produced by the Armourers' Company in London, and the Master of the Armoury had a close working relationship with the Company. The Armourers' Company, while not being among the big twelve city companies entitled to provide a Lord Mayor, had a long and illustrious history. Dating from at least the beginning of the fourteenth century, it received its royal charter in 1453 and soon came to control the manufacture of the ordinary armour used in the country from that date.[6] Ian Archer defines the Company as existing to exercise 'the maximum control over their trade, the elimination of outside interference and the maximization of employment prospects for members'.[7] As Master of the Armoury, Lee found himself expected to endorse the Armourers' Company's petitions to Parliament, protect their rights and privileges as outlined in their Ordinances and direct lucrative contracts in their direction.[8]

The Master of the Armoury also had jurisdiction over the Almain Armourers in the royal workshops at Greenwich. Until 1515, high-quality field and tilt armour had traditionally been imported from the Continent. In that year, Henry VIII invited nine German and Flemish craftsmen to set up armour production at Greenwich under the Master Workman Martin van Royne, as his answer to the *Hofplattnerei* of Emperor Maximilian and the armour mill of

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[4] TNA, PRO, E351/2963. See glossary for technical terms and for definitions of items of armour.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Unfortunately little of it can be positively identified today before the seventeenth century. See A. Williams & A. de Reuck, *The Royal Armoury at Greenwich 1515-1649* (Leeds, 1995), p. 26.
[7] I. Archer, 'The London Lobbies in the Later Sixteenth Century', *HJ.*, xxxi, i (1988), p. 19.
[8] Lee obviously did the job to the Company's satisfaction, as the close connection still continues today. Lee's third armour is preserved in the Armourers' Hall, as is the locking gauntlet of his second armour. The Gheeraerts portrait of Lee in Garter robes hangs in their drawing room, besides the De Critz portrait of Anne Vavasour. It may be that the activities of Viscount Dillon, himself made an honorary member of the Armourers' Company in 1905, ensured that Sir Henry Lee's memory would remain evergreen at their Hall at 81, Coleman Street, London. *(Fig. 13).*

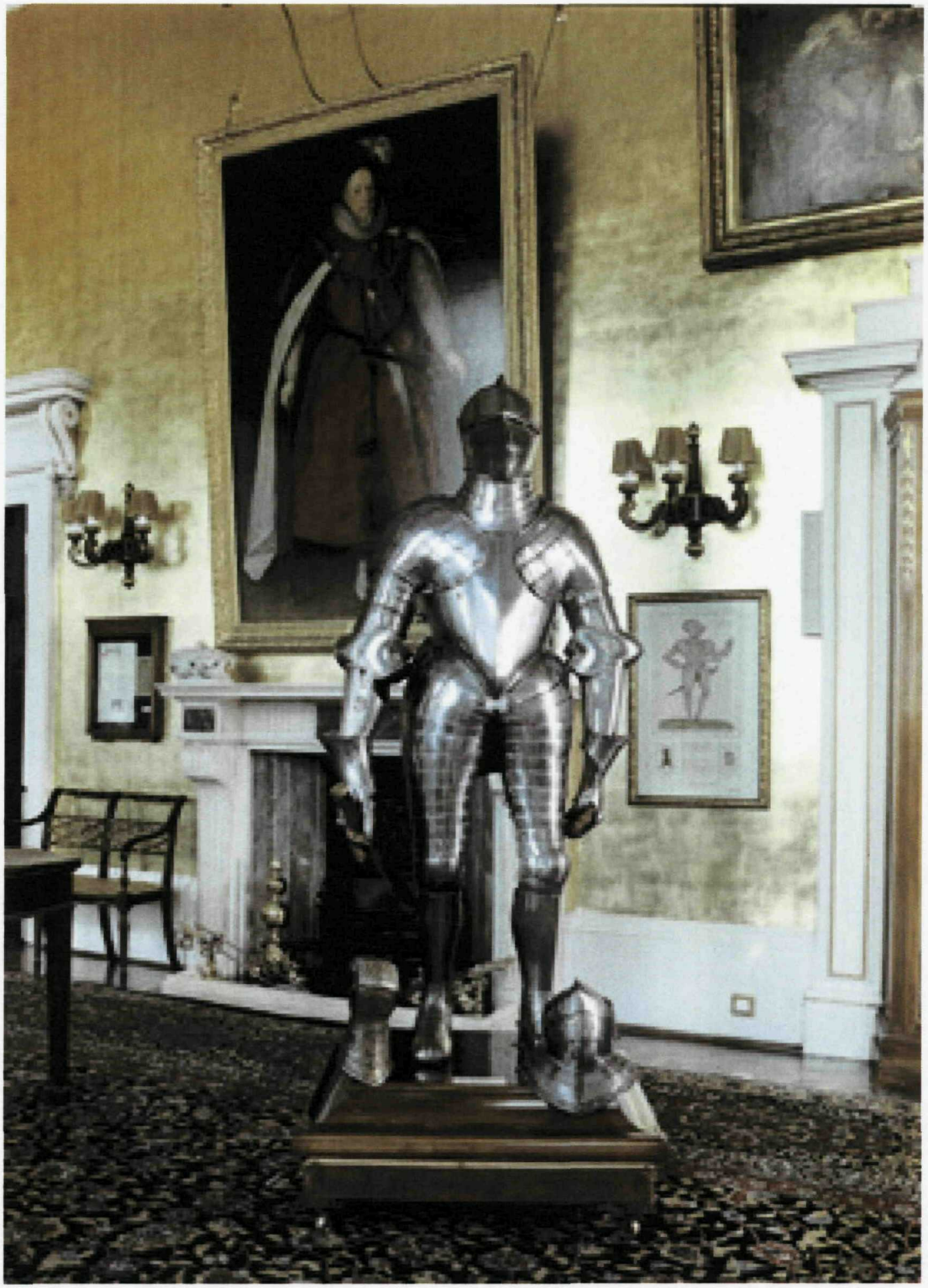

Fig. 13

Lee memorabilia at the Armourers and Brasiers Hall, London

James IV at Linlithgow. The Greenwich workshops were set up initially to produce fine armour for the King; later, any courtier who had both a royal licence and the money could commission a suit of armour from them.[9] By custom, there were usually twenty two workmen at the Greenwich workshops under a Master Workman – hammermen, millmen, locksmiths, labourers and one poorly-paid gilder, whose use of mercury in the gilding process inevitably rendered his life nasty and short.[10] The Armourers' Company had shown considerable resentment of the profitable royal patronage given to the technologically more advanced and better-paid foreigners, and locating the workshops at Greenwich had been an attempt to put the Almains beyond the jurisdiction of the London guilds.[11] The two groups, however, soon began to work in reasonable harmony, and the Armourers' Company admitted 'forren' workmen into their brotherhood.

By Elizabeth's reign, English names were appearing on the Almain payroll; the third Master Workman was the Englishman John Kelte (1567-76). Lee worked with Master Workman Jacobe Halder (1576-1608), who was German. Halder was first recorded as a hammerman at Greenwich in 13 July 1559, and the Register of the Armourers' Company records that in 4 August 1561 'Jacobe Halder, servant unto the quenes maiestie dwellinge at greneche was sworn a brother with vs in this haull'.[12] Halder had a good relationship with Lee; he made the garniture for Lee's first armour and the whole of his second and third armours. The costly suit of armour Lee gave to the young Prince Henry around 1606 also has the hallmarks of Halder's workmanship. As Master of the Armoury, Lee had lodgings at Greenwich, and was responsible for the armour stored in the Great Gallery and Green Gallery off the tiltyard at the Royal Palace there.

Whereas a certain amount of ceremonial attendance was required from the Master of the Armoury, a less pleasant duty was accompanying the axe

[9] There is little evidence that Greenwich ever made armour for the army.
[10] Williams and de Reuck, *Royal Armoury,* p. 28 gives the names of the Master Workmen from 1515 to the dissolution of the Royal Armoury in 1649. Examples of names of Greenwich workmen and their wages are to be found in Royal Armouries Tower of London (RATL) RAR 0-244.
[11] The Company frequently petitioned the Crown for protection for the home market. See C. Blair, 'The Armourers' Parliamentary Bill of 1581', *Journal of Arms and Armour Society,* xii (1986), pp. 20-53.
[12] G[uildhall] L[ibrary] MS, 12,079 i, v.45.

when it left the confines of the Tower of London, principally for executions on Tower Hill. Lee had already performed this duty *ex officio* in 1572; on 2 June, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk was executed on Tower Hill, and Norfolk's cousin Sir George Howard, then Master of the Armoury, was noticeable by his absence on that occasion. It is not known why Lee was deputizing for him, but his presence was not unwelcome. John Strype relates that, on the scaffold, Norfolk whispered some message into Lee's ear and 'so with Sir Henry Lee staying him by the left arm', knelt and asked the Queen's forgiveness.[13] At the time Lee exercised no office at the Tower of London and no relationship between England's premier duke and Lee is recorded, save the fact that Norfolk, Lee and Sir George Howard were all notable jousters. As Norfolk had specifically requested the support of his good friend and old tutor John Foxe, the martyrologist, Lee's presence might also suggest a personal friendship.

When Lee became Master of the Armoury himself, he was again called upon to accompany the axe for the execution of Edmund Campion. In 1580, Campion came with his brother Jesuit Robert Parsons on a mission to England; he had been arrested in July 1581 and was eventually sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 1 December 1581. Such was the reputation of Campion, who was subsequently canonised, that every detail of his execution was noted, including the presence of Sir Francis Knollys, Lord Howard and Sir Henry Lee as official witnesses.[14] If Lee was present at other executions, it was not recorded.

LEE'S INITIAL PROBLEMS 1580-1587.

When Sir Henry Lee received his patent as Master of the Armoury on 9 June 1580, it is clear that he found matters in some disarray.[15] He was not

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[13] Strype, *Annals of the Reformation,* ii. (2) p. 461; William Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Elizabeth, late Queen of England, Annales Rerum Gestarum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnate Elizabetha* (London, 1615), p. 178, Wing C362.

[14] Thomas Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iestuite* (London, 1582) pp. 8-9, RSTC. 4537; R. Simpson, *Edmund Campion, a biography* (London, 1867).

[15] C.J. Ffoulkes, *An Inventory of the Armouries of the Tower* (London, 1917), i. p. 46. It is unclear precisely when Lee took over as Master of the Armoury at the Tower of London. The exact date of Sir George Howard's death is not known but a privy seal docquet book records both a last payment to him as Master of the Armoury in May 1580 and the appointment of Sir Henry Lee in the following month. A warrant had been issued to Lee on 7 July 1578 for the repair of houses near the Tower held by him

included in the commission under Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, to review the state of the Armoury on 26 August 1580, but wrote an undated letter to Burghley from his Savoy lodgings on 1 November, presumably in 1580 voicing his disquiet at the state of things. He had, he wrote,

> come hith[er] to the towre to know your plesuer and atende your ... offyce of the armoury of w[hi]ch as yet I have reseved no charge ... [He had found] many a hande prancke played by shuche as have bene longe suffered synce the dethe of Sir George Howwarde yea and synce my going in to the contry, as conveying & carrying owt of the tower shuche furnyture ... as they myght wth less susspysyon carry.[16]

Despite such habitual pilfering, Lee assured Burghley that

> wth your lordships goode helpe [it] may easyly be corrected and altogether amended and thoffyce brought to as good if not a better order then ever heretofore.

Lee was destined to be disappointed; fundamental problems existed at the Tower which proved to be insoluble throughout his long period in office.

The most intransigent problem facing Lee was the close association of the Armoury with the Office of Ordnance. Lee's responsibilities, as Master of the Armoury, were quite distinct from those of the Master of the Ordnance, Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick. Lee's department handled the small arms and armour, whereas the remit of the Ordnance covered a wide range of materials from the heavy ordnance from which it took its name to gunpowder, firearms and even buckets and shovels for military use. The yearly regular allowance for the Armoury was only £400 a year, compared to the £6000 a year allowed to the Ordnance office, but the development of new weapons created a grey area of administration between them. The two departments shared the same accommodation at the Tower, and Lee soon discovered that whereas he enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy as Lieutenant at Woodstock, this was not the case at the Armoury.

'as Master', see Chambers, *Lee,* p. 109. The book, *A View of Valyaunce* was dedicated to 'Sir Henry Lee, Knight, Master of the Armourie' by Thomas Newton, 20 June 1580. RSTC. 21469.

[16] RATL. 0-99. 'Furniture' usually referred to articles of armour, but in this case it was used generically, and could have referred to almost any article in the Tower armouries. This was the only letter of Lee's to remain at Ditchley until 1932, and as there is no evidence that Lee ever retained copies of his letters, one wonders whether it was ever sent.

The major problem was that Ordnance office was notorious for peculation and corruption throughout Elizabeth's reign and was manned by individuals prepared to put their own interests before loyalty to commonweal or monarch.[17] It was far from unique in this, and many of its problems were inherent in late Tudor government administration.[18] The official salaries of most crown officials were poor and there was a contemporary expectation that a substantial proportion of one's wages would come from the perquisites of the job – in the case of the Ordnance office, profiteering from contracts, pilfering of military equipment and falsification of the records. The opportunities for peculation in the Ordnance increased in time of war when new contracts for a vast array of war materials were being granted and equipment was delivered to a variety of stores in the Tower and other arsenals. Many minor government servants held their positions for life, and were exceedingly difficult to remove, even when corruption was proved. Reversionary leases also existed on many positions in the Ordnance, making new appointments very difficult. If leading crown officials like Lee were not guilty of peculation themselves, few of them were equipped to prevent it; the Queen often kept major offices untenanted for several years and day-to-day administration was usually delegated to a deputy.[19] Roger Ashley correctly points out that, while there were technical experts such as gunners and armourers at the Tower, the principal crown officials, as elsewhere, were gentlemen amateurs with little training, least of all in accountancy.

When Lee became Master in 1580, a major conspiracy to defraud had just been uncovered at the Tower. The principal malefactor was one William Painter who, from 1560 to 1581, was not only Clerk of the Ordnance but Clerk of the Armoury as well. Painter was superbly placed for financial embezzlement, being responsible for issuing supplies from the various stores at the Tower and listing the return of unused items. He also compiled the

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[17] R. Ashley, 'Getting and Spending : Corruption in the Elizabethan Ordnance', *History Today, xl* (Nov. 1990), pp. 47-55; R. Ashley, 'War in the Ordnance Office: the Essex connection and Sir John Davis', *B[ulletin of the] I[nstitute of]H[istorical] R[esearch]*, lxvii, 164 (Oct.1994), pp. 337-345.

[18] See also G. Elton, 'The Elizabethan Exchequer: War in the Receipt', in S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C.H. Williams, eds., *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays presented to Sir John Neale* (London, 1961), pp. 213-249; J.D.Alsop, 'Government, Finance and the Community of the Exchequer', in C. Haigh, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, 1984), pp. 101-125.

[19] There was no Master of the Ordnance between Warwick's death in 1590 and the appointment of Essex in 1597, key years in Lee's Mastership of the Armoury.

permanent books of accounts, and Richard Stewart rightly points out that 'the very complexity of the supply process and overlapping systems of indentures, ledger books and official responsibilities created loopholes for the clever and industrious cheat'.[20] Investigations in 1579 revealed that William Painter had been using his dual clerkship to defraud the Queen ever since 1560 in collaboration with the Surveyor of the Ordnance. Such highly placed corruption over a long period of time affected not only the Ordnance, but also the condition of the Armoury as Lee inherited it and gives a clear context for Lee's letter to Burghley in 1580.

The conspiracy appeared to be well-known in the Tower, but an anonymous letter Burghley received in June 1578 from an employee in the Ordnance suggests that corruption was so entrenched that workers there feared to speak out.[21] The writer, while outlining

> a way the abuses of the affair of th'ordnance may be found out ... [had] sought all the means possible to refforme these abuses but I know not what course to take for indangeringe my selfe. For ... if any suspytio[n] should growe unto me ... I should surely be murthered wher I goe.

He named the chief culprits as being 'the Clerke', William Painter and John Powell, the Surveyor with the connivance of the Lieutenant of the Ordnance, and the scheme he proposed for discovering the miscreants clearly showed an intimate working knowledge of the department. Burghley obviously found the scheme both believable and workable, as a footnote appended to the letter states that 'this course was accordingly taken by the Lord Treasurer'. Charges of misappropriation were finally brought against Painter in 1581 and he was removed at least from his clerkship of the Armoury. The Council attempted reform with a 'List of Orders for the Ordnance' published in 1584, but the case against Painter and Powell continued until 1587, when it threatened to engulf the Master of the Ordnance, Ambrose Dudley, earl of

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[20] R.W Stewart, *The English Ordnance Office, 1585-1625: A Case Study in Bureaucracy* (Woodbridge, 1996), p. 33.

[21] BL, Lansdowne MS, 26 no. 27 ff. 64-65. The scheme suggested by the anonymous writer involved an investigation of the amount of gunpowder brought into the Tower and 'foreign powder' which never arrived and was charged for. When Painter was again investigated in 1593 by George Hogge, Clerk of Deliveries, Hogge's specific charges related to accounts drawn up in 1575 and 1576 concerning gunpowder. One wonders if the suggestions of the anonymous writer of 1578 eventually served to incriminate Painter.

Warwick. The charges were rapidly dropped and Painter was not removed from the Ordnance Office until 1595.[22]

The case, developing over some thirty-seven years, affected the Armoury as well as the Ordnance, and many of Lee's problems in building up and maintaining an adequate supply of armour originated with the financial machinations of Painter. The absence of Painter's Armoury accounts between 1561 and 1580 makes it difficult to ascertain what money had been spent equipping the Armoury, but in correspondence with Burghley and Walsingham, Lee showed he was only too aware of the poor quality and quantity of armour at the Tower, especially in time of war.[23] The country's fighting forces needed arms and armour, and with a monarch notoriously reluctant to spend on either, what money there was had to be husbanded. Lee handled government contracts for weapons procurement, but was only allotted an annual sum of £400 in December 1580 for the upkeep of the Armoury, barely sufficient for the armourers' wages. The Clerkship of the Armoury remained vacant from 1580 to 1589 and Lee himself signed the accounts, although it is unlikely that he drew them up.

Lee needed subordinates in whom he had confidence and it was typical practice in late Elizabethan bureaucracy for a gentleman to extend what patronage he could to his own kinsmen. In 1589, he attempted to obtain the Clerkship for his cousin John Lee, but the position went to a Mr Sugden.[24] Armoury accounts were now maintained by Sugden, but Lee continued to sign them until 1610 and the Armoury escaped the constant investigations for corruption experienced by the Ordnance office. Although Sir Henry Lee could only obtain the post of yeoman at the Greenwich arsenal for his cousin, John Lee occupied the Armoury house there and acted as Lee's deputy at the Tower on a day-to-day basis from 1589.

Another problem that faced Lee was his relationship with the Armourers' Company of London. Claude Blair describes the Master of the

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[22] BL, Lansdowne MS, 5 no. 19. ff. 67-71. Painter's Armoury accounts of 1561 are later annotated 'William Painter, Clark of the Armoury Discovery of his Receipts and Deceits 1561'. The accounts are so closely written as to need a trained Tudor accountant to decipher them. Only Painter's armoury accounts from March 1556/7-December 1561 exists as TNA, PRO, E 351/2962.

[23] *CSPD.* 1581-90 p. 623. (Lee to Walsingham 3 Oct 1589).

[24] *CSPD.* 1581-90 p. 604. (2 June 1589).

Armoury as the 'head of the crown organization that provided the members of the Armourers Company with much of their employment'.[25] Lee was therefore involved in the various machinations of the Company. One of the chief duties of a Livery Company was the protection of the quality of the goods produced by their craft, but the amalgamation of smaller companies with the principal ones in the city of London widened the scope of products for which they claimed responsibility. The Armourers' Company, originally the Helmers' Company, had enlarged their remit to include all armour by 1453 and on amalgamation with the Bladesmiths in 1515, they asserted jurisdiction over all bladed weapons, a claim hotly disputed by the Cutlers' Company. By 1570 the Armourers were claiming jurisdiction over the making of crossbows and guns. The rapid developments in gun technology in the sixteenth century and the great variety of guns being produced caused conflict as to which guild could claim responsibility for them, for lucrative government contracts could fall to the successful Company. To ensure their success, Companies sought to promote bills advantageous to them through parliament, approaching leading men at Court and on the Council with suitable inducements.[26] Such bills, however, were subject to the many vagaries of the Elizabethan parliaments, and considerable time and money could be wasted.

These problems can be seen in the ill-fated Armourers' Bill of 1581, and it illustrates the frustrations that beset crown officials like Lee who worked with the London guilds. All Livery companies claimed the right of search for defective or sub-standard wares belonging to their craft, sold within three miles of London. The right of search, apart from being a quality control, was exceedingly profitable to the company - everyone searched had to pay a small fine to the Company concerned and those caught with defective wares were substantially fined. The transition to firearms for personal use, and specifically the development of the caliver as the principal firearm in the army

[25] C. Blair, 'The Armourers' Bill of 1581', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society,* xii (1986), pp. 20-53.

[26] Ibid. The Armourers' Company promoted bills in 1576, 1581, 1584-5 and in 1597-8, dealing with the right of search of imported armour and the assaying, marking and quality of weapons. None of these became statutes.

occasioned a demarcation dispute with the Blacksmiths' Company.[27] In 1581, early in his appointment to the Armoury, Lee was asked to promote a Parliamentary bill enforcing the Armourers' claim that their right of inspection of all armour and weapons should include guns, especially calivers. The bill had already been put before the Speaker and Recorder of 'the parlament howsse' in January 1581 for a first reading; now the Master and officials of the Company were lobbying the Lord Chancellor and Sir Walter Mildmay for a second reading. The Armourers' Court Book gives a detailed account of the campaign, noting that

> Sir Henry Leie was a hellper of us to set forward our bill ... He had to dinner at his lodgings in the Saveoie [numerous named Members of Parliament] ... and caussid us to bring our boucks, grauntes and exambepelles with us to shewe and make the best prove we cowld unto them ... they promosid to stand with us the best they could. [28]

The story then degenerates into farce. The Speaker promised the bill would be read 'upon Monday next', but a subsidy bill took its place. On the following Friday, when 'Sir Henry Leye' had mustered a goodly number of members in Parliament to support the bill, the Queen sent for the Speaker on another matter. The following Saturday, Lee and his friends 'could not be ther', but the Speaker advised the Company to rally their support in Parliament for the next Monday, which Lee promptly did. The Armourers' records related

> then comithe ij bills frome the quenes majestie again that must neades be read that daie ... so our bill was putt of. [29]

The Master of the Company then importuned the Lord Chancellor, who agreed to speak to the Queen and promote the bill in Parliament, but

> then comithe the French Imbassadors so his honor whent to St. Jamesis ... then the parlament beganne to drawe to an end.

The Armourers' Renter Warden accounts record the full incidental costs of the action, which Blair reckons to have been one seventh of the Company's total income at that period. There is no mention of any inducement given to Lee

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[27] *CSPD*, Addenda 1547-65, p. 78 (19 June 1569), stated with regard to musters, 'the men to be recruited, with firearms ... as many as can be to be calivers'. The Blacksmiths' Company had claimed the right of search on calivers in 1571.

[28] GL. MS, 12071/2 ff. 412-415, 538, 539-40, 584. For a full transcription and account of the bill, see C. Blair, 'The Armourers' Bill of 1581', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society,* xii (1986), pp. 20-53.

[29] One of these was the bill for the defences of the North, on which committee Lee had sat earlier.

for his services, but xiijs was paid on 'the furst of March for one Lame [lamb] and ij capons which was geven to Sir Harry Lee', presumably for the dinner at his Savoy lodgings.[30] The politics of the domestic production of arms continued to involve Lee throughout his time as Master of the Armoury, with petitions being put to Parliament in 1585, 1589 and 1590.[31] The links forged between the Company and Lee, however abortive in 1581 and in 1585 when an Armourers' bill again failed in parliament, stood the company in good stead in 1589 and 1590. These bills were successful, and illustrate Ian Archer's point that a company's plight that was frequently brought to the attention of those in authority would eventually receive a sympathetic hearing.[32]

WAR WITH SPAIN

As war with Spain became imminent from 1584, the demands on the Armoury increased, and their accounts record the costs for 'furnyshing the Queenes Maiestie's shippes set forth for the seas for the better defence of the Realme, 26 November 1587'.[33] Four separate defensive armies had been created by 1588, the first to shadow the Spanish fleet in the Channel and prevent a landing, the second under Lord Hunsdon to protect London, the third under the earl of Leicester to guard Kent and Essex, and the fourth under the earl of Huntingdon to guard the North of England. The manpower for these armies came from the trained bands, and the servants and tenants of nobility, gentry and clergy. Armouries at different locations were called upon to supply body armour and weapons. The Armoury at the Tower of London was also involved in a healthy

> sale of provycons & armour out of the store [to] noblemen and other persons for the pryce of armoure sold to them for their better furniture to attende the defence of her Ma[je]tie's person upon the Spanish invasion in Somer 1588 viz. armors complete for launce, corselettes, burgonettes, spanish moryans, sleeves of mayle, in all solde by warrante of the Lords of the Councill dated iiij day of august 1588.[34]

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[30] GL. MS, 12065/2 f. 25v.
[31] TNA, PRO, SP12/8/2 f. 3. The Armourers were petitioning for the City to hold annual show of armour, as this would increase sales from their company. The petition was unpopular with the other companies and was rejected in Parliament.
[32] I. Archer, 'The London Lobbies in the Later Sixteenth Century', *H J,* xxi, 1 (1988), p. 40.
[33] TNA, PRO, E 351/2963,iii,1580-1601.
[34] Ibid.

Securing the return of loaned armour was a perennial problem from the Armoury, and often direct sale was more practical.

The Greenwich armourers were also busy furnishing expensive field armours to leading courtiers around 1585-87. The Almain Armourers' Album appears to group its illustrations in chronological order although it neglects to date each armour. Eric Eaves draws attention to a group of five illustrations at the end of the Album that appear on a gathering of sheets rather than separately, and suggests that these armours, more suitable for field use than tournaments, were all produced at the same time.[35] In each case, there was a good reason why often unlikely combatants would have purchased armour around 1585-87. Sir Christopher Hatton had long since ceased to appear at tournaments, but as a leading courtier, he had commissioned new armour in 1585. The armour was loaned to his friend Leicester on 29 November 1585 and used when the latter was appointed head of the army guarding Kent and Essex. Hatton's appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1587 necessitated a less combative approach.[36] Privy Councillor Lord Buckhurst had no aspirations to a military role, but was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Sussex in 1586 and exercised his position with great zeal. Lord Cobham, a key player in the diplomacy surrounding the Armada, was appointed Knight of the Garter in 1586, and probably believed this and his position as Lord-Lieutenant of Kent warranted an expensive armour. The wealthy Italian merchant Horatio Palavicino was granted letters of denization in November 1585, was knighted by the Queen in November 1587 and volunteered for service against the Spanish in 1588; all things justifying the purchase of a suit of Greenwich armour. Sir Henry Lee's third suit of armour is the fifth illustration in this group, and the inclusion of long tassets, more suited for riding than jousting, would confirm that this was commissioned for field use.[37] (*Figs.7a, 7b, 14*). These armours were not cheap, and their purchase around this time shows

[35] V&A, D.586 1894 & D.586A 1894 – D.614 1894 & D.614A 1894; E. Eaves, 'The Greenwich Armour of Sir Henry Lee', *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society,* xvi 3 (1999), p. 153.
[36] Williams and de Reuck, *The Royal Armoury at Greenwich,* p. 98; Adams, 'Household Accounts', p. 339. A portrait in Sion House shows Leicester wearing Hatton's new armour.
[37] Ibid. Williams and de Reuck date the Scudmore armour (not shown in the Almain Armourers' Album) as being made around 1587 (MMNY 11.128.1). They suggest the same date for the Buckhurst armour (probably that in the Wallace collection London A62). They date Lee's second armour around 1585 (RATL IV.43) and his third armour shortly after. See chapter six below for further debate on the personal implications of Lee's third armour.

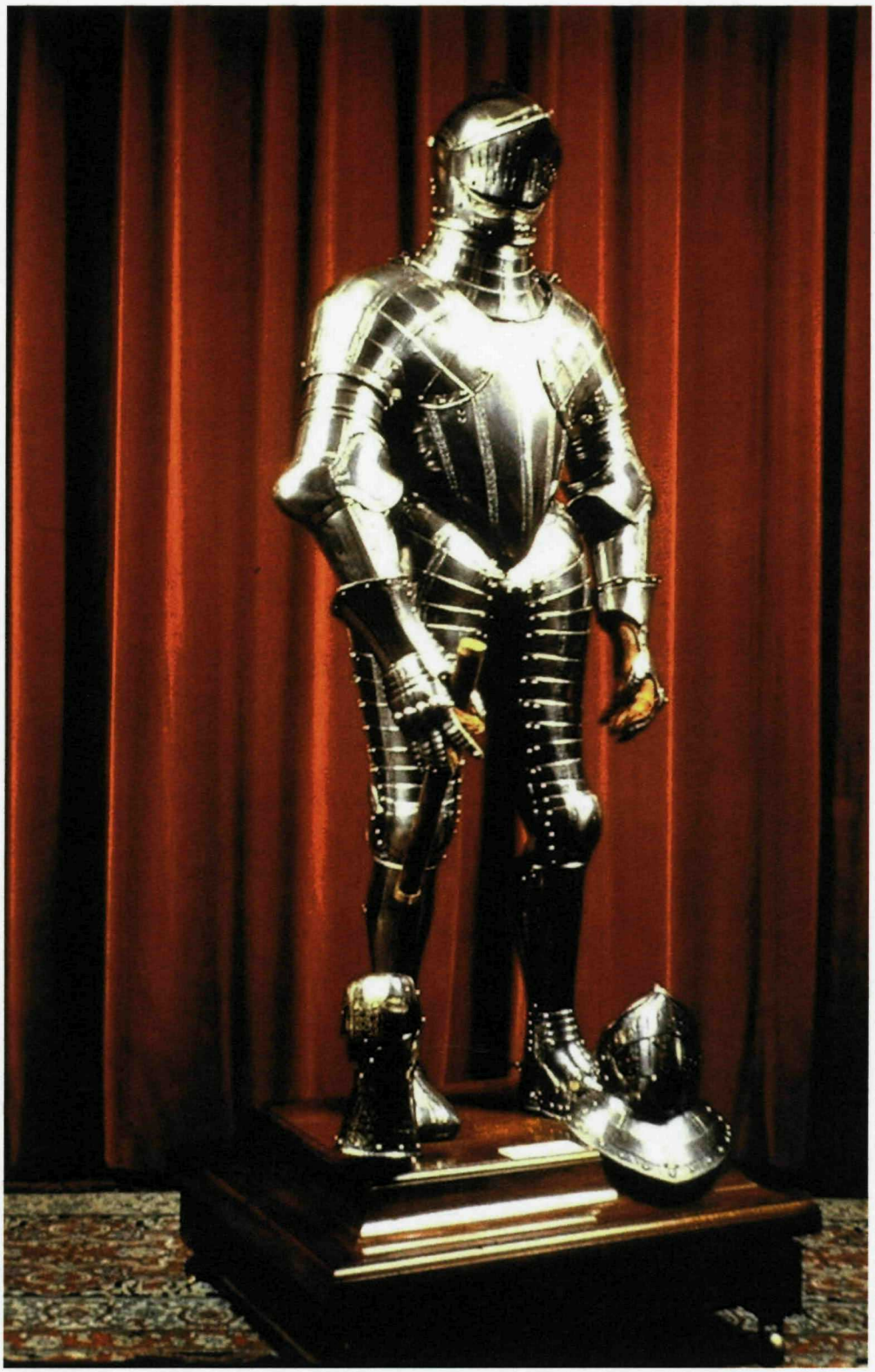

Fig. 14
Sir Henry Lee's third armour in the Armourers and Brasiers Hall, London

how seriously the leading men of Elizabeth's court took the threat of Spanish invasion and their own responsibilities to Queen and commonweal.

Lee's new suit of armour was not just for show; despite his responsibilities at the Armoury and his fifty-five years, he was not prepared to miss an opportunity for active military service. In December 1587, Lee was appointed as General of the Horse under the earl of Huntingdon in the North of England. Lee's colleague at the Tower of London, Lieutenant of the Ordnance Sir Robert Constable, was General of the Foot.[38] Although neither man took up their positions until May 1588, it is still an interesting question what two major figures with responsibilities at the Tower were doing away from their posts at the height of the Spanish emergency that summer. A possible explanation is that the majority of provisions had already been allocated by May and deputies were doing the day to day work. Lee's earlier apprehension over both the quality and quantity of armour provisions was rapidly justified. When Lee and Constable travelled to Doncaster in May 1588 to train the raw recruits for a month, Huntingdon wrote to Secretary of State, Sir Francis Walsingham stressing that

> we must continue to make the necessary provisions, and then we may with better spirits commit the success to God. Her Majesty shall find as good service in these parts ... (if war do come) if necessaries are provided. [39]

Lack of 'necessaries' and confusion in national preparations for war were evident in the whole campaign. Lee reflected the general state of affairs in a letter to Walsingham of 28 July 1588 from Sheffield

> I am here a cypher ... I desire to be set to work, no more a looker on in so general a need. [I wish] I may know ... what Her Ma[jes]tie will have me do and that where most needed and peril is [but] my horses are in one place, my saddles, furniture and armour in another and myself in a third. [40]

Lee's personal logistical problems appeared to be symptomatic of the whole enterprise; even Leicester himself begged the Queen to assemble her forces rapidly and not to risk defeat by delays. Lee's worst fears on the state

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[38] *CSP Border* I 1560-1594 p. 289 (3 December 1587).
[39] *CSP Border* I 1560-1594 p. 323 (15 May 1588).
[40] TNA, PRO, SP12/213/95 (*CSPD*, 1581-90 p. 515).

of the Armoury were confirmed when Leicester wrote to Walsingham on 1 August 1588 that

> ther ar here aryved a nombre of burgonetts fr[om] the tower but not ane man wyll bye one, but [is] a shamed to wear yt, I never saw ye lyke. I wyll send yo some of tha[m] & return the rest & for gods sake let her Ma[jes]t[ies]s Armory be better looked unto or elles save the charges of yt. [41]

Huntingdon likewise wrote to the Privy Council from 'Hartyllpoole' on 17 August 1588, protesting that at the general musters at Durham, he found 'many able bodies fit for service but in effect all naked [unarmed] without furniture'.[42] Lee was fortunate that, while he was journeying south to inform the Council of the difficulties, the national emergency passed without any call being made on the northern army. He returned to Court in late August 1588 to give the Queen a personal account of the military actions in the north of England, and as Master of the Armoury, he accompanied her to St. Paul's to give thanks for England's deliverance from the Spanish Armada.[43]

Lee was also swift to present a memorandum to Walsingham, itemizing the major defence needs of the North, though he, if anyone, knew how unlikely these were to be met.[44] Although both Lee and Constable had been absent from the Tower in the summer months of 1588, it is difficult to see how their presence would have made a difference. Years of neglect and corruption had left the Armoury and the Ordnance office barely able to equip four major defensive armies in the first war since 1564. In eight years, with entrenched hostility among several of the staff at the Tower and very little money, Lee had been unable to bring the armour up to the standard required. The crisis in summer 1588 passed, but Lee now faced demands on the Armoury from a country at war until 1604 and from rebellion in Ireland.

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[41] TNA, PRO, SP12/214/1.
[42] *CSP Border* I 1560-1594 p. 329 (17 Aug. 1588). 'Furniture' was used as a generic term for all military equipment.
[43] TNA, PRO, SP46/125/175 (27 August 1588); Nichols, *Elizabeth*, ii p. 537.
[44] *CSP Border* I 1560-94 p. 331 (23 Aug. 1588).

THE EFFECTS OF THE SPANISH CRISIS OF 1588

Major changes were needed in the Armoury, and the appointment of a new Clerk and a new deputy in 1589 was a step in the right direction. The demands of 1588 had taken a heavy toll on the military supplies in general, and the Armoury store in particular. In addition to the usual problem of reclaiming armour once the danger was passed, there were now new demands for military supplies for Ireland.[45] The Queen requested a review of the whole state of armour and weapons throughout her realm.

In a graphic letter to Walsingham dated 3 October 1589, Lee described the Armoury as

> not only much unfurnished and full of wants, but ... out of all order' [as] my self have oft and sundry times complayned ... not only to her Ma[je]tie but also set down the same in writing. [My offer] to make such supply & good armour ... was little harkened unto, and such as is in the tower [is] in such plight, delivered unto me as I was ashamed to see and most pity it should be in the armour of so great a princess. Our former toil, charge and travail hath been bestowed upon nothing, [as armour had been] delivered over in to sundry countryes, much sent to and fro to the shipps, a great deal lost and through negligence and the force of salt water, made so thin that the virtue was clean taken away ... the charges and trouble hath been exceeding great in transporting armour from one place to another, [leaving] other forces unfurnished. [46]

Lee himself lacked the finances to travel often to London and requested that he might deal with the situation at the Armoury when he came to London for the November tournament, hence 'stop[ping] two gaps with one bush'. Lee's financial embarrassments appear to have been typical of many officials at the Tower; for example, Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower from 1570 to 1590, resigned with substantial financial problems deriving from his office.[47]

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[45] HMC Salis III no.863 p. 409 (3 May 1589). Walsingham sent demands to Constable and Lee for a supply of munitions, morrions, oil for armour and other necessities for Ireland, from the Ordnance and the Armoury.

[46] *CSPD*, 1581-90, p. 623. (3 October 1589).

[47] As is obvious from the Loseley Papers at the Surrey History Centre, some of the financial embarrassments on death or resignation resulted from monies being paid personally into the hands of officials and then reclaimed from their estates, see Surrey History Centre LM/64 'Account of money owed to the Crown by Henry Lee esq. as heir and executor of Sir Henry Lee, KG. late Master of the Armoury for the period Jan. 1602 - Dec 1610. Residue of monies received into the hands of Sir Henry Lee KG'.

Lee's complaints about the state of the Queen's armoury were also reiterated by the Armourers' Company. On 13 July 1589, the Company had directed a petition to the Council 'to have leave to furnish the State with what armour is wanting and upon what terms'.[48] The Company's prime objective was to secure work for their own members, but the petition did raise the very pertinent question of the state's dependency on imports of foreign arms for its defence. When, at her accession in 1559, the Queen had thought it prudent to purchase large quantities of arms, her agent Sir Thomas Gresham had obtained them from Germany and the Low Countries. Paul Hammer observes that Gresham's shopping list shows England's dependency on imports for virtually every item needed for war, including essential components for making gunpowder.[49] There is little to indicate that matters had changed substantially by 1589. The elegantly produced document produced by the Armourers laid out their case succinctly. They had been at great charge in

> enterteynin and keping foreyn men from beyond the seas to learne and practice the making of Armour [but] ... at this tyme we make ... better armor then that is w[hi]ch cometh from beyond the seas...and fearing that for lack of sale ... of the same we shall not be able to kepe and maynteyne the nomber of our apprentices and servants which are very well practysed in making all sorts of armours. [50]

They requested that

> we may be appointed to bring unto her Ma[jes]tie's store at reasonable price monthly the Armour that we shall make till her Ma[jes]tie's store be furnyshed ... it is a means to set a great number of her Ma[jes]tie's subjects to work ... it will furnish this land with skilful men to make and fytt armours to mens bodies ... and we shall be free from those dangers which may onset by the great nombers of bad and insufficient armourers which are now brought unto this land by unskilled men.

The petition was endorsed by Sir Henry Lee's deputy at the Armoury, John Lee, who concurred that the Armouries at this point are 'very weakly furnished ... the armour that is made here is accounted far better then that which cometh from beyond the seas'. On this occasion, the Armourers' petition met with greater success than their earlier ones.

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[48] BL, Lansdowne MS, 63 no. 5 ff. 19-20.
[49] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 68.
[50] BL, Lansdowne MS, 63 no. 5 ff. 19-20.

Whereas good armour could be made in England, the best metal was usually procured from overseas. Apart from one experiment in 1540, when English ore had been sent to Nuremburg to be tried, English armour manufacture had always used imported ore from Germany, and both the Armourers' Company and the Greenwich workshops preferred this arrangement. Before his death in 1590, Sir Francis Walsingham set in train an enquiry into the use of Shropshire iron, and Lee reported to Burghley on the subject on 12 October 1590.[51] He had, he wrote, together with his cousin John Lee and the Lieutenant of the Ordnance, Sir Robert Constable, attended a 'trial of iron for armour', of 'certayne ierne metell w[hic]h grewe[sic] or was made in Sropshere. A new brest[plate] beyng sent owt of the contry', was tested with one 'of the very same wayght' newly made in the Greenwich workshop. Lee took 'a good and stronge pystolle', an identical weight of powder and equall charge and 'tryed fyrste the one and then the other'. The breastplate made in Greenwich and of 'mettell of Hungere' held out with a little dent, that made in Shropshire was 'clene shotte thereowe. Thus muche for this Yenglyshe metal'.[52] Despite Lee's willingness to undertake an empirical experiment, the test merely confirmed the superiority of foreign ores, and an opportunity to encourage a domestic metallurgy industry was missed.

Lee was also prepared to lend his voice to that of the Armourers in preventing freelance workshops developing outside London. Not only was Lee 'gratified' in 1590 to the tune of £50 by the Armourers' Company for hindering one Stanley from setting up as an armourer, but he also made a plea to Burghley for the 'whole compene of the Armourers, beynge very many that lyve on that trade with ther wyves and chyldren'.[53] He pointed out the dangers of armour-making being put into unskilled hands, 'where warres may happen as well by sea or land' and hoped that 'suficient armour of good shape and good stuffe' may be had within the realm, presumably from the Armourers' Company. The Armoury continued to supply body armour,

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[51] *CSPD,* 1581-90 p. 692; H.A. Dillon, 'A letter of Sir Henry Lee,1590, on a trial for armour', *Archaeologia,* li. 1 (1885) pp. 167-172.

[52] Ffoulkes makes the salient point that it was hardly fair to place armour made by a provincial blacksmith against that made by the Queen's finest Armourers'. See C. Ffoulkes, 'The Armourers' Company of London and the Greenwich School of Armourers', *Archaeologia,* lxxvi (1927), pp. 41-58. 'Metal of Hungere' usually denoted German metal.

[53] Ibid and *CSPD, 1581-90* p. 692.

helmets, shields and swords to the English soldiers in Ireland throughout the decade and Lee directed several lucrative contacts to the Armourers' Company. In 1596, a warrant was made out to Sir Henry Lee, for £2000 3s to be paid to the Armourers' Company for '449 cuirasses, 433 lances, 96 cuirasses of proof, 62 targets of caliver proof, 59 targets of pistol proof and armour complete'.[54] Lee was prepared to extend Armoury patronage to the Cutlers' Company, and in 1599 he was instructed to pay both companies a total of £1031 8s for 3,000 swords and £29 8s 8d for 'theire carriadge ... into Irelande'.[55]

Lee's relationship with the Armourers' Company was not unusual among crown officials who had dealings with the City. Regardless of what his own attitude to the Company's trade practices might have been, Lee's main priority in the thirty-one years he was Master of the Armoury was to ensure a smooth working relationship between the Armoury, the Greenwich workshops and the Armourers' Company. The state needed a reliable supply of armour and personal weapons, and an England at war with Spain was no place to make far-reaching experiments in weapons procurement.

PROBLEMS OF THE LAST DECADE

In the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, the Armoury was increasingly overshadowed by the Ordnance office, as the expansion of firearms made arms and armour relatively insignificant. The department of Ordnance was not a pleasant place in which to work; George Carew, Lieutenant of the Ordnance in 1594 described it as

> this troublesome place where I have found at no time either profit or ease ... and my fellows in office so corrupt and of such malicious spirits as but in hell I think their matches can hardly be found ... hope did persuade me that as their falsehoods were discovered and proved they would be displaced, but that hope is lost.[56]

Things did not improve; there was no Master of the Ordnance from 1590 to 1597 and the department was under almost constant investigation. During one such investigation in 1600, the new Clerk of the Ordnance Stephen

[54] *CSPD*, 1595-97, p. 295. (19 October 1596). See glossary for description of weapons.
[55] TNA, PRO, E 101/64/11 (Duplicament of the account of Sir Henry Lee, master of the armoury). 16 Jan 1598 and 30 June 1599; BL, Sloane MS, 1519 ff. 209, 216
[56] HMC Salis. IV p. 555 (George Carew to Robert Cecil 30 June 1594).

Riddleston confessed himself to be 'over-wearied with a company of wayward and malignant spirits', and in 1601 an investigation of the 'discovery and reform of the deceits, forgeries and abuses in that Office in her majesty's reign' estimated that during some four decades of corruption some £60,000 had been embezzled. [57]

Lee as Master of the Armoury felt that the larger office was taking advantage of his advancing years. His complaints were many; in 1594, he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil complaining that the house in Greenwich belonging to the Armoury and occupied by his deputy John Lee had been taken over by another minor government official.[58] In 1598, Lee again complained to Cecil that 'there were some that would cunningly intrude themselves into my office', and when attempts were made in 1600 to encroach on a tenement held by the Armoury near the Tower, he appealed yet again to Cecil 'to defend me in my aged absence from such greedy procurers ... especially in the matter of small offices in my gift as Master of the Armoury'.[59] The truth was that, with the demands of foreign war and Irish rebellion, and with the increasing use of new weapons, the Armoury was having difficulty maintaining its autonomy. Its claim to be the sole provider of basic equipment such as swords was regularly undermined as the Council and even Essex bought swords for overseas use from sources other than the Armoury. Stewart makes the point that the fact that Lee had to write to Cecil in 1598 and again in 1601, specifically pleading that swords should be supplied by the Armoury indicates that the 'delineation of tasks between the ordnance and the armoury was no longer clear'.[60]

The example of an incident in 1601 illustrates how fiercely Lee was prepared to fight for Armoury rights, but also reveals his anachronistic attitudes. In that year a warrant was sent to the Tower for swords and armour to be supplied 'jointly' by the Armoury and Ordnance office. Lee immediately appealed for the warrant to be made 'severally', to preserve the reputation of his department.[61] The Privy Council had authorized George Harvey, deputy lieutenant of the ordnance, to supply arms for Ireland including swords. Lee

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[57] Cecil MS 251.11 (HMC Salis.X. p. 244); Cecil MS 90.111 (HMC Salis XI. p. 551).
[58] HMC Salis. IV.p. 576.
[59] Cecil MS 68.2 (HMC Salis. X p. 18) (29 Jan 1600). See also TNA, PRO, E 133/10/1492.
[60] Stewart, *The English Ordnance Office*, p. 125; HMC Salis. X. pp.550-1.
[61] Cecil MS 90.107 (HMC Salis. XI p. 551).

stated that the provision of swords was the responsibility of the Armoury, and the Privy Council had excused itself on 28 July 1601, replying that since a large supply was needed in some haste, they had appealed to Harvey since they 'did require the healp of a man of some credite and of skill [so] we thought him a fitter person than a merchant to deale in it'.[62] Stewart again makes the telling point that this did not speak well of the council's opinion of Lee's ability to organize a supply of arms.[63]

Lee immediately sent a letter to Sir John Stanhope on 29 July 1601, complaining of what he regarded as an insult to himself and his office.[64] He deeply resented the Council's support of George Harvey, and wrote that 'for skill I will neither give place to him nor any other, having had the use of arms both in earnest and sport all the days of my life'. Lee gave full range to his anger on many fronts; he was enraged that the armour of Henry VIII that had been displayed in a room off the Green Gallery at Greenwich since the king's reign had been 'thrown into a corner ... thrown upon heaps and without my knowledge ... a wrong to the dead and to her Majesty'. The main import of Lee's letter to Stanhope was to warn him that too little armour was being maintained at the Queen's houses for her defence. The armoury at Windsor Castle and at Hampton Court had been run down since 1580 and the Tower supplies were poor. Lee quoted the precedent of Queen Mary's danger in 1554, when there was insufficient armour in Whitehall to defend her from Wyatt's rebellion, and implied that 'if God had not provided better', the situation might have been repeated in Essex's recent rising in February 1601. Overall, the letter illustrates Lee's bitter resentment of the decline of both his influence and his budget, and his conviction that respect for himself and armour in general was a thing of the past. His convictions were probably accurate; in 1601, Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, stating he considered that the office of Master of the Armoury was in his gift and regretted it was 'otherwised disposed of'.[65]

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[62] Dasent, *APC* 1601-4, 108-9 (28 July 1601).
[63] Stewart, *The English Ordnance Office* p. 124.
[64] Cecil MS 117.3 (HMC Salis.XIV. p. 181).
[65] Cecil MS 181.142 (HMC Salis. XI. p. 169).

CONCLUSIONS ON THE ARMOURY.

If Lee was not exactly handed a poison chalice in 1580, he was certainly appointed to a department where it was going to be difficult to succeed. The armour he inherited in 1580 was in poor condition; in peacetime, the Armoury cared principally for ornamental tournament armour and very little had been invested in field armour since the Le Havre expedition in 1562-3. What little money had been allocated appears to have been embezzled. Lee's meagre budget of £400 a year had barely begun to bring the Armoury up to standard when it was called upon to equip four major defensive armies, and then provide arms and armour for war with Spain and rebellion in Ireland.

Many of the problems that Lee was experiencing in practical terms in the Armoury were corroborated by his former travelling-companion, Sir John Smythe in 1591, in his *Instructions, Observations and Orders Militarie*. [66] Smythe, like Leicester, observed that 'in the camp and armie at Tilbury 1588 ... I did see and observe so great disorder and deformitie in their apparrell to arme withall ... many did weare their armors verie uncomlie and uneasilie'. Like Lee, Smythe was of the opinion that 'the long peace that we have had till within these 15 or 16 [y]eares past did bring a great decaye in armors and weapons throughout the Realme ... verie few or none of the corslets of all the shires throughout England are Augsburge or newremburg which are the best stuffe'.

Notwithstanding the petty jealousies that existed between government departments, and the opportunism of younger men prepared to take advantage of an aging Master, the fundamental problem was that armour itself was declining in importance and with it the role of the Armoury. When in 1590, Lee had assured Burghley that 'the worlde ... is lykelye to use more [armour] hereafter than in the tyme paste'; he was voicing an understandable but anachronistic judgement of a situation which left many of his contemporaries equally confused.[67] Lee's main area of expertise was with

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[66] John Smythe, *Certen instructions, observations and orders militarie* (London, 1594), RSTC. 22884; BL, Harl. MS, 135 f. 96. A letter sent by Leicester during the Armada crisis suggests that Smythe was too sick to take part at Tilbury, TNA, PRO, SP12/213/94.

[67] *CSPD 1581-90,* p. 692 (12 Oct. 1590). The title Master of the Armoury was abolished with the office in 1671. However, Lee's descendant Viscount Dillon became first modern part-time curator of the Royal Armouries from 1895-1912, and voluntarily classified, cleaned and reassembled much of the armour. then at the Tower of London. When Charles Ffoulkes was appointed as full-time curator in

ceremonial tournament armour; the annual Accession Day tournaments served to keep the armourers in business for another two decades after peace with Spain in 1604, but even then, tournaments were becoming outdated as a mode of Court entertainment.

The nature of warfare was changing rapidly by the last decade of the sixteenth century, and Lee, nearly seventy by 1600, would have been unusually prescient to have appreciated the technical innovations needed in weaponry. Lee missed opportunities to encourage the development of English steel for armaments, but a country at war was no place to nurture a young industry through its teething troubles, and the credit for any successful innovation would probably have been taken by the Ordnance office. Lee was also hampered by the vested interests of the Armourers' Company, who were more interested in strengthening defensive armour and preserving the *status quo* than in fundamental change. Increasingly, the work of the Armoury as a supplier of swords, lances and corslets was taken over by the Ordnance office. Stewart convincingly argues that the decline in the Armoury is even more obvious when one looks at its expenditure.[68] From 1590 to 1594, it spent £2,087, only marginally more than the £400 per annum allotted to it for those five years. Between 1595 and 1603, it needed to spend substantially more, some £11,000, mainly on providing swords and armour for Ireland. From then on, with small exceptions, the office spent only its allowance of £400 a year.

Lee continued as Master of the Armoury until his death in 1611, but he was presiding over an office whose time had passed.

1910, the ancient title of Master of the Armouries was revived, though with rather different responsibilities.

[68] Stewart, *The English Ordnance Office* p. 125 from Lee's accounts TNA, PRO, AO/1/2299/3, AO/1/2299/4.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIR HENRY LEE - THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A TUDOR GENTLEMAN

i) LEE'S PERSONAL ESTATES AND FINANCIAL POSITION.

Sir Henry Lee, like many Elizabethan gentlemen in crown service, enjoyed a rich private life with lands, family, friends and other interests in addition to his public service for the Queen. To his close associates, he was Sir Harry Lee, a sobriquet that even found its way into the state papers. Lee owned extensive sheep-rearing estates at Quarrendon, near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, the revenues from which afforded him freedom from the constant importuning for a lucrative position at Court that was the lot of many of his contemporaries. Although the care of his own estates was to some extent subordinated to his stewardship of the Queen's manor at Woodstock, Lee built up a second personal estate nearby at Ditchley, Oxfordshire after 1583 and this became his principal home. Sir Henry Lee left no direct heir, and very few of his personal papers appear to have been preserved by later incumbents of Ditchley. Those that do exist are usually in the collections of other men, and few financial details have survived. The extent of Lee's lands is known, as are the patents granted to him, the salaries he received for official positions and the occasional loans he obtained from the Queen. Other than that, his financial position can only be pieced together from circumstantial evidence. It is interesting to compare his economic activity with comparable gentry families who did leave a record, such as the Dormers of Oxfordshire and the Treshams of Northamptonshire. Lee was a land-owner for some fifty-six years and a study of this aspect of his private life presents an opportunity to see how an Elizabethan gentleman dealt with the vicissitudes of the wool trade and the practical economies of funding a career at Court.

LEE'S LANDS AND FINANCES.

The main financial priority for a private Elizabethan gentleman was the accumulation and consolidation of his land holdings, frequently involving their conversion to pastoral farming. Sir Henry Lee himself was fortunate that the hard work of establishing the family estates in the rich Buckinghamshire pasture land had already been done by his grandfather Sir Robert Lee before

1540, when expansion of sheep farming and enclosure of common land was at its height. Sir Robert's principal estates were at Quarrendon, with land in Over Upping, Little Marston and Bierton. A recent RCHME/English Heritage archaeological survey of Quarrendon reveals that the Lees lived in a substantial moated manor house, built in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, with a formal garden and courtyard within the moat, a two acre toft called Pondecroft and an ancient church near the house.[1] In 1540, the manor of Quarrendon itself comprised 355 acres – 25 acres around the Manor house itself and 330 acres of pasture called the Berryfield, having a value of £4418s 0d.[2] In addition to this, there were 73½ acres of land appertaining to the manor at Bierton, Aylesbury and Bellinger and 330 acres of woods. The total annual value of these was £58 9s 10½d. Sir Robert Lee also leased land from four nearby manors - at nearby Fleetmarston with Blackgrove, at Weedon with New College Oxford, and at Hardwick and Burston, some 960 acres of pasture in all. His son Anthony Lee added Little Marston, additional land at Fleetmarston, the manor of Oving, and also continued his father's lease of tithes from Quarrendon and Bierton from the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln cathedral.[3]

In 1553, after five years in wardship, Sir Henry Lee inherited extensive, well-ordered and consolidated estates of rich pasture in the highly profitable Midlands sheep-rearing area, which throughout the later sixteenth century produced some of the best quality wool and heaviest fleeces in the country. Quarrendon had a long record of exporting wool to the continent and despite the collapse in wool and cloth prices on the foreign market in 1551, Buckinghamshire remained important as a source for the long combing wool for the booming domestic worsted industry of Berkshire and Hampshire.[4] Lee was well-placed to take advantage of this, and even without detailed estate accounts, it is reasonable to assume that for the first twenty years of his

[1] Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) survey 1989-1990, taken for English Heritage. See P. Everson, 'Peasants, Peers and Graziers: The landscape of Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire interpreted', *Records of Buckinghamshire,* xxxi (2001), pp. 1-45.
[2] ORO Dil X/b/2c, 'A breve declaration of the Inquisition found for ... the Mannor of Quarrendon now in the holding of Sir Anthonie Lee Knight'.
[3] ORO Dil X/f/1, 2.
[4] P.J. Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1962), pp. 41-76. Sir Robert Lee had received a licence to export wool to Calais in 1533.

ownership of Quarrendon, he was a man of considerable means. Like his father, Lee added small parcels of land as the occasion arose, although the existence of other moieties and reversions of leases created court cases that appeared to be commonplace among Elizabethan landholders.[5]

Like many other gentleman landholders in Buckinghamshire, Lee's prosperity was based upon enclosures and depopulation of hitherto arable land - practices which brought unrest among the tenants and local workers, resentment from neighbours and investigation from government commissioners. The land Lee inherited had long been converted to sheep-farming and whereas he was in a position to benefit, he did not appear to be personally responsible for the depopulation of Quarrendon, which numbered twenty families in 1524 and only four by 1563.[6] His grandfather, Sir Robert Lee had enclosed Fleetmarston and Quarrendon, and while Sir Robert had been exonerated from legal infringement at Quarrendon by Wolsey's enclosure enquiry of 1517, he was responsible for the depopulation of Fleetmarston.[7] Prior to the enclosure inquisition for Buckinghamshire in 1566, the earl of Leicester stayed with Sir Henry Lee at Quarrendon, and wrote to Burghley on 20 February describing the state of things as he saw them in the county generally, 'I never saw in so rich a soyll so many miserable and poor people. Hir ... some have all and greate numbers nothinge'.[8] No criticism was voiced directly at Lee, and later, in 1577 and 1578 Lee was appointed by the Privy Council to sit as one of the twelve commissioners investigating complaints against enclosures in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.[9] Bowden observes that the administration of Tudor statutes against depopulation and enclosure was usually put into the hands of those most opposed to the statutes, but Lee's letters make no personal comment on

[5] See arguments with William Hawtrey over Fleetmarston in *VCH Bucks*. iv. p. 74. John Lord Mordaunt brought an action against Lee in 1559 for wrongfully detaining the premises of 'the Manor place' at Burston. See also Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies for details of Lee's smaller land purchases, D-LE/1/12 (Bargain and sale 30 May 1561); D-LE/1/15 (exemplification of recovery 15 November 1561); D-LE/2/22 (lease 1561-62); D-LE/5/9 (fine 8 July 1557).

[6] Everson, 'Peasants', p. 17.

[7] Fleetmarston was reduced from 50 persons and 8 ploughs in 1500 to a manor house and 5 cottages for shepherds by 1540.

[8] TNA, PRO, SP12/39/105 (20 Feb.1566).

[9] *CPR*.19 Eliz. I part vi. p. 292, (17 April 1577); Dasent, *APC* ix. pp. 323-324; *APC* x. p. 155; *VCH Bucks* iv. p. 9. By 1636, Quarrendon was described as 'an ancient enclosure and depopulated', *VCH Bucks*. iv. p. 100.

enclosures.[10] Lee's marriage to Anne Paget in the early 1550s had brought him little material gain except the advowson of Aylesbury church, but he had the use of Paget House, his father-in-law's house on the Strand.[11] After Lord Paget's fall from office in 1558 and death in June 1563, Lee obtained the lease of an apartment at the nearby Savoy, which became his main London lodging until 1608.

By the latter part of the 1560s therefore, Sir Henry Lee was established as one of the most prosperous sheep farmers in Buckinghamshire, well-travelled, with influential friends at Court and in growing favour with the Queen. The latter was a fortunate development as a considerable part of his livelihood was swept away in the great floods of 1570. Quarrendon occupied a low-lying position adjacent to a tributary of the river Thame and Lee's lands were vulnerable. Thomas Knell, in his *'Declaration of such tempestuous and outrageous fluddes'* described the damage done by the major floods, gales and high winds that shook the east coast of England on 5 October 1570, wreaking havoc from Hull and Lincolnshire to Sussex. There was a tidal wave in the Thames, and flood waters reached as far east as Oxfordshire. Knell related the death toll of people, sheep, horses and cattle in some fourteen counties affected; the greatest named loser in his whole account being 'Sir Henry Ley, [who] lost by the flouds of water the number of iii M sheep, besides horses and other cattell a great number'.[12] How large a percentage of Lee's total livestock were lost is unknown, but on 1 January 1571 the Queen granted him a seven year licence to export 1000 tods of wool yearly, stating that 'through the late tempestuous weather he has suffered great loss in his sheep and cattle, which are the chief part of his livelihood'.[13] In 1572, Lee received another licence for ten years to buy in England and export 500,000 woolfells.[14] Granting export licences was a typical way of rewarding

[10] Bowden, *Wool Trade,* p. 110.
[11] Paget House was bought by the earl of Leicester for £2,500 around 1570, becoming first Leicester House and later, Essex House.
[12] Thomas Knell, *The declaration of such tempestuous and outrageous fluddes as hath been in divers places of England 1570* (London, 1571), RSTC. 15032. See also Holinshed, *Chronicles,* iv, p. 257.
[13] *CPR* 13.Eliz.I part vi, p. 253 (1 Jan. 1571). A tod is a unit of weight for wool, equivalent to about 28 pounds.
[14] *CPR* 14 Eliz.I part xii p. 487, (undated).

the Queen's favourites, for example, major wool grants were made to the earl of Leicester in 1560, Sir Francis Walsingham in 1575 and Simon Bowyer, Gentleman Usher to the Queen in 1576.[15] Invariably such licences were sublet to agents or sold to alien merchants with the licensee taking a cut from the profits. As the export market for English wool was in decline by the 1570s, such licences were not as profitable as they had once been and as his flocks recovered, Lee would probably have sold his own wool on the domestic market. The licence he obtained in 1576 to buy and export 200,000 calf skins over the next twelve years may well have been more profitable.[16] A more singular source of income was the three patents granted to Lee in 1575 and 1576 to seek out and manumit bondsmen and bondswomen from the Queen's estates, discussed below in more detail. As with many of the Queen's favours to courtiers, this involved Lee in considerable hard work and expense before he saw any financial reward, and potential income was liable to be spread over several years in the future.

In addition to grants and patents, Sir Henry Lee also received some fees and perquisites for his various roles in the Queen's service. Although his wife and daughter continued to live at Quarrendon, Lee's own attention after 1570 turned to the Queen's manor at Woodstock, Oxfordshire where he lived at High Lodge. Lee had initially purchased the patent for Stewardship from Edward Dyer around 1571, but subsequently received an annual Exchequer fee of 100s.[17] From 1572, he received 3d a day as keeper of the great park, 3d a day as keeper of other parks within the manor and after 1574, 4d a day for the office of the wardrobe of beds at Woodstock. From 1579, he was granted 3½d a day as keeper of the garden and meadows. He was allowed to keep 70 cattle and 40 horses on the demesne, and to cut 108 loads of firewood and 18 loads of hay and brushwood annually to the value of £7. When Lee became Master of the Armoury at the Tower of London in 1580, he

[15] Bowyer's patent, for example, licensed him to buy and sell 500 sarplers within the next ten years, (1092 lbs of wool or 19 tods).
[16] *CPR* 18 Elizabeth I part vii, p. 86 (10 July 1576).
[17] The patents for the stewardship had originally been granted to Edward Dyer in 23 June 1570, but Dyer, perennially short of money, had assigned them to his deputy Thomas Peniston, Lee's cousin. The patents had passed rapidly to Sir Gerard Croker and hence to Lee by purchase, until the death, forfeiture or surrender of Edward Dyer. Lee's reversionary lease of 1573 meant that the patents would eventually pass to Lee in his own right. Dyer lost his offices at Woodstock in 1603 at the accession of James I; but despite royal attempts to assign them elsewhere, Lee retained the patents until his death.

received an annual Exchequer fee of £31 18s 9d, additional payments for keeping armoury in the Great Gallery at Greenwich of £66 13 4d and various rents for tenements adjacent to the Tower.[18]

Regardless of the honours that accrued from royal favour, there is evidence that by the later 1570s Lee was increasingly in financial difficulties. A review in 15 March 1580 of recent loans made by the Queen indicated that Sir Henry Lee had received a loan of £3000 in 1576 repayable at £300 a year, the first repayment to be made by Midsummer 1577. By 1580, he had only repaid £600.[19] Lee's position was not unusual for a courtier; the earl of Leicester, Lord Stafford, Sir John Smythe and Edward Dyer were also named as having received loans from the Queen. Dyer, of a rank and position similar to Lee, received a royal loan of £3000 in 1579, a sum he never managed to repay.[20] Royal servants could expect some remuneration for their labours, but payment was usually in arrears and the sums involved did not compare with the income of gentry like Lee's Buckinghamshire neighbours the Dormers, who remained at home husbanding their profits from wool. None of Lee's royal licences or patents was such as to afford him an immediate financial windfall and there is no evidence that as Master of the Armoury, he supplemented his income in the manner practised by his colleagues in the Ordnance department.

Much of Lee's income from Woodstock would have been spent in maintaining his position on the occasions when the Court visited on progress. Entertaining the Queen and Court was costly, and Lee's friends - Edward Dyer, Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville - were notorious for their impecunious lifestyle and rising debts. The court tournaments, for which Lee was increasingly responsible, could be ruinous and here Lee was competing with some of the most profligate spenders among the aristocracy. Philip Howard, before he succeeded to his grandfather's dignities as earl of Arundel in 1581, spent lavishly on tournaments; in 1580, £14,000 in debt, he had been forced

[18] BL, Harl. MS, 7457.
[19] *CSPD,* 1547-1580, p. 646; TNA, PRO, SP12/136/135.
[20] Early in 1582 a Spanish agent at court described Dyer as 'that bankrupt poltroon', *CSPFor.,*1581–2, p. 472.

to leave the court in disgrace and sell some of his properties.[21] Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford, who appeared as the Knight of the Tree of the Sun before Elizabeth in February 1581, was still being pursued in 1584 by his tailor for payment for apparel and livery for his servants to wear at 'tiltings'.[22] Lee had a position to maintain as Queen's champion; by 1586 he was in possession of three highly expensive suits of Greenwich armour and a stable of appropriate horses.[23] Self-appointed, Lee received no financial payment from the Queen, who increasingly used the Accession Day tournaments to entertain visiting foreign dignitaries at no cost to herself.

Lee still owned sizeable estates, however, and was usually able to find the money for purchases he regarded as important. In 1583, regardless of his debt to the Queen or perhaps because the loan had made capital available, Lee acquired a second territorial estate in the three Oxfordshire townships of Spelsbury, Charlbury and Stonesfield, centred on Ditchley near Woodstock. For several years, Lee's immediate interest in his family estates at Quarrendon had been dwindling. Regular manorial courts were still held there, but the predominant part of Quarrendon's demesne land, the Berryfield, had been leased out for some time and Lee sold 160 acres of land in Fleetmarston in 1580, releasing capital.[24] By contrast, as early as May 1570, Lee had acquired a reversionary lease of the Oxfordshire manors of Spelsbury and Shipton on the deaths of Anne, Duchess of Somerset and Anne, Countess of Warwick.[25] In January 1571 he obtained a grant of all 'tymbre trees of oke' and all other woods in woods and demesne lands belonging to the manors of Spelsbury and Shipton. He failed to acquire the manor of Spelsbury outright in 1575, but bought the house and estate at Ditchley in 1583 for £1000. He later added land at Charlbury and additional

[21] Fitzalan-Howard, *Philip Howard,* p. 7.
[22] Alan Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool, 2003), p. 184.
[23] Thom Richardson, Keeper of Armour and Oriental Arms and Armour at the Royal Armouries, Leeds suggests unofficially that Lee, as Master of the Armoury in charge of the Greenwich workshops might have had some financial reduction on his second and third armours. Certainly, these were as lavishly decorated as any nobleman's armour included in the Almain Album.
[24] Courts Leet and Courts Baron were held regularly at Quarrendon – see ORO Dil X/a/14; Dil X/a/15; Dil X/a/16. The Berryfield, some 330 acres out of 350 acres of demesne land were leased to a George Duncombe by 1581. ORO. Dil X/h/1.
[25] *CPR* 13 Eliz. x. p. 303. (1 Jan 1571).

freehold parcels of land at Stonesfield, Spelsbury and Taston. He realised his reversionary lease of Spelsbury in 1587, on the death of Anne Somerset.

Why did Lee want a second estate? His Buckinghamshire neighbours the Dormers had bought estates in Oxfordshire to extend their sheep-grazing activities, but John Chamberlain's survey of Ditchley, commissioned by Lee in May 1581 prior to purchase, indicated that the land was very poor.[26] The house and 47 acres of arable land adjacent to it were burdened with annuities to William Gibbons and his family which Lee had to buy out. The 900 acres which comprised the principal part of the estate had been 'so turned ... as it is neither good arable or pasture'. The arable land

> groweth so small a quantitie ... that some yeares it is skant worth the gathering ... there is no hay nor help for cattle ... and the barronesse of the ground worne out to the uttermost.

The sheep commons were overstocked and the 326 acres of woods 'so cropped with cattell as will not yeald of long time any present peece of money'. Chamberlain had warned Lee that, the state of the land being what it was 'no man will over bidd you & therefore be not over hasty to purchase a hard bargain'.

It was not, however, the farming potential of Ditchley that appealed to Lee but its proximity to the Queen's manor of Woodstock. As Steward at Woodstock, Lee had the use of four lodges on the estate, but he was dependent on Court favour, his decisions had been over-ruled by Burghley and he had been harassed by the Comptroller George Whitton. Lee relished his roles in the service of the Queen, but by 1581, his experience of ten years as a royal servant contrasted poorly with his three decades as an independent landowner. Ditchley was Lee's own solution to the classical controversy of corrupt Court versus the purer pastoral idyll so often referred to in Court entertainments – he would establish his own independent estate at the gates of Woodstock while continuing to run the Queen's manor. From 1583, Ditchley became Lee's home and he created his own hunting domain within the forest of Wychwood. He made provision for his wife Anne at Quarrendon in December 1581, that on the event of his death, she should enjoy the profit

[26] ORO Lee 1/3a (9 May 1581).

from the lease of the Berryfield.[27] There is no indication that she ever came to Ditchley. The Quarrendon lands were entailed, but both Lee's sons had died young, leaving only a daughter, Mary, to inherit. On the death of Mary around 1583, Lee effected a recovery on his estates, transforming his holdings from fee entail to fee simple, which enabled him legally to leave his lands as he wished.[28]

The poor state of Lee's finances continued throughout the 1580s and was frequently mentioned in his letters. When sending a present to Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter, Frances, on her marriage to Philip Sidney in 1583, he apologized for the smallness of the gift stating 'he cannot send much that hath but little'.[29] In particular, his debt to the Queen was turning out to be a major embarrassment and given the extortionate interest rates of the time, usually ten percent and above, it was proving impossible to pay. In a letter to Walsingham in February 1587 from his brother's house in Thorne, Yorkshire, he wrote he was eager to 'satisfy her majesty and the worlde to whom I am in dette'.[30] By August 1589, after he had incurred expenses as Master of the Horse in the north of England during the Armada crisis, Lee still owed the Queen £900, and had to obtain a ruling from Burghley that no process would be made against him over his debt to the Queen if he repaid £300 yearly.[31] In another letter to Walsingham in October 1589 on the state of the armour in the Tower, Lee stated plainly that he lacked the finance to come to London as 'I am this week ... to send up such little plate I have to answer [the] debt to her Majesty [and] this year past I sold a farm I might evil spare'.[32] He requested that the Lords might delay questioning him about the Armoury until his annual engagement in London on 17 November, when he might 'stop two gaps with one brush'.

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[27] ORO Dil X/h/1.
[28] A recovery is a collusive action – a fake legal procedure in the Court of Chancery whereby estates are converted from holding in fee entail to fee simple. Lee's recovery was registered in Recovery Rolls 25 Elizabeth Easter m. 93. Ditchley was conveyed to feoffees for the purposes of Lee's will in 1593.
[29] *CSPD*, 1581-90 p. 95 (10 Feb.1583).
[30] BL, Harl. MS, 286 f. 100.
[31] TNA, PRO, SP46/37/41, Burghley's letter to Fanshawe (16 Aug 1589).
[32] *CSPD*, 1581-90, p. 623. (3 October 1589).

Lee was also borrowing from other sources. He had been promised a loan of £500 from George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury and had received £200 in September, prior to the earl's death on 18 November 1590. On 7 December 1590, he wrote to the seventh earl, Gilbert Talbot to say he had hoped to receive the outstanding £300 at Christmas 1590, as 'the hope of that munny whyche I so much bylte on, made me take some groundes in to my hands whyche is now lyke to turn to my hurte'.[33] Gilbert Talbot, with enough financial problems of his own, was lending money to no-one. Like many other courtiers, Lee could plead poverty and yet spend lavishly when the occasion demanded; he had just renewed a lease for the manor of Charlbury from St John's College Oxford and had purchased the residue of a lease of Abbots Wood at Charlbury. He spent heavily on the entertainment at his retirement tilt on 17 November 1590, but this was the last tournament for which he would lay out considerable sums. It was fortunate that on 5 July 1593, Burghley again ruled that no action should be taken against Lee in the matter of his debt to the Queen and later that year, a quittance of a debt of Sir Henry Lee was officially recorded, with a proviso that the £100 that still remained should be paid. [34]

Despite Lee's letter in 1600 to Sir Robert Cecil pleading poverty as a reason for not entertaining the Queen on her progress, his overall expenditure increased considerably in the years between 1596 and 1608. In 1597 Lee could afford to ride from Charing Cross to Windsor for his investiture as a Knight of the Garter with a train of some two hundred retainers, all dressed in blue. He also engaged in a rash of construction work that was typical of Elizabethan gentry at this time and his *Memorium Sacrae* records that he built 'four goodly houses', as well as an almshouse and family tombs in St Peter's church at Quarrendon. The new-found wealth needed to finance this came, in Lee's case and in the case of many other Buckinghamshire graziers, from the substantial rise in price of wool in the latter years of the 1590s, a rise that

[33] L[ambeth] P[alace] L[ibrary], Talbot papers 3199 f. 211 (7 Dec 1590).
[34] TNA, PRO, SP 46/38/344, Burghley to Fanshawe. (5 July 1593); BL, Add. Charters 75718 after 5 Dec. 1593.

peaked in 1603 before a substantial decline by 1610.[35] Lee was well-positioned to benefit from this; Gervase Markham noted that Buckinghamshire produced 'large-boned sheep of the best shape and deepest staple' and Camden, writing at the end of the sixteenth century recorded the 'infinite numbers of fleecie sheepe' at Quarrendon and Eythorp, where Sir Robert Dormer farmed.[36] Lee was raising his own sheep; in July 1594, he sent 'six sheep of his own breeding' from Quarrendon to the earl of Shrewsbury at Sheffield.[37] In 1598 Lee sold 4,905 fleeces at an average weight of 4.1 lb each, some from Ditchley but mostly from Quarrendon.[38]

Lee undertook building work at Ditchley itself, updating the old house before the Queen's visit in 1592 and he later built a lodge four miles from Ditchley known as Lee's Rest or Little Rest for his mistress Anne Vavasour at a cost of £5000, in keeping with the late Elizabethan fashion for building private lodges in the grounds of an estate.[39] Although there is little evidence that Lee enclosed any land on his Oxfordshire estates at this time, he was perceived to be guilty of enclosing as Benjamin Steer, the putative leader of the 'Oxfordshire rising' against enclosures in November 1596 named Lee as one of the six Oxfordshire landowners to be attacked.[40] It is possible Lee's enlarging of the Queen's hunting domain at Woodstock two decades earlier accounted for his inclusion on the list. In the event, the rising failed to materialize.

Lee's principal building works were in and around Quarrendon, and it is interesting to speculate why, having settled with his mistress in Ditchley, he should have chosen to develop his Buckinghamshire property at this point. The scale and design of Lee's building work was very much in keeping with

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[35] For a very detailed discussion of this complex topic, see Bowden, *Wool Trade.* Bowden also includes a table of wool prices pp. 219-220.

[36] Gervase Markham, *Cheap and Good Husbandry* (London, 1676) Wing M681; W.Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1626) RSTC. 4527.

[37] LPL, Shrewsbury papers 701 f. 145. (Lee to Shrewsbury 15 July 1594).

[38] ORO Dil III/b/2; VCH Bucks. iv. 101. This was 700 tods of wool.

[39] Burghley had a lodge at Theobalds and Sir Thomas Tresham built the triangular lodge at Rushton in 1596.

[40] John Walter, 'A Rising of the People?' *Past and Present,* cvii (May 1985), pp. 90-143. The date set for the rising was very close to 17 November, when several of the named potential victims such as Lee would have been in London. It is probable that the aim was to damage property or seize arms, rather than to give violence to landowners.

the enthusiasm for building current among the Elizabethan gentry in the last decade of the century and Lee, despite still having no legitimate heir but with intimations of mortality growing apace, presumably sought to leave some mark upon his ancestral family home. Possibly he simply chose to develop the gardens at Quarrendon because Ditchley, on much poorer soil and heavily wooded, was totally devoted to hunting. Although no part of the Elizabethan estate now exists above ground level, with the exception of a few stones of St. Peter's Church, the RCHME/English Heritage archaeological survey in 1989 reveals a precise picture of Lee's home that is absent from contemporary documents.[41] *(Figs. 15, 16, 17).*[42] The survey gives us an added perspective on the lifestyle and interests of Sir Henry Lee since, with the virtual abandonment of Quarrendon by his heirs, the Elizabethan garden layout was not remodelled by later generations.

The estate as it was left to Lee in 1548 comprised a moated manor house and courtyard with nearby orchards *(Fig. 15a)*; by 1600 the manor house had been enlarged and boasted major garden developments. To the west of the house, there was a moated water garden *(b)* - a complex of ponds and islands, surrounded by raised banks and walkways from which to view the islands. The estate continued west to St. Peter's church *(c)*, which was damaged in the floods of 1570. At some point after 1597, Lee restored St. Peter's Church, erecting family tombs and church armorial glass bearing his coat of arms with the Order of the Garter. The church itself is now reduced to a few stones above ground, but is by far the best documented part of the estate being the last structure to be demolished.[43] Lee's tomb inscription also claimed that he had 'reised the foundation of the adjoininge Hospitall', or almshouses. These are undocumented, and although Chambers and Dillon denied their existence, the archaeological survey reveals a possible site for the almshouses near the church *(d)*.

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[41] RCHME survey 1989-1990, taken for English Heritage. The whole complex was designated as a scheduled ancient monument; National Monument No.12004. Such was the extent of the earthworks of the formal gardens that they had earlier been misinterpreted as military earthworks from the Civil wars and are so named on some Ordnance Survey maps.

[42] Fig. 16 is reproduced from Everson, *Peasants,* p. 6.

[43] BL, Lansdowne MS, 874 ff. 35, 50b, epitaphs and arms from many of the churches in England, gathered by the College of Arms, includes a contemporary description of Lee's tomb. Engravings exist from 1815 and 1828, and photographs from 1908 show sixteenth century alterations to the church roof and nave.

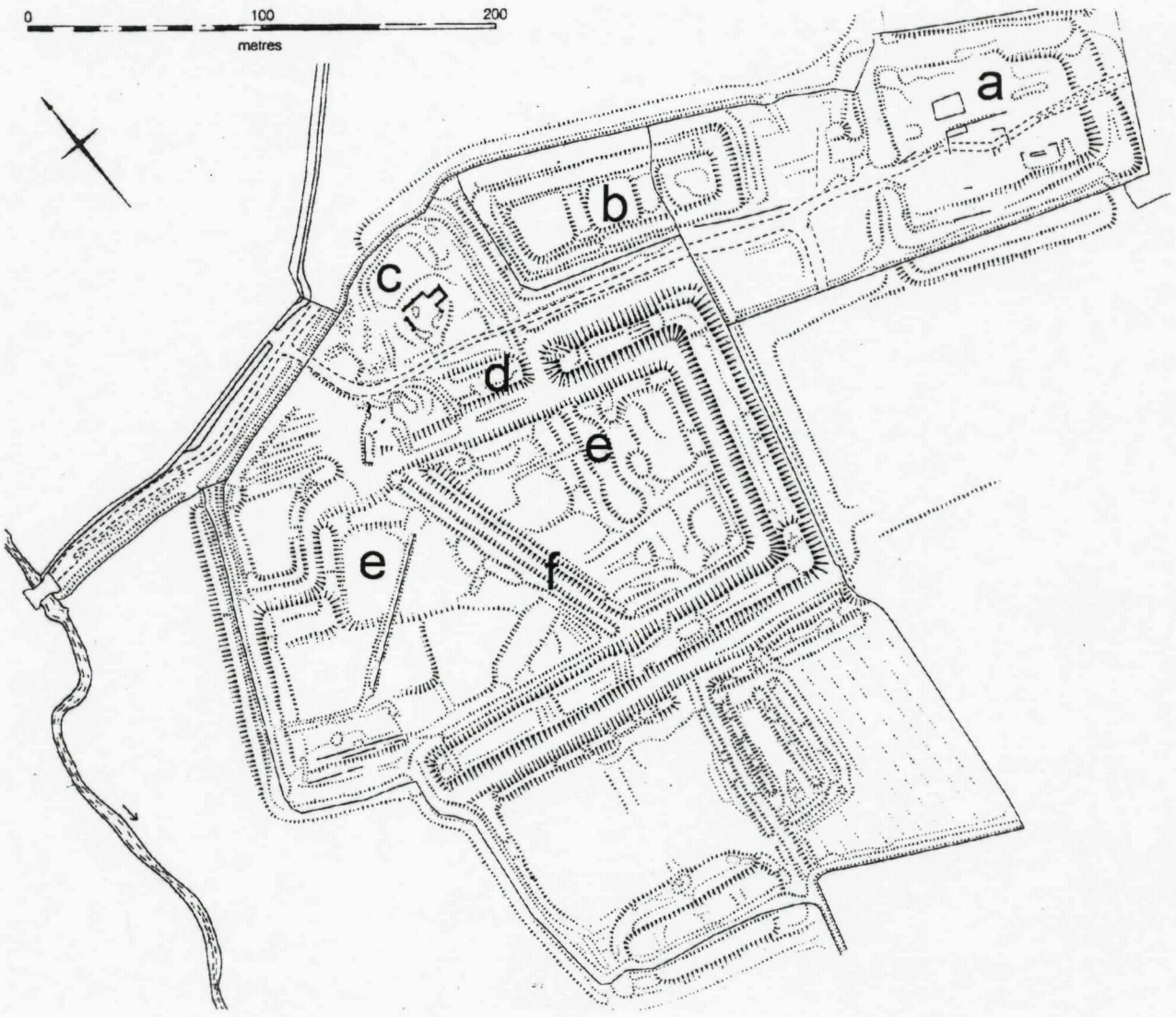

Fig. 15

RCHME/English Heritage surveyed plan of Quarrendon, 1990

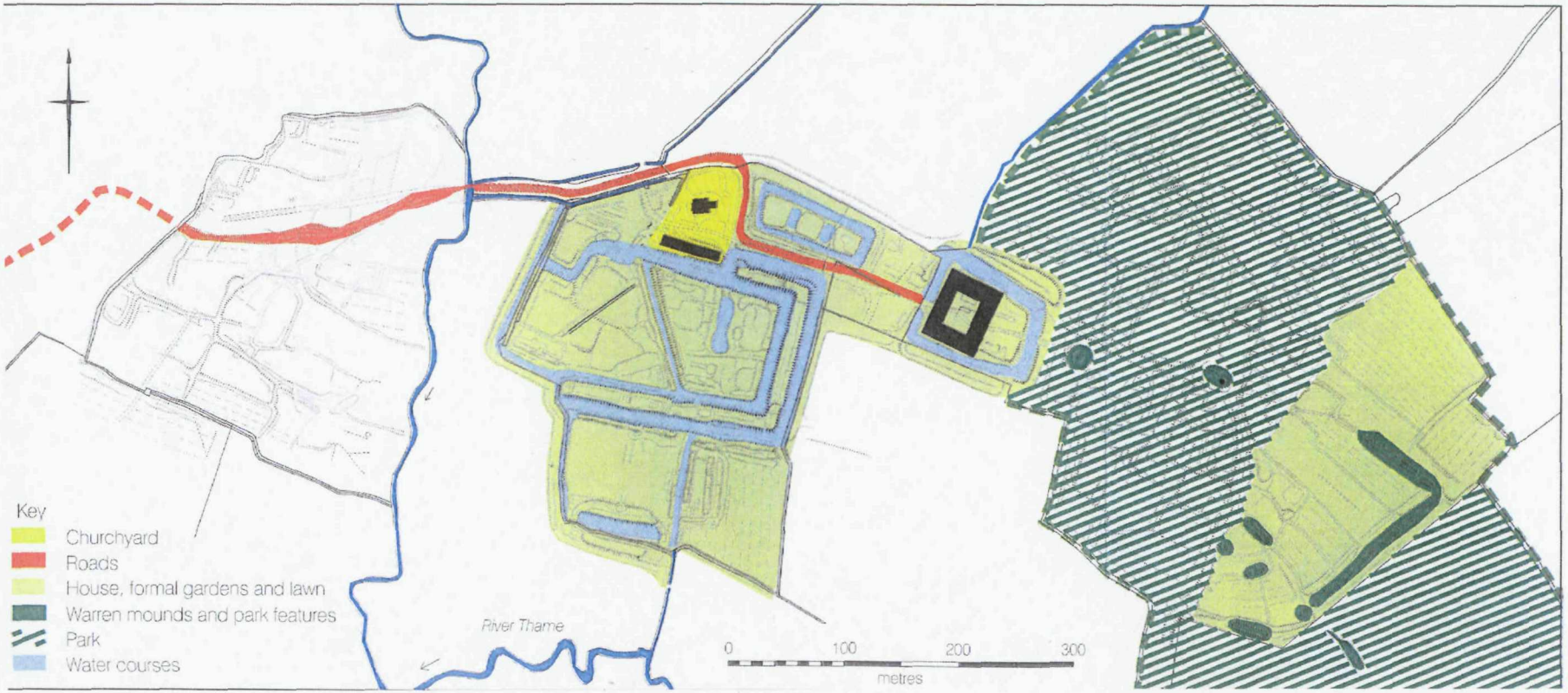

Fig. 16

Colour plan of Quarrendon

Fig. 17

Aerial photograph of Quarrendon

The major part of the Quarrendon gardens lay to the south of the church and comprised features typical of late Elizabethan gardens *(e)*.[44] The gardens were bounded by prominent earthworks; within these were sizeable raised islands surrounded by canals and ponds and accessible by ornamental bridges. In the garden were viewing platforms, garden buildings and possibly an ornamental mill. The most prominent feature of the garden appeared to be a broad inner canal running from west to east and acting as a bypass system from the garden's many water-features *(f)*. The garden was heavily reliant on a complex system of water management, and the archaeological survey revealed that certain drainage features still survive as functioning drains and dyked hedgerows. Everson suggests that these would have converted a large area of former floodplain north of the site formerly vulnerable to floods, such as those of 1570, into rich grazing meadow.[45] This would argue for the creation of such a garden scheme after the floods of 1570; had it existed before, the losses Lee experienced and the flood damage to St. Peter's church might have been averted. The size of the undertaking suggests that a considerable sum of money was spent on the expertise and manpower needed to execute the design. Many other features are revealed by the archaeological survey, including a sizeable managed Tudor coney warren, placed very prominently to the east of the great house, with a typical complex of pillow mounds, ditches and possibly a warrener's cottage.[46] Everson notes that 'the formal garden, earthworks and the warren are notable for their scale, detail and completeness'.[47]

Is the survey of Sir Henry Lee's gardens important? Of itself, it is little more than an interesting recovery of a lost Elizabethan garden, proving that Lee was well in the forefront of the contemporary fashion for house and garden development. Taken together with the intricate symbolism of the 1592 Ditchley portrait and other portraits commissioned by Lee, and his known talent for producing tournament *imprese*, the complicated layout of the gardens on such a large scale would suggest that Lee had a mind far deeper

[44] See P. Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden* (London, 2005).
[45] Everson, 'Peasants', p. 31.
[46] Pillow mounds were pillow-shaped, flat-topped rectangular mounds often surrounded by a shallow ditch, used to farm rabbits from Norman times.
[47] Everson, 'Peasants', p. 1.

and more complex than has been hitherto suspected. Everson goes as far as to suggest that the somewhat eccentric triangular layout of Lee's formal gardens at Quarrendon shows a 'concern in this garden's creation for didactic ratios and scientific geometry very much beyond the organization and rectangularity characteristic of early post-medieval formal gardens in England'.[48] Whether this is true or not remains a matter for speculation. In all probability Lee did not plan every feature of the gardens himself, any more than he planned every aspect of the Ditchley portrait. He did, however, commission and pay for them and would have had a major say in their formulation.

One of the major difficulties with using the 1989 archaeological survey of Quarrendon is that there is virtually no contemporary written evidence on Lee's garden development. We only know that land including the 'upper warren' was leased to an Aylesbury butcher in 1607.[49] It is therefore difficult to date Lee's development of his estate at Quarrendon and any attempt must be conjectural, based on the evidence of his other actions. While the principal developments at Quarrendon appear to have taken place in the second half of the sixteenth century, they need not necessarily have been effected at the same time. Such a large-scale development of Quarrendon itself would have necessitated three things from Lee – time, inclination and most importantly, money. The formal courtyards around the moated great house existed in Sir Anthony Lee's day, but the house itself appears to have been enlarged by Sir Henry Lee. The visit of the earl of Leicester in 1566 would perhaps have necessitated some enlargement, but house extension tended to be a continuous project in late Elizabethan England. After 1570, although Lee had neither the time nor money to devote to Quarrendon; his wife was nominally living there with their daughter Mary, and the creation of the coney warren could have been her work. The melancholic and deserted Lady Lee was spending an increasing amount of time with her mother at the Paget family home at West Drayton, Middlesex, and died in 1590. From 1595 Lee had both the money and the freedom to indulge his new passion for building, and the style of the gardens themselves is typical of others developed

[48] Everson, 'Peasants', p. 40.
[49] ORO Dil X/g/1.

elsewhere in the 1590s and 1600s. Before his death, Lee had also built two more manor-houses near Quarrendon; one at Burston and another called Laelius at Weedon.[50]

The late Elizabethan fashion for house-building also brought a rash of borrowing; as Lee remarked in 1607, 'builders seldome swymme in money'.[51] The demand for short-term loans saw the rise of a new type of moneylender and Michael Hickes, secretary to Lord Burghley and friend of Sir Robert Cecil typified the careful professional man who was prepared to advance money to friends under certain conditions. Borrowing by landowners did not necessarily indicate poor finance; rents from leases on land tended to be paid only twice a year and income from wool annually. Many landowners, finding themselves in temporary difficulties or seeing an opportunity to buy land adjacent to their own, preferred to take out a short-term loan rather than sell assets. Most of Lee's loans either took the form of a bond or were secured by statute; in both cases the creditor could sue for repayment. Raising money by mortgage was a more risky procedure which could result in the forfeiture of the land, and Lee only resorted to this once in 1598, when he briefly mortgaged some coppices in Charlbury and ten acres in Blackgrove to his nephew Lee Symonds. Lee borrowed frequently from Hickes; he borrowed £2000 secured by statute in April 1598, another £500 in June 1599 and he continued to borrow from Hickes until 1608 while remaining on the friendliest of terms with his creditor.[52]

In 1601 Lee received, as a compliment from the Queen, 'in consideration of good and faithful service done by Sir Henry Lee', a confirmation of his former patent of

> the Manor of Quarrendon & all the tythes marshes woodes etc and all the courts whatsoever and all the fairs markets toles ... and all rent & annual profit ... by fealty only.[53]

The new patent was highly complimentary but its wording necessitated a second recovery on Lee's hereditary estates.[54]

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[50] The house now standing on the site of Laelius is called Lilies, with little apparent appreciation of the significance of the original name.

[51] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90. no. 36 f. 72 (Lee to Sir Michael Hickes 1607); L. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1995), p. 247.

[52] TNA, PRO, LC4/195/73 (1598) and LC4/194/165 (1599). The penalty for non-payment was £4000; A.G.R.Smith, *Servant to the Cecils, the life of Sir Michael Hickes, 1543-1612* (London, 1977), pp. 108-11.

[53] Rot. Pat. 44 Eliz. Pt. iv M. 22. (Lee's renewed patent for Quarrendon).

HOW TYPICAL WAS SIR HENRY LEE AS A LANDOWNER AND GRAZIER?

It is interesting to compare Lee's financial position with other gentlemen of the same status as himself. His closest neighbours, the Dormers at Wing, four miles from Quarrendon were, like the Lees, a gentry family whose great wealth was built on sheep farming. They had land in Oxfordshire as well as Buckinghamshire, and Sir Robert Dormer (1485-1552), like Sir Robert Lee, had built up the family fortunes. Both families appreciated their responsibilities as local gentry; Sir William Dormer (1512-1575) served in Parliament with Sir Henry Lee as knight of the shire for Buckinghamshire on at least three occasions; Lee served on eight occasions between 1558 and 1584, and sat on four parliamentary committees in 1581. Members of both the Lee and Dormer families served as local magistrates and as muster-masters for Buckinghamshire.[55] Whereas Lee's main preoccupation was his service to the Queen and much of his Quarrendon land was leased out, the Dormers preferred to remain at home, developing and extending their manors and flocks. The principal difference between the two families was the fact that the Dormers were Catholic. The leading men of the family were prepared to conform publicly to the established religion, which enabled them to play a part in county administration and avoid recusancy fines, but overall it was deemed politic and infinitely more profitable to eschew a Court career.[56] The younger Sir Robert Dormer (1550/51-1616) occasionally came to Court with Lee in the 1590s; but he followed the tradition of his father and grandfather, and concentrated on his lands. Before his death, he had more than twenty-six sheep-rearing manors and become Baron Dormer of Wing, purchasing the title that eluded Lee.[57]

The experience of the Dormers contrasted with another great sheep-rearing gentry family, the Treshams of Northamptonshire. Sir Thomas Tresham (1544-1605), an erstwhile participant in Lee's tournaments, had

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[54] 1 Jac. I Trinity m. 21 1603.
[55] See, for example, HMC. Salis. V p. 523.(1595).
[56] Jane Dormer (1538-1612), a gentlewoman to Queen Mary, married the Duke of Feria in December 1558, the only important marriage between the servants of Philip II and those of Mary. As Duchess of Feria, Jane's house became a centre for English Catholic exiles in Spain.
[57] It was said he paid £10,000 for the title of Baron Dormer in 1615, in the first of the substantial sales of peerages at the Jacobean Court.

sought a Court career but his open Catholicism brought him a term of imprisonment and ruinous recusancy fines. Sir Henry Lee, although he had a Catholic wife, avoided such financial pitfalls by his firm adherence to the established church. The experience of Lee and the Dormer family as gentlemen graziers can also be compared to that of the Spencer family of Althorp, Northamptonshire. Whereas Lee had chosen a Court career and the Dormers had extended their land in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the Spencers had a long tradition of eschewing attendance at Court, concentrating on building up flocks and developing breeds of sheep. The exercise, over several generations, had rendered them one of the wealthiest gentry families in England. Unlike Lee, Sir John Spencer had a large family to provide for, including six daughters, but money and judicious marriages ensured the family rapidly entered the peerage under James I.

It is also interesting to compare Lee's building activities with those of his contemporaries. Quarrendon was what Paul Everson calls 'a country house within a manipulated setting', a wealthy gentry estate typical of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and incorporating many features found in the properties of Lee's friends. The Dormer family's original house at Wing had been moated like Quarrendon, but in 1606 Sir Robert Dormer commissioned Ascott House, a pleasant half-timbered dwelling, not unlike contemporary descriptions of Lee's house at Ditchley. Dormer, like Lee, also borrowed money from Sir Michael Hickes to finance his building work.[58] Lee's almshouses at Quarrendon were typical of other charities of the time; Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester had already founded Lord Leicester's Hospital at Warwick in 1571 and Sir Robert Dormer's mother, Dame Dorothy Dormer founded almshouses known at Dormer's hospital in 1596 for eight men and women. Sir Baptist Hickes, a good friend of Lee, endowed twelve almshouses in Chipping Campden in 1612, near his newly- built Campden House.

The garden earthworks and water gardens at Quarrendon would have closely paralleled those at Lyveden New Bield in Northamptonshire, where the Catholic Sir Thomas Tresham developed a formidable system of water

[58] TNA, PRO, LC4/193/69.

gardens with raised terraces and moatside walks from 1593.[59] Coney warrens such as Lee's were a common feature of medieval and post-medieval gardens. At least twelve pillow mounds still exist at Woodstock, the Dormers' estate at Wing incorporated a rabbit warren within an elaborate garden, Petworth House in Sussex boasted Conigar Lodge and Sir Thomas Tresham built his heavily-symbolic triangular Warrener's lodge at Rushton, Northamptonshire.

Although it was not part of his personal estates, Lee was prepared to use his experience and influence as a member of the leading county gentry to benefit New Woodstock, Oxfordshire. The township, which was chiefly dependant upon its proximity to the Queen's manor at Woodstock had 'fallen into great poverty', but was allowed to set itself up as a wool staple in 1576, in the hope that this would attract trade and industry to the borough.[60] Lee was responsible for New Woodstock being granted its own Parliamentary seat, usually filled by Lee's family nominees. Despite his *contretemps* with the tenants of Woodstock in 1576, he was appointed High Steward of the borough of Woodstock in 1580, a 'ceremonial position providing the political patronage regarded as vital for the town', and held this position until 1611.[61]

A CASE-STUDY: ROYAL PATENTS AWARDED TO SIR HENRY LEE FOR THE MANUMISSION OF BONDMEN REGARDANT TO MANORS OF THE CROWN.

If the majority of Sir Henry Lee's financial affairs were reasonably typical of Elizabethan gentlemen of his standing, the patents to manumit or free some three hundred bondmen and bondwomen on the royal estates granted to Sir Henry Lee by the Queen in 1575 and 1576 were unique. A study of these illustrates the last days of the archaic system of villeinage that was all but dead in most parts of England.

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[59] Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden.* Unlike Quarrendon, Sir Thomas Tresham's work at Lyveden is well-documented, BL, Add. MS, 39832, 39833 and 39836 f. 164. The building accounts from 1593-97 and 1599-1600 were used in Finch, *Five Northants Families*, pp. 66-94 and pp. 182-184.

[60] Statutes of the Realm 18 Elizabeth I c. 21. Complaints were made in 1577 that the new wool staple at New Woodstock in Oxfordshire had led to much local English wool being engrossed into a few rich men's hands – TNA, PRO, SP 12/114/39.

[61] M. Maslen ed., *Woodstock Chamberlain's Accounts 1609-1650,* Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol. 58 (Stroud, 1993) p. 3.

One way in which the Queen could reward favourites at no expense to herself personally was to grant permission for them to seek out certain of her subjects who could be forced to forfeit their goods or money for various reasons. In Lee's case, the subjects to be sought out were bondmen or villeins on royal manors and his task was to manumit them, or grant them their freedom for a fee. If the bondmen themselves refused manumission, Lee was entitled to claim up to a third of the bondman's 'goods, chattels, leases, lands, tenements and hereditiments'. Villeinage in gross, though mentioned in Lee's commission, had virtually died out, but the state of villein regardant to a particular manor still existed especially on Crown lands.[62] The term was still used in manorial records, but by the reign of Elizabeth, the granting of manumissions to such bondmen who still existed had degenerated into a fund-raising exercise for the Signet office or for a favoured courtier. Sir Henry Lee was the last major beneficiary of patents of manumission; the patents were a sign of substantial royal favour, but would not make his fortune overnight.

The survival of villeinage into late Elizabethan England was something of an anachronism; some contemporary Elizabethan authors such as Sir Thomas Smith denied its existence and it is not a subject which has much exercised present-day historians. The subject was discussed in 1903 by Alexander Savine, in what was then a ground-breaking article, and revisited by Diarmaid MacCulloch in 1988.[63] Apart from these, the demise of Elizabethan villeinage has tended to be relegated to the researches of local historians.[64] While a study of manumission under Lee adds little to the overall work of Sabine and MacCulloch, it does add to our knowledge of Lee himself. In the absence of detailed financial accounts for his landholdings in Quarrendon and Ditchley, it gives an interesting insight into the one specific aspect of Lee's finances which is well-documented.

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[62] *Villeins in gross* were attached to an individual lord and the practice had all but disappeared. *Villeins regardant* were attached to a specific manor.

[63] A. Savine, 'Bondmen under the Tudors', *TRHS.*, 2nd series, xvii (1903), pp. 235-89; D. MacCulloch, 'Bondmen in Tudor England', in C. Cross, D. Loades, J.J. Scarisbrick, eds., *Law and government under the Tudors: essays presented to Sir Geoffrey Elton* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 91-109; Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* ,iii, pp. 107-14, quoted in Savine 'Bondmen', p. 239.

[64] F.G. Davenport's *The economic development of a Norfolk Manor, 1086-1565* (Cambridge, 1906, reprinted New York,1967) is typical of such studies, and fortunately extends its survey to include Lee's manumissions on the manor of Forncett in 1575.

What Diarmiad MacCulloch calls 'the last great manumission campaign' began on 3 April 1574 with a charter for Burghley and Sir Walter Mildmay.[65] The preamble informs us that the Queen's

> poore faithfull and loyal Subjects, being borne in Blode and regardant to ... manors [had] made humble Suyte unto Us to be Manumysed Enfranchised and made free with theire Children ... [to become] more apte and fitte members ... of our Common Wealthe.

Whether or not they had made suit, the fact remained that they had to 'compound ... for Suche resonable Somes of Money ... for Manumission', in this case, the sum of 12s 8d. A letter from Burghley to Thomas Fanshawe on 11 July 1574 makes it clear that the benefit of this particular commission had originally been intended for Sir Henry Lee, and that her Majesty now desired that Lee should have a full grant in his own name to manumit a number of bondmen.[66] On 7 January 1575, Lee, as the Queen's

> wellbeloved and faithfull subject and servant ... for the speciall trust & confidence ... in your ... wisdome & fidelitie' [was to] appoint accept admitt & cause to be manumysed infranchised & made free such two hundreth of o[u]r bondmen & bondwomen in bludd ... either bondmen ... in gros or els ... regardant to all or any of o[u]r mann[o]rs.[67]

The procedure was laid down in the commission. The holder was to seek out some two hundred bondmen and bondwomen, with 'their children and sequells', and compound with them for their freedom; in Lee's case, a fee of 26s 8d was mentioned in his patent of 17 January 1575.[68] A warrant was to be drawn up, signed by Lee and presented to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.[69] Lee's first warrant is dated 1 February 1575 and the whole business was of sufficient contemporary importance for Lee's patents and warrants to be copied out chronologically some time shortly after 1591.[70]

The case of Long Bennington in Lincolnshire illustrates how Lee's commission was implemented. By his first patent, he was entitled to manumit some two hundred bondmen with their children and Lee took care to choose

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[65] T. Rymer, *Foedera,* (20 vols., London,1704-35), xv, p. 731-33.
[66] TNA, PRO, SP46/30/49.
[67] TNA, PRO, DL 42/102 (Duchy of Lancaster Miscellania). Lee's original patent was sold as part of 'property of a gentleman' at Sotheby's 20 Nov.1973 and was purchased privately. Lee's second patent, 20 June 1575, is now on display at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire.
[68] *sequella* – progeny or brood. *CPR* 17 Eliz. I part viii. p. 511 (17 Jan. 1575).
[69] TNA, PRO, DL 41/553 - Lee's actual warrants and draft deeds of manumission are retained among the Duchy's papers in a large unwieldy bundle. See also E178/1550.
[70] TNA, PRO, DL 42/102 - chronological copies. The last recorded is 12 May 41 Eliz.

only bondmen who could afford to pay. Various manorial surveys had been undertaken earlier in the reign, probably with the purpose of manumission in mind, and Lee was fortunate that one existed for the royal manor of Long Bennington. The survey had been conducted by some eighteen local men and women, and depositions sworn on 18 April 1570, recording the ages of all bondmen and women with their families, goods and chattels, and inventories of recently deceased bondmen. Clearly, many bondmen had prospered; for example, the late Robert Gilbarte, a villein regardant unto Long Bennington was worth £195 3s 6d on the day of his death.[71]

The Long Bennington roll also illustrates how candidates for manumission were selected. The original 1570 roll was meticulously annotated by Lee's agent Thomas Grey in 1575 and little was secret. Thomas Huys, deceased, 'died riche by marrying of a wydoo sister to Isake of London' and the children of the late Robert Gilbarte were to pay 'out of their porcion for ther manumising'. When manumission was granted to bondmen with their children, no mention was made of the bondman's wife, having no monetary value to the manor. When the wife was a freewoman, a note was made. Against widows' names are details of their property; in the case of the widow Margaret Isake, who had £6 18s 4d, the note reads 'this woman will pay nothing'. The pauper status of the cottars Humfrey Huys and Robert Baynbrigg was recorded, and it is unlikely that Lee would have regarded them as worth manumitting. Overall, we have an evaluation of the holdings of each bondman and bondwoman regardant to the manor of Long Bennington in both 1570 and 1575. Armed with this information and other similar rolls, Lee could choose who the most profitable subjects for manumission were. Savine suggests that the annotations to the Long Bennington roll are by Lee, but it seems highly unlikely that he actually did the work himself, given his other activities in the service of the Queen.[72] The vigorous and muscular writing used on the roll, not dissimilar from Lee's, is the hand of his agent Thomas Grey, who signed and delivered each manumission warrant to Lee.[73] Savine quite rightly calls the seeking out of bondmen 'mean work' and whereas Lee

[71] TNA, PRO, DL 41/553 ff. 1-8.
[72] Savine, 'Bondmen', p. 18.
[73] TNA, PRO, DL 41/553.

was nominally in charge, the close enquiry needed to implement this was more the work of a land steward.

It was obvious by the time of Lee's second commission in June 1575 that he was meeting some opposition, possibly from prosperous bondmen such as the large Gilbarte family of Long Bennington.[74] On 30 June Lee received a second grant to enfranchise an additional one hundred bondmen and bondwomen. This time the commission had teeth - not only could Lee seize the lands and chattels of any such who refused reasonably to compound with Lee for their manumission, but he could cause enquiry to be made of all lands alienated by bondmen and bondwomen. Lee received a third commission on 17 December 1576 granting him further powers to seize for himself any land that had been recently alienated by bondmen and bondwomen. To aid him in his enquiries, he already had a list of landholdings in 1570 in Long Bennington and in other manors with similar surveys.[75]

The records illustrate that not all the bondmen still surviving into Elizabethan times were content to remain as mere labourers on their manor. Many chose to live some distance from the manor and paid the fine of *chevage* for the privilege; for example, William Wanklen, a villein regardant to the manor of 'Leompster', Herefordshire, was found to be living as a hatmaker in Saint Katheryns, London. Some had become educated; William Baynbrigg from Long Bennington was a curate in Norwich as was his brother Thomas, and on 12 May 1576, Lee presented for manumission William Dunne, fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and Daniel Dunne, fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, both villeins regardant to the honour of Eye.[76] Some wealthy bondmen who had risen in the world welcomed manumission as a chance to improve the standing of their family at a bargain price; a frequent complaint in the past had been the difficulty villeins experienced in making advantageous marriages. Many villeins preferred not to advertise their servile status, even to denying their villeinage. In Forncett in Norfolk, a manor escheated to the Crown after the execution of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk in 1572,

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[74] *CPR* 17 Eliz. I part xiv. p. 564 (20 June 1575).
[75] *CPR* 18 Elizabeth I part viii p. 330 (17 December 1576). Davenport, *Norfolk Manor,* reprints part of the survey taken there in 1565.
[76] TNA, PRO, DL 41/553 ff.1-8. See also BL, Lansdowne MS, 23 no. 74, (a letter from Daniel Dunne in Latin to Lord Burghley thanking him for dealing for him with Sir Henry Lee 19 May 1576).

Robert Bolytout and Thomas Lound refused to pay for manumission, denying villein status and took Lee to court.[77] This was not an isolated case and others must be hidden in the hundreds of manor rolls still extant. Local magistrates were not above aiding villeins who were not prepared to pay for manumission; in Norfolk, magistrates of six parishes obligingly found there to be no villeins regardant within their purlieu.[78]

What do Lee's actions in this matter tell us about Lee himself? The manumission patents reveal him as a man who was meticulous in their implementation, signing each warrant and continuing the process up to 1599. Despite having been a substantial landowner in Buckinghamshire for two decades, Lee's experience of dealing with recalcitrant tenants by 1575 would have been scant and his experience of villeinage even less. MacCulloch points out that villeinage survived into Elizabethan England on older traditionally conservative manors lying mostly in wetland levels or in rich river bottoms, mostly devoted to agrarian farming. This was precisely where sheep farming would not have flourished. Quarrendon itself had been enclosed and depopulated long since; in 1563 it was only supporting four families and Fleetmarston had only five cottages for shepherds. Lee did not purchase Ditchley until 1583 and that manor was sparsely tenanted. Obviously, dealing with tenants could be very different with differing forms of farming; if Lee's experience with recalcitrant tenants was coloured by his experiences when manumitting bondmen, it throws a new light on his impatience when dealing with difficult tenants at Woodstock between 1576 and 1580.

How much money Lee made out of his manumission warrants is not known. Dillon was of the opinion that Lee only got 'a nice clutch of lawsuits' but by 1581 Lee's patents were being cited as a reason for the decay of the Profit of the Signet and Privy Seal.[79] The activity appeared to have been sufficiently profitable for more than 200 warrants to have been presented to the Duchy of Lancaster, mostly between 1575 and 1581, with the last being presented in 1599. In total, Lee manumitted some 495 named individuals in 137 villein families from Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Somerset, Cornwall,

[77] Davenport, *Norfolk manor,* Appendix XIV pp. xcii-xciii.
[78] TNA, PRO, E 178/1550 Inquisitions as to bondmen of blood regardant to the Queen's manors in the parishes of Martham, West Walton, Walpole, Terrington, East Dereham and Wymondham.
[79] Chambers, *Lee,* p. 46; *CSPD,* 1581-90 p. 40.

Berkshire, Hereford and the Isle of Wight. As Lee was entitled to manumit 300 bondmen and their named offspring, in many cases four or five other persons, this number would suggest that Lee fell short of his 300 'bondmen of bloud'. He must have realised quite quickly that, however potentially lucrative the manumissions might prove in the long run, they were not going to solve his short-term financial problems.

If Lee's handling of his manumission patents do not reveal him as a man of acute financial acumen, it might also indicate that there was not necessarily a great deal of money to be made out of the Queen's favours, however flattering they might be, and however hard a courtier worked to implement them.

CONCLUSION

In private life, Sir Henry Lee's economic fortunes followed a pattern typical of land-owning gentleman graziers; financial returns rose and fell with the vagaries of the wool trade, and the extent to which one profited depended on one's own personal aspirations and family circumstances. Ideally, a gentleman's path to prosperity was to remain at home, husbanding and developing one's estates with one healthy male heir prepared to continue this tradition. It was preferable to avoid the necessity for copious dowries for daughters, to stay firmly Protestant, and be prepared to wait for the next monarch to prove generous with titles. Little of this was either attractive or available to Sir Henry Lee. Clearly, taking the example of the Dormers, Lee would have found it more profitable to remain at home in Quarrendon, extending his family lands and wool business in contented domesticity, but it was not in Lee's nature to find this sufficient. He failed to profit financially from his marriage, and family life proved disappointing and fruitless. Service to the crown brought excitement, challenge and a wide range of friends. The Queen's various favours in the 1570s were never very lucrative; Lee was frequently in debt like many other courtier gentlemen, and only after his retirement from Court did he find himself sufficiently wealthy to indulge in the contemporary enthusiasm for house-building. On the death of his wife, he could have sought a profitable second marriage to some wealthy widow and it is a testimony to the closeness of his relations to Anne Vavasour that this was

never mooted. Lee did not die a wealthy man, but at least he avoided the crippling financial ruin that was the lot of many of his contemporaries at Court.

CHAPTER SIX

SIR HENRY LEE - THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A TUDOR GENTLEMAN

ii) LEE'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS

In the chivalric culture of which Sir Henry Lee was a part, links of kinship and friendship in private life were regarded as being as important as loyalty and service to the monarch. From the day he achieved his majority in 1554, Lee was the head of a large family grouping. He took his responsibilities seriously; if he himself relied on the patronage of others at Court, his family and his subordinates relied on him for advancement and employment. Lee's immediate family relations were poor; he became estranged from his wife Anne Paget and distanced himself from his Paget relations, whose Catholic activities became increasingly damaging in the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign. From 1590, unusually for a courtier in the Queen's favour, Lee lived openly with his mistress Anne Vavasour, achieving the domestic contentment missing from his marriage. He also developed a wide circle of friends at Court during his long career, and his interests after retirement reflected his devotion to Queen, friends and family. A study of this aspect of Sir Harry Lee's private life presents an opportunity to see not only a more rounded view of the man in his own context, but to glimpse domestic interests, responsibilities, priorities and concerns typical of many Elizabethan courtier gentlemen.

SIR HENRY LEE AND HIS FAMILY.

Sir Henry Lee's wife was Anne, second daughter of William, Lord Paget. As Paget's ward, Lee had little option whom he married and the couple were wed by July 1551. His personal life did not flourish; his two young sons John and Henry died in infancy and after twenty years of marriage, Lee's only heir was his daughter Mary. There is little evidence that Lee spent much time with his wife after his appointment at Woodstock, and Lady Lee's letters to her brother, Thomas, Lord Paget, make it clear that as early as 1572, she was not only spending much of her time with her widowed mother, Lady Anne Paget, at the Paget family home at West Drayton, but was also administering her mother's

household.[1] Lee was recalled to his paternal duties when, in February 1578 the lords of the Privy Council were informed that

> one Worsley had stolen away the daughter of Sir Henry Lee knight and marryed her, contrary to the lawes of the Realme and all good order, theire lordships require ... Sir Henry Lee to repaire unto them and call before them all sutche as he shall chardge to have delt in this matter.[2]

By March 1578, George Monoux of Walthamstow, together with the vicar and the parish clerk of that parish had been imprisoned for complicity in the matter, although they were later released.[3] No more was heard of Lee's only surviving child until her death around 1583. Lee did not entirely ignore his wife; he sent her game regularly from his many visits to the earl of Leicester at Kenilworth and possibly shared his copy of Sidney's *Old Arcadia* with her.[4] In 1581, when contemplating purchasing Ditchley in Oxfordshire, he made financial provision for Lady Lee in the event of his death.[5]

By 1583, any links he had with the Catholic Paget family were becoming an embarrassment to Lee and he took care to distance himself from them. Anne Lee came from a large family, with four sisters and two brothers still alive in 1583, and Sir Henry Lee was one of the few within the extended family who did not profess Catholic sympathies.[6] The position of English Catholics was becoming increasingly difficult politically and the Pagets were viewed with suspicion. There was much justification for this; Lady Lee's younger brother Charles Paget had long been active as a Catholic agent in France and the head of the family, Lord Thomas Paget, fled to Paris in December 1583 following the Resolutions of the Council, for 'the execution of the laws against evil affected subjects and Jesuits'.[7] Lord Paget left the ordering of his affairs, discharge of his servants and sale of his horses in the

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[1] S[taffordshire] R[ecord] O[ffice], D603/K/1/4/6; D603/K/1/10/21-23.
[2] Dasent, *APC* XI pp. 56-7 (Feb1578).
[3] Dasent, *APC* XI p. 79 (March 1578). George Monoux was the heir of the very wealthy merchant and mayor of London George Monoux (1465-1544), later of Walthamstow.
[4] CKS, (Penshurst papers) U1475 E93 ff. 5r., 7r., 16v. Gifts of venison to Lady Lee are recorded in 1574, 1575 and 1578. Presumably, as Lee was responsible for the Queen's game at Woodstock, it was inappropriate to send his wife venison from there. In *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts,* pp. 264-266, Woudhuysen suggests that *Henry Stanford's Anthology,* containing eleven of Sidney's poems, owes much to Lee's own copy of the *Old Arcadia.* Stanford was tutor from 1581 to the young William Paget at his grandmother's home in West Drayton, where Anne Lee also lived.
[5] ORO Dil X/h/1.
[6] The scant evidence of Lee's own religious beliefs is discussed below in chapter seven.
[7] L. Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem, some aspects of the careers of two exile-Adventurers, Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget* (London, 1964).

hands of his sister Lady Lee, and his mother was entrusted with the care of his young son William.[8] In January 1584, Anne Lee wrote from West Drayton to her brother Charles in Paris

> you knowe my malyngcholy nature wellinough, and beinge dayly oppressed with greifes and troubles and wantynge the good and comfortable company of them whiche I was wont to have ... for now we live alone and almost ther is none that dareth come to us ... my lady [their mother] is in helth and I thank god hathe passed over thes trowbles a greate deale better then I loked for. My nephew William with all the rest here are in helth.[9]

This and a similar letter to their brother from her sister Griselda Waldegrave née Paget were both intercepted by Walsingham's agents.

The fortunes of the Paget family did not improve; in August 1584, the goods and chattels of Lord Paget were confiscated by the Crown, reserving enough for his son and his mother. Anne Lee received another letter from Lord Paget on 14 October 1584, with a missive to be forwarded to the Council, pleading his case.[10] In September 1585, Ightham Mote in Kent, the home of another Catholic Paget sister Ethelreda, wife of Sir Christopher Allen, was searched for 'knowledge of an unknown person come from beyond the sea'.[11] It was found that 'Sir Christopher Allen ... kept a vile and papistical house' and had received a messenger from the Paget brothers in Paris.[12] Lord Thomas Paget was formally attainted for treason in 1586 and the barony and family estates forfeited in 1587. After the death of the dowager Lady Anne Paget in February that year, the wardship of young William Paget was given to Sir George Carey.[13]

Lady Lee's letters to her brothers suggest that she was an intelligent and capable woman, but after twenty years of a marriage that had produced

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[8] TNA, PRO, SP12/164/7. Paget's estranged wife Nazareth Newton had already died in April 1583.
[9] TNA, PRO, SP12/167/13 (29 January 1584); SP12/167/98 (Griselda Waldegrave née Paget to Charles Paget). The dowager Lady Paget's houses in Staffordshire and in Fleet Street, London had been searched in December 1583 as was that of Griselda Waldegrave, *CSPD,* 1581-90 p.138.
[10] *CSPD,* Addenda 1580-1625, p.128.
[11] *CSPD*, 1581-90 p. 266.
[12] *CSPD,* 1581-90 p. 267.
[13] Dasent, *APC* (1586-7), p. 352. Young William Paget appeared to be more like his grandfather than his father and had rented back the family lands by 1597. He was restored in blood and honours by James I in 1604. His will in 1629 required his children to be brought up in the Church of England 'and in no way otherwise', Michael A. R. Graves, 'Paget, William, fifth Baron Paget (1572–1629)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21122].

only one living daughter, she had little to attract her husband. Any fiction of a union was over by 1585, when her mother, Lady Anne Paget, made her will. Lady Lee was the only member of the family to be left property directly, 'during such time as Sir Henry Lee husband to the said Ladie Lee my daughter and she shall live separate and asunder one from the other'.[14] The fact that she received the use of all her mother's household goods suggests that she brought little away from her marital home at Quarrendon. Anne Lee was the chief mourner at her mother's funeral in February 1587; her husband was conspicuous by his absence.[15] After that date Lady Lee may have resided in the house her mother had left her in Fleet Street, London; more probably, with her sister Griselda Waldegrave.[16] The date of Anne Lee's death is not known; Chambers states she was buried in Aylesbury Church 31 December 1590 but offers only evidence from a secondary source.

Lady Anne Lee's lavish alabaster tomb in St Mary's Church, Aylesbury bears the date 1584, which is clearly wrong. There is a curious entry in the church register of 1586 [February 1587] which records that 'the corpes of Mistress Mary Lee daughter to Sir Henry Lee Knight was layd in the vaute in the church wher hir mothers tombe now standeth on xij of ffebruary'.[17] It is probable that Mary had died in 1583, accounting not only for the recovery of his lands that Lee made in that year but the 'greifes and troubles' referred to by Lady Lee. Possibly Anne Lee consoled herself by constructing an elaborate tomb, and Mary's coffin was moved as soon as it was ready.[18] Whenever Lady Lee died, her tomb inscription records that she

> bare thre impes which had to name
> Ihon Henry Mary slayne by fortvnes spight
> First two bei'g yong which cavsd ther pare[n]ts mo[an]e
> The third in flower a[n]d prime of all her yeares
> All thre do rest within this marble stone.

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[14] TNA, PRO, PROB/11/72 - will of Lady Anne Paget.
[15] SRO, D603/K/1/4/57-63.
[16] The codicil in Lady Paget's will had entrusted the upbringing of the young William Paget to Lady Lee, and Sir William and Lady Griselda Walgrave. This was not implemented.
[17] Chambers, *Lee*, p. 261. The interment was within days of the funeral of her grandmother, Lady Anne Paget.
[18] Henry Stanford, tutor to William Paget at Drayton, probably composed the verses inscribed on Lady Lee's tomb in Aylesbury church. Texts of the poem in Stanford's hand are preserved in his private manuscript anthology, now in Cambridge University Library (MS Dd.5.75) and another at Berkeley Castle.

By a trick of fortune, Anne Lee's tomb has long outlasted that of her more famous husband, and the people of Aylesbury still observe the last supplication of this unhappy lady,

> Good fre[n]d sticke not to strew with crimso[n] flowers,
> This marble stone wherein her cindres rest.[19]

Sir Henry Lee, although mentioned on his wife's tomb, prioritized his position as a loyal servant of the Queen and continued to maintain his distance from the remaining Pagets. When, in December 1602, he received a letter from Paris from his brother-in-law Charles Paget, he swiftly forwarded it to Sir Robert Cecil as from 'an evil deserver to the state and her Majesty'.[20]

SIR HENRY LEE AND ANNE VAVASOUR.

Lee's waning affections for his sad and melancholic wife may well have been influenced by his growing interest in Anne Vavasour, his 'dearest deare' who became his long-term mistress and the mother of his bastard son Thomas.[21] This colourful lady is typical of several Elizabethan women in and around the Court who occasioned both scandal and genuine affection, survivors of the penalties of the double moral standard that existed for men and women. Anne Vavasour was the daughter of Henry Vavasour and Margaret Knyvet of Copmanthorpe, Yorkshire and through her mother's good court connections, she became a gentlewoman of the bedchamber to the Queen in 1579 or 1580.[22] The young Anne was rapidly seduced by Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford and was pregnant by him by February 1580. There is evidence that Oxford offered marriage despite the existence of his wife, Burghley's daughter, but the first pregnancy ended in miscarriage.[23] It is highly unlikely that Anne attempted an abortion, as she was pregnant again by Oxford by July 1580. On 23 March 1581, Anne gave birth to his son in the maids' chamber, adjacent to that of the Queen at Whitehall and the delivery in

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[19] Inscription on Anne Lee's tomb in St. Mary's Church, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.
[20] Cecil MS 97.144 (HMC Salis. XII p. 532) (Paget to Lee); Cecil MS 91. 92 (HMC Salis. XII p. 532) (Lee to Cecil). Paget's letter to Lee is dated from France 10 February 1603, reflecting the differing calendars used at the time.
[21] Aubrey, *Brief Lives,* ii p. 31.
[22] TNA, PRO, SP40/1/86. Anne's aunt, Catherine Knyvet, had been a gentlewoman of the Bedchamber.
[23] TNA, PRO, SP12/151/118-119. Lord Henry Howard charged Oxford with having evolved a scheme ' to cary away Nan Vaviser was a 12 monthe [ago] when he thought hir first to haue bene with child'.

so public a place caused a furore. Sir Francis Walsingham reported to the earl of Huntingdon that

> on Tuesday at night Anne Vavysor was brought to bed of a son in the maidens' chamber. The E. of Oxeford is avowed to be the father, who hath withdrawn himself with intent ... to pass the seas. The ports are laid for him [and] ... it is not likely that he will escape. The gentlewoman the selfsame night she was delivered was conveyed out of the house and the next day committed to the Tower ... Her Majesty is greatly grieved with the accident. [24]

Oxford, having failed to flee abroad, was briefly incarcerated in the Tower in somewhat more luxurious accommodation than that provided for Anne. After pressure on the Queen by his father-in-law and Walsingham, he was released on 8 June, confined to his house until July and barred from Court for two years. Through Burghley's good offices, he was back in the Queen's favour by the end of July 1581.

Although she was of a good gentry family, Anne Vavasour had no such influence at court and the pillorying to which she was subjected reflects not only the double moral standard of the time but the attitude of the Queen to her ladies. If the illicit marriages entered into by her maids and gentlewomen could arouse the ire of the Queen and banishment from Court, an illegitimate child would place the woman beyond any royal forgiveness.[25] Anne's baby was placed under the care of Sir Francis Vere, Oxford's cousin, and we do not know for how long Anne remained in the Tower.

How much of this would Sir Henry Lee have known? Gossip travelled fast, even to Woodstock and little was secret at Court. Lee had tilted with Oxford, and as a gentleman at Court with business at the Tower, he probably met Anne in one of these locations.[26] The Oxford-Vavasour affair was one of the most public scandals of the decade; the story was circulated abroad and became a potential source of embarrassment to Elizabeth.[27] The scandal broke within weeks of Henry Hawkins' widely-reported statement that 'Lord

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[24] HMC Hastings MS, II p. 29.

[25] See P. Hammer's 'Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I', *Sixteenth century Journal,* xxxi (Spring, 2000) pp. 77-97, for a copious listing of the misalliances of Elizabeth's women servants.

[26] There was a distant connection between Lee and Anne Vavasour, as her aunt, Catherine Knyvet, was the widow of Henry Paget, Lee's former brother-in-law.

[27] *Fugger Newsletters,* 2nd series (1568-1605) ed. Victor von Klarwill, trans. L.S.R.Byrne (London, 1926), p. 55.

Robert hath had fyve children by the Quene and she never goethe in progresse but to be delivered' and the behaviour of her ladies reflected badly upon the Queen.[28] In accepting an affair with the earl of Oxford, Anne Vavasour had been playing with fire – or at least with one of the most profligate and volatile nobles at Elizabeth's Court. A member of the old aristocracy, Oxford had achieved considerable notoriety by murder, mayhem and sodomy, and had already attempted to repudiate his wife and bastardize their child. Anne's liaison with Oxford had been an open secret at Court - Oxford had earlier threatened to kill Anne's uncle Sir Henry Knyvet 'for spekeing evell of him to his ni[e]ce'.[29] An anonymous poem, later attributed to Sir Walter Ralegh, was subscribed 'written to Mistress A.V.' in two manuscript versions and circulated at Court.[30]

> Many desire, but few or none deserve
> To pluck the flowers and let the leaves to fall;
> Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve
> But unto him that will take leaves and all.
> For this be sure, the flower once pluckt away
> Farewell the rest, thy happy days decay.

More importantly, Anne was implicated in the brief flirtation Oxford was pursuing with a group of leading Catholic intriguers at Court, Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel and Francis Southwell. In December 1580 Oxford betrayed his fellow plotters to the Queen to clear his own name, but in the ensuing treason and sedition case, Anne was named as the go-between for Oxford and Charles Arundel.[31] Elizabeth demanded a very high standard of behaviour among her gentlewomen, and if Anne's sexual incontinence was not enough to condemn her in the eyes of the Queen, her implication in a political intrigue would have damned her permanently. The scandal was not allowed to die a natural death; Anne's Knyvet cousins, in a search for revenge, would not let the matter rest. Throughout 1582, a bitter feud was waged on the backstreets of London, where 'my lord of oxford fought with

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[28] TNA, PRO, SP12/148/157; *CSPD*, 1581-90, p. 12.
[29] TNA, PRO, SP12/151/103-04.
[30] Bodl. MS, Rawlinson Poetry 85 f. 116; also BL, Add. MS, 22601 f. 71; Ralegh, *The poems of Sir Walter Ralegh*, ed. A. Latham (London, 1929), p. 66.
[31] *CSPD*, Addenda 1580-1625, pp. 48-49. In his declaration, Charles Arundel refers to 'my cousin Vavisor who was the means of our meeting'.

master Knyvet about the quarrel of Bessie Bavisar'.[32] Oxford was wounded by Thomas Knyvet and the quarrel resulted in several lethal affrays before tempers cooled. As late as 1585, Anne's own brother Thomas Vavasour was prepared to revive the feud and challenged Oxford, stating that 'if thy body had been as deformed as thy mind dishonourable, my house had been yet unspotted and thyself remained with thy cowardice known'.[33]

The majority of the Queen's ladies who fell from grace did so because of an ill-conceived marriage without royal permission. Doubtless other unmarried girls had left the Court pregnant, but none ever made such a public display of their condition as Anne Vavasour. On release from the Tower, her options would have been few. For a Yorkshire girl of seventeen, the complete loss of child, lover, marriage prospects and good name along with any royal favour and protection must have been intolerable. She did not return home but her Knyvet relations appeared to be keener on pursuing their vendetta against Oxford than protecting her from the continuing slander. Burghley, in writing to Hatton in 1583 complained bitterly that Oxford was being punished twice 'first by her majesty and then by the drab's friend'.[34] In 1584, the anonymous *A Copie of a Letter,* later known as *Leicester's Commonwealth,* named Anne as one of the many court ladies complicit with Leicester's seductions, 'she being but the leavings of another man' and he being 'nothing squemish ... to gather up the crummes when he is hungry in the very laundry itself or other places of baser quality'.[35]

In no position to support or protect herself, at some point after her release from the Tower, Anne Vavasour married a John Finch of London. Chambers, with his fascination for genealogy, speculates that he was the John Finch who traded in Russia from 1584 until sent home in disgrace in 1591. He was subsequently imprisoned in 1597 for perjury.[36] If Chambers is

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[32] BL, Cotton MS, App. 47; *Calendar of State Papers Colonial Series, East Indies, China and Japan: 1513-1616,* II, pp. 85-86. (Diary of Rev. Richard Madox 3 March 1582).
[33] BL, Lansdowne MS, 99 no.93. 'An impudent scurrilous challenge of Thomas Vavasor sent to the Earl of Oxford, to fight him, 1584'.
[34] N.H. Nicolas, *Memoirs of the life and times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London, 1847), pp. 256, 321.
[35] *Copie of a Letter,* ed. Peck, pp. 88-89.
[36] Chambers, *Lee,* p. 163. It is not known whether Finch was paid to marry Anne, possibly by the Knyvetts, and trading privileges obtained for him. In Russia, animosity developed between Finch and Sir Jerome Horsey, a well-known English figure at the Russian court. Horsey caused Finch to be sent home in disgrace from Moscow in 1591, and in 1595, on the encouragement of the English ambassador

correct, it would at least explain why Anne, with proven fecundity, had no children by Finch and was free to pursue another affair. It says much for Anne Vavasour's strength of character than she not only survived the years between 1581 and 1585 but emerged to create a more lasting alliance under the protection of the Queen's champion Sir Henry Lee. It also says much for Lee's affection for 'his dearest deare' and his ability to find a way through the jungle that was the Elizabethan court that he could not only envisage a liaison with the scarlet woman of the decade but live happily with her for at least twenty-one years. Given his financial situation at the time, marriage to some wealthy widow when his wife eventually died would have been infinitely quieter and more profitable.

One reason why Anne Vavasour is still a subject for speculation of historians and literary editors is the existence of two more poems subscribed 'Vavasor' in some manuscripts - poems which unite generations of readers with Anne's contemporaries in seeking clues as to her thoughts and motives.[37] The hauntingly enigmatic echo poem *'Sitting alone upon my thought'* is entitled 'verses made by the Earle of Oxforde and M[ist]r[es]s Ann Vauesor' in one text although Chambers convincingly argues that this identifies them as the principals in the work rather than its authors.[38] At the beginnings of the poem, the male author is 'sitting alone' near the sea caves when a fair young lady comes to bewail her sad fate with sighs and tears. As she questions her predicament aloud,

... the Echo answered her to every word she spake.

An Vavesors eccho
O heauens, quothe she, who was ye fyrst that bredd in me this feauere? Vere.
Whoe was the first yt gaue ye wounde whose scarre I ware for euere? Vere.
What tyrant, Cupid! To mye harme vsurpes thy goulden quiuere? Vere.
What wighte first caughte this hart and can from bondage it deliuere? Vere.

Yet who doth most adore this wighte, oh hollow caues tell trewe? You.
What nymph deserves his lykinge best, yet doth in sorrowe rewe? You.
What makes him not rewarde good will with some remorse or reuthe? Youth.

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to Russia, Sir Jerome Bowes, Finch accused Horsey of high treason. When the case came before Privy Council in April 1597, Finch was proved to be a liar.

[37] Folger MS, V.a.89 folio 9 'Sitting alone' is subscribed 'vavasor'. Ruth Hughey, *The Arundel-Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry,* (Columbus, Ohio, 1960) records it as subscribed 'Ffinis qd E Vere count d'Oxford' in Harington's hand.

[38] Bodl. MS, Rawlinson Poetry 85 f. 11; Chambers, *Lee,* p. 152.

What makes him show besydes his birrthe suche pryde and suche untrvth?
Youth.
May I his fauor matche wth louve if he my loue will trye? I.
Maye I requite his birthe wth faythe than faythfull will I dy? I.

And I that knew this ladye well
Sayde Lord howe great a mirakle,
To he[a]r howe eccho toulde the truthe
As trewe as Pheobus' orakle.

Steven May includes the poem in his section on Oxford's work but admits that both its tone and point of view are inappropriate for it to have been written by either Oxford or Vavasour.[39] Ilona Bell, fastening on the male sentiments voiced by one who ' knew this lady well', seeks to identify the poem with Lee in the early days of his courtship of Anne and turns the last two lines of the Echo into an avowal of Lee's love for Anne.[40] The sentiments would, however, fit a pregnant Anne Vavasour better than the rejected 'drab', and it is unlikely that Lee would have fallen headlong in love by 1580 with an Anne Vavasour who had only recently come to court. More improbably, Bell credits Lee with the poem's authorship. If one compares it to verses known to have been Lee's, *My golden locks are to silver turned,* his poetic talents appear to have regressed markedly by 1590.

A second poem *'Though I seem strange, sweet friend, be thou not so'* is also subscribed 'Vavaser' in one manuscript, and here Ilona Bell's attempt to identify it with the Lee-Vavasour relationship is more credible.[41] Even Chambers, who prints the poem in full concedes the author is a woman and that it would fit Anne's position well enough in 1580.[42] Bell attributes it to Anne's position in 1590, and finds many parallels both with Anne's situation and the words of the 1592 Ditchley entertainment. An analysis of the text, alongside a close study of Lee and Vavasour's careers would, however,

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[39] *The poems of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex* ed. S. May (Chapel Hill, 1980); S. May, *The English Courtier Poets: the poems and their contexts* (Columbia, 1999).
[40] I. Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 75-99.
[41] The poem in Folger MS, V.a.89, pages 8–9, is subscribed 'Vavaser'; BL, Harley MS, 6910, folio 145r–v. is subscribed 'La. B. to N' and BL, Harley MS, 7392 (2) f. 40, (a partial text) was at first assigned to 'H W'; the initials were later crossed out in favour of 'Ball', possibly an abbreviation for 'ballad' in this anthology.
[42] Chambers, *Lee,* p. 153.

suggest that the poem best fits the context around 1585, just before their liaison became semi-public.[43]

Thoughe I seeme straunge sweete freende be thou not so
Do not accoy thy selfe with sullen will
Myne harte hathe voude althoughe my tongue saye noe
To be thyne owne in freendly liking styll.

Thou seeste me liue amongst the Lynxes eyes
That pryes into the priuy thoughte of mynde
Thou knowest ryghte well what sorrowes maye aryse
If once they chaunce my setled lookes to fynde.

Contente thyself that once I made an othe
To sheylde my self in shrowde of honest shame
And when thou lyste make tryall of my trouthe
So that thou save the honoure of my name.

And let me seme althoughe I be not coye
To cloak my sadd conceyts with smylinge cheere
Let not my iestures showe wherein I ioye
Nor by my lookes lett not my loue apeere.

We seely dames that falles suspecte, do feare
And liue within the moughte [mouth] of enuyes lake
Muste in oure heartes a secrete meaning beare
Far from the reste which outwardlye we make.

So were I lyke, I lyste not vaunte my loue
Where I desyre there most I fayne debate
One hathe my hande an other hathe my gloue
But he my harte whome I seeme most to hate.

Thus farwell freende I will continue straunge
Thou shalte not heere by worde or writing oughte
Let it suffice my vowe shall never chaunge
As for the rest I leave yt to thy thoughte.

This is not the poem of a young girl; the sentiments voiced are those of a mature woman who has few illusions. The poem is so personal in its address that it 'seems straunge' that it ever found its way into an anthology. She has learned how to protect herself from 'the Lynxes eyes', the gossip and slander of Court often referred to in the Ditchley manuscript. The lady has learned how to dissemble, as Anne Vavasour must have done, but she fears that a new liaison might destroy the frail edifice of self-respect she has

[43] Bodl. MS, Rawlinson Poetry 85 f. 17.

created to protect herself. Ilona Bell makes much of the references to 'rest' as referring to the lodge at Ditchley, Lee's Rest, but this was not built for Anne until the mid-1590s. Of much more interest is the third verse which parallels Anne's situation very exactly. The lady has made an oath, and in this case it is clearly differentiated from the vow which she mentions twice. An oath is usually a legal undertaking, externally administered before witnesses – a vow is a private promise. The oath was taken in order to shield herself in what seems like a 'shroude of honest shame'. Was this an oath in a marriage of convenience, hastily arranged by embarrassed male relatives? The lady has no other option, but feels shamed, having to give her body to a man she neither knows nor likes in exchange for the appearance of honest respectability. To a young woman with her life before her, it would feel like a shroud. In the last two lines of the verse, she warns her would-be lover that, if they go any further, he must at least protect the only thing she got out of this unpleasant arrangement – a respectable name. The writer's predicament must have been replicated by thousands of unfortunate women, yet seldom is it is so clearly expressed. Matters had moved on since her disgrace; even though Oxford might still have her heart, a husband has her hand, leaving only a glove for a would-be champion. What she offers here is 'to be thyne owne in freendly liking' – friendship is mentioned three times while love, possibly still for Oxford, does not enter the equation. Above all there is caution, and a desire not to be hurt again.

It is not known at what point Anne began her relationship with Sir Henry Lee; for all his shining armour, at over fifty years of age he was not exactly a young girl's dream of romance. Perhaps by 1585 Anne Vavasour had become sufficiently worldly-wise to appreciate the safety of an older man's devotion compared to the volatile excitement that had been offered by Oxford. Lee's personal life had been far from fulfilling, but his name had not been linked with any lady at Court, despite his somewhat oblique reference in the Woodstock entertainment to 'a new mistress that lived every day in [the Queen's] eye'.[44] Lee enjoyed the company of men in the hunting field and at

[44] In 1575, Lee hunted at Kenilworth with Lady Susan Bourchier, one of the Queen's ladies and niece of Sir Walter Mildmay. He borrowed money from her in 1578 which he repaid in his will, but there was little indication of a romance between them.

tournaments, but his interest in the rising young stars of the tilt - Philip Sidney, Robert Devereux, even Prince Henry at a later date - appears similar to his paternal or avuncular interest in the young men who passed through his care at Ditchley - his godson Robert Dudley, Edward Vere, his own illegitimate son Thomas Vavasour, his nephew Owen Cooke. His devotion to the Queen's service appears to have been sufficient until he met Anne Vavasour.

Although Anne was not mentioned until 1590 in the Ditchley Steward's Book, it is probable that the relationship began earlier, and there is a temptation to equate Lee's purchase of a private estate at Ditchley in 1583 with possible expectations of changed circumstances.[45] Certainly the Queen's disgraced gentlewoman would not have been welcome at the royal manor at Woodstock. The will of Lee's mother-in-law in December 1585 states openly that Lee and his wife were living 'separate and asunder'. One clue to the dating of Lee's commitment to Anne Vavasour is an 'AV' monogram, which appears twice as an integral part of the decoration on Lee's third suit of armour. In the Almain Armourers' Album, the sketch for this armour is bound with others commissioned around 1585-86; it is field armour that Lee used as Master of the Horse in the north of England and was not for tournament use within sight of the Queen. There is no evidence that the AV monogram was added at a later date; therefore this would suggest that Lee was sufficiently sure of Anne to commission her initials as a motif on an expensive suit of armour by 1585-86.

Lee would have had major problems in publicly declaring his love for Anne and giving her the protection she needed. He was, after all, the Queen's own champion; Elizabeth might, and did give her glove to other men at tournaments but Lee could wear no other favours but the Queen's. Elizabeth had been swift to forgive Oxford his misdemeanours, welcoming him back to Court and even giving him an annuity of £1000, but there was no royal forgiveness for Anne Vavasour. In addition, the Oxford-Vavasour affair had sorely wronged Burghley's favourite daughter; Lee was a long-time friend of Burghley and to some extent dependant on him for alleviation of the debt he owed the Queen. The affair between Lee and Anne naturally occasioned

[45] ORO Dil xxi/4.

numerous comments, few of them complimentary. Sir Edward Stafford later claimed that Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick had entrusted young Robert Dudley's affairs to him in February 1590, as 'Sir Henry Lea loved the countreye and his pleasure so much as that he could hardlie attend the poore Boys estate'.[46] In November 1590, Sir John Stanhope, writing to Gilbert Talbot, mentioned Anne as 'the subject of much mirth and scandal among the courtiers, on account of her attachment to the old gallant Sir Henry Lee'.[47]

There is little evidence that Lee was ever in real disgrace with the Queen over his affair with Anne Vavasour, and after 1590, Lee retained his royal appointments. He followed the royal progress in summer 1591 and welcomed the Queen back to Woodstock in 1592. Elizabeth's visit to Lee's own home at Ditchley during that visit does not suggest royal disfavour. In the two-day entertainment he provided for her, Lee was sufficiently sure of his position with the Queen to make the heart of the performance indulgently autobiographical even making reference to his new love, who was probably not present. Echoes of *Though I seem straunge* returned as Lee confessed his faults to the Queen;

> but loe unhappie I was ouertaken
> by fortune forced a straunger ladies thrall
> whom when I saw all former care forsaken
> to fynd her out I lost my self & all.

Lee and Anne were both fortunate in their relationship which lasted until Lee's death in 1611. Anne gave Lee a son, the illegitimate Thomas Vavasour, and the companionship and care that became necessary as his health declined.[48] He gave her the protection she needed and a standard of living commensurate with her birth. It would have been unusual for a wife, let alone a mistress to have accompanied Lee to London, but Lee built 'Lee's Rest' for Anne, a lodge in the grounds of Ditchley and commissioned a handsome portrait of Anne, probably by John de Critz.[49]

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[46] CKS, (Penshurst Papers) U1475 L2/4 ff. 80-81. Ambrose Dudley and Lee were both godfathers to Leicester illegitimate son, Robert, in August 1574.
[47] Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History* (3 vols., London, 1791), iii. p. 16.
[48] Lee never gave his bastard son his name, but secured a position as Yeoman of the Armoury for him in 1608. This would suggest Thomas Vavasour was born around 1592 – another good reason for Anne Vavasour to absent herself during the royal visit of that year.
[49] The portrait, c.1605 is now in the possession of the Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers, London.

SIR HENRY LEE'S PROBLEMS AS HEAD OF THE EXTENDED LEE FAMILY.

Sir Henry Lee had five brothers, three legitimate, two illegitimate and numerous sisters. *(See Appendix Three).* Two of Lee's brothers died in early manhood, the other three married wealthy widows and none left legitimate offspring to become Lee's heir. None of his brothers appear to have been particularly pleasant or successful individuals, yet like many gentlemen in Lee's position, he exercised a patriarchal care not only for his brothers but for various nephews and cousins for whom he found positions in government service. Some of them, such as Captain Thomas Lee, caused Sir Henry only grief.

Sir Henry's eldest brother was Robert Lee, from 1570 the keeper of the game at the royal hunting grounds of Hatfield Chase in Yorkshire, which boasted the largest collection of red deer in the country. Hunting was a common bond of interest between the brothers, and when Robert Lee leased the parsonage at Hatfield in 1562, Sir Henry used it as a base when visiting the north of England.[50] Robert did not endear himself to many; his wife complained to the Queen in 1585

> both of his hard usage of her whilst she lived with him and of her miserable estate since she left him, being destitute of all things. [51]

The Archbishop of York reported in 1587 that Robert was not fit to be a justice of the peace as

> he is a notable open adulterer. One that giveth great offence and will not be reformed. He useth his authority ... to work private displeasure ... a very bad man and one that doeth no good. [52]

Nevertheless, Robert Lee became a magistrate in 1588, served under his brother by leading horsemen from the country of Yorkshire in the summer of 1588 and received a personal letter of thanks from the Queen.[53] Robert Lee sat as Member of Parliament for Huntingdon but only made one appearance.

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[50] *CPR* 660. 23 Eliz I part XI 660 mm. 25-6 1594. Robert Lee was confirmed as master of the hunt of game within the lordships of Hatfield and Thorne, Yorks for life on 11 Aug 1581, with an annuity of £100.
[51] Hasler, *HoP, Commons, 1558-1603*, ii. p. 450.
[52] Strype, *Annals* iii (2) p. 463.
[53] *CSP Border*, I pp. 324 (no. 608); 331(no. 630); 332 (no. 631), (23 August 1588).

He surrendered his position at Hatfield in 1594 and died near London in 1598, leaving Sir Henry Lee what little money he had.

Lee's second brother, Cromwell Lee, was the scholar of the family, existing on rents from various advowsons and leases secured for him by his brother. He was a Fellow of St John's Oxford, spent some years travelling in Italy and upon settling in Oxford, composed the first Italian-English dictionary. According to Chambers, more than one Oxford epigram records Cromwell's morals 'in the grossest terms'.[54] He died in 1601 and like his brothers, left no legitimate heirs.

Sir Henry Lee had most in common with his half-brother Sir Richard Lee, some twelve years younger and the illegitimate son of Sir Anthony Lee and Anne Hassell. Sir Richard successively married two wealthy widows, became an MP for Canterbury but spent most of his time either at Woodstock or in Lee's rooms in the Savoy in London. Both brothers had a lively interest in contemporary politics, as is shown by a long political letter between them in June 1592, discussing the state of the war with Spain and the safety of the earl of Essex.[55] Richard Lee's chief moment of glory came in 1599 when the merchants of the Muscovy Company chose him to represent them as an Ambassador to Russia, and contributed £2000 towards the enterprise. He wrote to Sir Robert Cecil asking for his aid in persuading the Queen to confirm his appointment. [56]

> The merchants have resolved of myself by general consent ... my brother Sir Henry Lee ... has provided a present of better than two hundred marks. I hope her majesty ... will not suffer me to be disgraced but will be pleased with the merchants' free choice.

Richard Lee was knighted on 1 June 1600, set sail in mid June and spent some ten months in Russia. The embassy was not a success; Sir Richard failed to gain an extension of merchants' trading rights through Russia to Persia and failed to promote a marriage alliance between an unnamed Englishman and the Tsar's daughter. On his return to England, the Muscovy Company refused to pay his expenses and the Queen refused to recompense

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[54] Chambers, *Lee,* p. 223. Cromwell Lee's dictionary is still in the archives of St. John's College, Oxford.
[55] Cecil MS 21.22. (HMC Salis. IV pp. 206-7) (5 June 1592).
[56] Cecil MS 69.10. (HMC Salis. X, p. 76) (20 March 1600).

him, leaving him with grave financial problems. Sir Henry attempted to help, passing on the constableship of Harlech castle which he held, but Sir Richard's debts continued to haunt him until his death in 1608.

Sir Henry Lee's sense of obligation as head of his family also extended to the sons of his sisters and to his cousins. Whereas this display of patronage was expected of a courtier gentleman in Lee's position, it also behoved him to have a network of dependants he could trust, especially in the fraught world of the Armoury and the Ordnance department at the Tower. Lee's deputy at the Tower was his cousin John Lee. John, much the same age as Sir Henry, had had a somewhat dubious career in Low Countries in 1570s, reporting to Burghley on the activities of English exiles in Antwerp until his own imprisonment there in 1572. On that occasion, he begged Sir Henry to importune his influential friends to obtain his release, which he did by June 1573. It was probably due to his cousin's influence that John Lee became MP for New Woodstock in 1589, 1593 and 1597. Sir Henry failed to obtain the clerkship of the Armoury for him in 1589, but John Lee operated as Sir Henry's deputy from 1590. He became a Yeoman of the Armoury at Greenwich in 1594 and occupied the armoury house there. When, for financial reasons, John Lee took up the additional position as keeper of the Great Store in the Ordnance Office, he was forced to put up a bond for £3,500 to guarantee his good behaviour in office and Sir Henry Lee cajoled some thirty of his friends to put up £100 each in bond in surety for his cousin.[57]

On John Lee's death in 1603, his role as Sir Henry's deputy passed to Lee Symonds, son of Sir Henry's sister Katherine. Lee Symonds also acted as his uncle's amanuensis and agent until his own death in 1607.[58] Sir Henry's own illegitimate son Thomas Vavasour was appointed Yeoman of the Armoury in 1608, retaining the family interest. Sir Henry obtained lucrative export contracts for his relatives; in October 1590, he requested a licence from Burghley for his brother-in-law Mr Symonds of Clay in Norfolk to transport 3000 quarters of wheat to France, 'corn being in that shire in great plenty and good cheap'.[59] Lee frequently employed his Symonds nephews;

[57] TNA, PRO, SP39/9/105.
[58] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 36 f. 72.
[59] *CSPD,* 1581-90 p. 690 (3 Oct 1590).

the white vellum folder containing the tournament texts of the Ditchley manuscript is inscribed 'delivered to the Earl of Cumberland by William Symonds'.[60] Lee promoted the marriage between his niece Elizabeth Symonds and Lawrence Tanfield, and later received from their young daughter Elizabeth, a hand-written translation of Ortelius' *Mirror of the Worlde, translated out of French into Englishe* with an effusive dedication to Sir Henry Lee.[61] The precociously intelligent Elizabeth Tanfield later became Elizabeth Cary, author of *Miriam* and other works.

Lee also exercised the same care over his nephew Owen Cooke who he described to Walsingham as 'a nevew of myne who I have browght uppe and muche love, and is better able to serve her [the Queen], then ... my sellfe'.[62] When Lee purchased the constableship of Harlech Castle in 1587, he requested that Burghley might 'juyne him in patent with me, that my sisters sonne may supply my place when god shall call me awaye. His name is Owen Couke, very honest and one I love much'.[63] The Constableship carried a fee of £50 a year; most of this went to Cooke and later to Sir Richard Lee. Sir Henry saw little of the money although he travelled there in 1592 and continued to concern himself with the position until 1611.

Captain Thomas Lee - a case study.

Nowhere is Sir Henry's sense of responsibility for his family's good name and well-being more clearly illustrated than in the case of Thomas Lee, son of his father's half-brother. A study of this most troublesome cousin reveals not only how useful Sir Henry's relatives regarded their kinsman, but how far Sir Henry would go in furthering their prospects, even at considerable risk to his own integrity and purse. Thomas Lee, born around 1551, was seldom out of trouble and Sir Henry was his most consistent advocate over some twenty years, more from family duty than from conviction. In July 1577, Sir Henry obtained a pardon for him for 'all robberies, felonies and burglaries' he had committed in England before that year, but Thomas was again before

[60] BL, Add. MS 41498. This white vellum binder now contains Lee's copy of the Sidney's *Old Arcadia.*
[61] Folger Library Film Acc. 700.6. Ortelius's work did not appear to have been printed in English until 1601.
[62] BL, Harl. MS, 286 f. 100 (from Thorne 24 Feb1587).
[63] *CSPD,* 1581-90 p. 577 (5 Feb 1589).

the Privy Council in May 1580 for highway robbery in Oxfordshire.[64] Thomas Lee was principally a soldier and adventurer in Ireland, and typical of many impecunious younger sons of English gentry who attempted to make their fortunes in the fraught world of Irish conflict.

From his early twenties, Thomas acted as a mercenary captain with twenty-four horse and fifty foot soldiers in the service of various Lords Deputy of Ireland - Walter, earl of Essex, Lord Grey of Wilton, Sir John Perrot and disastrously under Sir William Fitzwilliam. As a military leader, he was a somewhat loose cannon; while successfully pursuing valiant and murderous service for the Crown and accruing property for himself, he often trespassed into territory held by Irish nobles such as the Butlers, earls of Ormond. Sir Geoffrey Fenton, principal secretary to successive Lords Deputy of Ireland from 1580 originally befriended Thomas, recommending him to Walsingham for service in Ireland. For twenty years Thomas was seen as a useful if erratic tool of the English crown. Thomas Lee's freelance activities meant he was frequently in debt, and his enemies secured his imprisonment on several occasions. Always he was released, and James Myers suggests that 'someone other than Sir Henry – possibly the Cecils or the Queen or even all three' protected him from his enemies in Dublin Castle.[65] From 1590, possibly encouraged by Sir Henry, Thomas began to pin his hopes on Robert Devereux, earl of Essex; he was, in fact, typical of the coterie of men that began to form around the earl. In a letter to his brother Richard in June 1592, Sir Henry discussed how Essex might do Thomas Lee some good, or at least protect him against his enemies.[66]

> His troubles spring of malice ... by the Butlers ... his enemies will adventure much to have their will ... [but] none will adventure his life more willingly to requite ... my lord's favour and goodness.

It was the unrest in Ulster and Thomas Lee's earlier friendship with Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone that encouraged him to believe he could adopt a more pivotal role in Irish politics. Thomas saw himself as an intermediary between Tyrone and the crown, and in 1594 he came to the English Court to

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[64] *CPR* 19 Eliz.I part viii p. 331 (29 July 1577).
[65] J.P. Myers, Jr., 'Murdering Hand ... Murdering Heart: Captain Thomas Lee of Ireland, Elizabethan Assassin', *Sixteenth Century Journal,* xxii (Spring, 1991), pp. 47-60 at p. 49.
[66] Cecil MS 21.44 (HMC Salis. IV p.207. (5 June 1592).

voice Tyrone's grievances against the 'corrupt administration' of Elizabeth's deputy Sir William Fitzwilliam. Thomas Lee also wrote two political tracts, *Informacion given to Queen Elizabeth against Sir William Fitzwilliams* and *A brief declaration of the government of Ireland,* which can be seen either as the ramblings of a man who had spent too long in Ireland or idiosyncratic solutions to an intransigent problem. The famous portrait of a bare-legged Thomas Lee in Irish costume was painted at this time by Sir Henry's favourite artist, Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger.[67] In June 1595, Tyrone was declared a rebel, but Thomas Lee, on returning to Ireland, was employed as mediator between Tyrone who saw him as a willing dupe, and the English authorities in Ireland who were suspicious of his motives. His dubious position and debts made him vulnerable to his Butler enemies who secured his imprisonment in Dublin castle in 1598, but his military abilities ensured his release. Thomas's attempts to mediate between Tyrone and the earl of Essex, the new military commander in Ireland, in April 1599 failed and led to suspicions of his being a double agent. When Essex deserted his army in Ireland and returned precipitously to Court in September 1599, Thomas Lee accompanied him, and like Essex was placed under house arrest.

Sir Henry Lee now became more deeply involved in his cousin's affairs than he might have wished, as house arrest for Thomas Lee meant residence either at Ditchley or in Sir Henry's apartment at the Savoy in London. Thomas Lee remained in disgrace for the remainder of his life, and became increasingly divorced from reality. During his enforced inactivity, he completed his blueprint for solving the Irish problem *The discoverye and recoverye of Ireland,* and importuned Sir Robert Cecil to present it to the Council.[68] The treatise, much wilder than his earlier work, contained offers to assassinate Tyrone as a way of solving the Ulster crisis, and letters flowed from Thomas to various captains in Ireland attempting to organize such a scheme.

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[67] This portrait, acquired by the Tate Britain in 1980, portrays Thomas Lee in a masque costume of an Irish soldier with bare legs. As the gallery caption states, nudity equates with truthfulness in Renaissance symbolism. The Latin inscription on the tree in the portrait refers to Mucius Scaevola, who remained true to Rome even when among enemies. The implication is that Thomas Lee is faithful to the Crown, despite the accusations of his enemies in Dublin.

[68] Cecil MS 67.113 (HMC Salis. X pp. 12-13) (Jan 22 1600); Cecil MS 69.16 (HMC Salis. X p. 77) (22 March 1600).

Sir Henry's letters to Sir Robert Cecil throughout 1600 were dominated by his cousin's position; whether his attempts to obtain a pardon for Thomas and permission for him to return to Ireland sprang from a genuine belief in his innocence or from exasperation with an unwelcome guest who had outstayed his welcome is unknown. Sir Henry risked a great deal; he gave Cecil his personal assurances of Thomas's good faith and offered himself in bond for his cousin's behaviour.[69] There was, wrote Sir Henry, no villainous meaning in Thomas to her Majesty or his country, except he would 'prefer Ireland with all the beggars before his natural country'.[70] Thomas became increasingly depressed; in June 1600 Sir Henry wrote to Cecil of 'my unfortunate couysin, whose case grows worse and worse'. By September, Sir Henry was describing the desperate state in which he found Thomas at the Savoy where he was in 'such great extremity ... all looked for his last farewell'. By December 1600, he reported to Cecil that 'my coosin is now ... trodden down underfoote ... being not worthy of life, not deserving better himself'.[71] He wrote to the Council on his cousin's behalf and even personally importuned the Queen to no avail. The matter of Thomas Lee appeared to have dominated Sir Henry's life in 1600 and it is difficult to see what else he could have done to help his undeserving and unwelcome guest. By January 1601, Cecil had obtained some money for Thomas and a commission to return to Ireland with a small troop of men.[72]

In the event, Sir Henry's faith in his cousin was not rewarded. The earl of Essex had not included this loose cannon in his rising on 8 February 1601 and Thomas, eager to establish his innocence, sent a list of the conspirators to Sir Henry four days later.[73] The mental instability that had been increasingly obvious to Sir Henry manifested itself on the evening of 12 February, when Thomas Lee was apprehended loitering at the door of the Queen's privy chamber, 'his color pale and his face had great drops of sweat

[69] Cecil MS 78.10 (HMC Salis. X p. 85) (29 March 1600); Cecil MS 80. 24 (HMC Salis. X p. 24) (13 June 1600); Cecil MS 81.36 (HMC Salis. X p. 278 (14 Aug.1600).
[70] Cecil MS 251.38 (HMC Salis. X p. 306) (7 Sept.1600).
[71] Cecil MS 82.80 (HMC Salis. X. p. 427)(22 Dec. 1600).
[72] Cecil MS 76.1 (HMC Salis. XI pp.9-10) (14 January 1601).
[73] Cecil MS 76.56 (HMC Salis. XI p. 44) (12 Feb. 1601).

standing upon it'.[74] He stated that he only wished to 'step unto the Queen and kneel before her and never rise till she had signed a warrant' pardoning the earls of Essex and Southampton. The claim, probably a truthful reflection of Thomas's disturbed mind, was regarded as far-fetched; he was found guilty of high treason and hanged, drawn and quartered by 14 February 1601. Sir Henry Lee was horrified and personally alarmed, not only at Essex's conduct but that his own cousin's treason would reflect on him. By 16 February he was describing Thomas to Cecil as 'of all creatures most hated to me ... in the course of his life, the wretch has spent me much; I pay interest [on] no small sum and have since his coming over increased it'.[75] Sir Henry was not the only one to turn rapidly against Thomas. John Lee, Sir Henry's deputy at the Tower, complained 'that bloody murderer' still owed him £100 and the Irish secretary Sir Geoffrey Fenton, originally a sponsor, described Thomas Lee to Cecil as having 'a murdering heart and a murdering hand'.[76] Sir Henry Lee himself was briefly placed under house arrest, but both he and his brother Sir Richard Lee worked to secure some sort of inheritance for Thomas's children. They wrote to Cecil in December 1602 to confirm Thomas Lee's lands at Roscommon and Castlereban, Co. Kildare for 'some poor innocents, the children of an unhappy father'.[77]

Sir Henry Lee's sense of obligation extended beyond his own blood relations. In 1574, he had, with Ambrose Dudley, stood as godfather to Leicester's illegitimate son Robert by Douglas Lady Sheffield, and had accommodated the young man from time to time at Woodstock. It is possible that the 'son in chivalry' whom he introduced to the tilting fraternity at some undated Accession Day tournament after 1590 was Robert Dudley, who made his tournament *début* in 1593.[78] Lee also encouraged Sir Edward Vere, Anne Vavasour's son by the earl of Oxford, in his military career in the Netherlands and promoted the renewed relationship between mother and son.

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[74] *CSPD* Addenda 1580-1625 p. 409, testimony given by William Poynes at Thomas Lee's trial. Poynes had apprehended Lee outside the Queen's chamber. See also Myrs, 'Murdering Hand' p. 48.
[75] Cecil MS 76.79 (HMC Salis XI p. 48).
[76] Cecil MS 180.32 (HMC Salis. XI p. 90 (1 Feb. 1601); *CSP Irish*, X p. 203. (26 Feb.1601).
[77] Cecil MS 96.104 HMC Salis. XII p. (10 Dec 1602).
[78] BL, Add. MS, 41499A ff. 1 & 1v. Chambers suggests this 'son in chivalry' was Cary Reynolds, but offers no substantiation. Strong suggests it was Sir John Lee. Although Cromwell Lee had an illegitimate son John, he was in holy orders and never knighted. Sir Robert Dudley, as Lee's godson, appears to be a simpler and more obvious candidate.

SIR HENRY LEE AND HIS FRIENDS.

It is obvious from the sources that Sir Henry Lee was a good friend to many, but the quality of Lee's friendship takes on a whole new meaning when one recalls that Philip Sidney in his *New Arcadia* refers to Lee as 'Laelius'. Sidney, classically educated and conversant with Cicero, would have used the name advisedly, revealing new depths of meaning as to how Sidney saw his friendship with Lee and possibly how Lee himself defined friendship. Gaius Laelius, Roman general and statesman, was described by Silius Italicus as an eloquent orator, a brave soldier and a poet. More importantly, Laelius is the chief discussant in Cicero's *On friendship*, *Laelius de Amicitia,* the principal text and practical guide to perfect friendship during the Renaissance, similar to the conduct books for courtiers and gentlemen. Friendship, in Cicero's work, was the key to happiness and more valuable than worldly goods; it did not depend on closeness of age but on a mutual love of virtue. Sidney would have known that Petrarch had his 'Laelius', who was described as a man with wide literary interests and the friend of leading statesmen.

Lee and Philip Sidney met first in 1575, during the Queen's visit to Kenilworth, the home of Sidney's uncle, the earl of Leicester. Sidney and his sister Mary were also present during the Queen's later visit to Woodstock, and the Ditchley manuscript contained an anonymous sonnet 'To Layius for October 1575'.[79] When, in 1577, twenty-two year-old Sidney was sent with his young friends Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville on a diplomatic mission to Prague, to offer the Queen's condolences to the Emperor Rudolf II on the death of his father Maximilian II, Burghley had added Jerome Bowes, a somewhat volatile diplomat, and Sir Henry Lee to the embassy. Lee, at forty-four, was the oldest and most experienced member of the group, but friendships developed on the journey; despite the age difference, Lee was not a little influenced by the charismatic young Sidney and unlike his earlier travels, there is no evidence that Lee wrote privately to Burghley during the journey.[80]

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[79] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 8.

[80] It is possible that Lee even concealed things from Burghley. Languet, Sidney's mentor and former tutor suggested that Sidney was attempting to marry the sister of John Casimir of the Palatinate and 'Monsieur Ley was privy to the scheme'. Sidney's marriage into a foreign ruling house would have outraged Elizabeth,

Edward Berry makes the interesting suggestion that when he first came into close contact with Lee in 1577, Sidney was finding the friendship of his earlier mentor and tutor, the philosopher Hubert Languet both controlling and threatening.[81] Lee, as instructor to Sidney's new tournament skills, would have offered a less intimidating friendship. The two collaborated in devising tournament entertainments, they tilted together, Sidney gave Lee a manuscript copy of his *Old Arcadia* and they shared a lodging at Theobalds in 1583. When Sidney introduced Lee into his *New Arcadia* as Laelius in the Iberian tilt, it was a major compliment; Cicero's Laelius was 'at once a wise man ... and eminent for his famous friendship'. But Cicero's Laelius had also spoken on bereavement and his words were prescient; 'the loving remembrance and the regret of friends which follows us to the grave, whilst they take the sting out of death, they add a glory to the life of the survivors'. On 17 November 1586, it was Lee who organized the first public tribute after the death of Sidney at the battle of Zutphen when, at the start of the Accession Day parade, Dyer and Greville led in Sidney's riderless horse around the tournament ground in full mourning.[82]

As was to be expected in a 'complete courtier' who lived to be seventy seven, Lee had many other friendships. His oldest and most profitable friendship was with Burghley and with Burghley's son, Sir Robert Cecil, Lee being related through the Cookes to Burghley's wife Mildred. Wallace McCaffrey has observed that Burghley, unlike Leicester, 'used his position to establish friendly relations with a broad range of courtiers, nobles and gentry who came to owe him thanks for favours done', and Lee's long relationship with Burghley substantiates this opinion.[83] Similarly, Lee's early friendship with his brother-in-law, Henry Lord Paget, led to a long relationship with Paget's close friend, Lord Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. Both Lee and Leicester shared a passionate interest and prowess in the tilt and in hunting, Lee entertained Leicester at Quarrendon in 1566 and Leicester reciprocated with hospitability at Warwick and Kenilworth.[84] Lee visited Warwick in

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[81] E. Berry, *The making of Sir Philip Sidney* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 38-48.
[82] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 7b.
[83] W.T. MacCaffrey, 'Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4983].
[84] See Thomas Kemp, ed., *The Black Book of Warwick* (Warwick, 1898), f. 33; Nichols, i. p 291..

September 1571 and in August 1574 stood godfather with Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick, to Leicester's illegitimate son, Robert by Douglas, Lady Sheffield. When Robert's later attempt to claim legitimacy was tried before the Star Chamber in 1604, Lee was described as one of the 'fower of the privatest frends of the Earle of Leyster'. [85] The Kenilworth Game Book shows that Lee hunted there in 1571, 1574, during the Queen's visit in 1575, in 1576 and 1577. [86] The easy friendship continued throughout Leicester's life and his household accounts record sums lost at dice or expended on entertainment in Lee's company at High Lodge, Woodstock.[87]

Lee was occasionally asked to act as an intermediary between disputing parties in Elizabethan society; these requests bear testimony both to his diplomatic abilities and the esteem in which he was held. In 1587, Gilbert Lord Talbot asked Lee to mediate between him and his father George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury. The relationship between Gilbert Talbot and his father, former custodian of Mary Stuart and fourth husband of the forceful Bess of Hardwick was fraught with estrangements, family feuds and financial problems. Several well-meaning courtiers, such as Gilbert's uncle Roger Manners had previously attempted to effect a reconciliation between father and son, but Gilbert Talbot's financial difficulties ensured that no settlement lasted for long. As a friend to both parties, Lee visited the earl on at least four occasions between July and October in 1587, bearing letters from the earl's son and eloquently arguing his case. In a series of long letters to Gilbert Talbot, Lee narrated the conversations he had had with the earl and the arguments he had put forward, arguments which reveal much of Lee's tact and insight in the world of family relationships. [88] The earl, he told Gilbert, 'is owlde and unwyldy, and dysceyved by shuche he trustethe, and you shunne to assyst hem'. On the other hand, he warned the earl that Gilbert Talbot's financial desperation could drive him abroad in 'thys dowtfull tyme', and 'if he

[85] CKS, U1475 (Penshurst Papers) L2/4 f. 72.
[86] CKS, U1475 (Penshurst papers) E93.
[87] S. Adams, ed., 'Household Accounts and Disbursement books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-1561, 1584-1586', *Camden Society*, 5th series vi (Cambridge,1995), pp. 186, 213-5, 237, 292-4, 299.
[88] LPL, Talbot Papers MSS. 3198, 3199.

shulde ... be taken from you and not be recovered, ... your grefe wolde accompne your whyte haires to your end with a grave full of cares'.[89]

Lee obviously had a great deal of sympathy and understanding for the much-afflicted older man, even though he had been recruited by Gilbert Talbot to put his case. In July 1587, reporting on the conversation he had with the earl of Shrewsbury, Lee told Gilbert Talbot to remember ' that you deale with a kynde man'.[90] The sympathy and friendship between Lee and the earl appeared to be mutual, as Shrewsbury wrote privately to Lee, regretting he could not accommodate his son, but welcoming Lee's visits. Shrewsbury appeared very lonely, and despite family accusations against her, Lee had sympathy with Shrewsbury's relationship with his mistress Eleanor Britton, who at least gave the old man some company.

When peace was temporarily restored between father and son in 1587, the earl was complimentary to Lee, assuring him 'the most eloquent orator in England can do no more with me than you have'.[91] It seems unlikely that Lee's considerable efforts at intervention were for any motive other than friendship; he received little for his pains except the warm approval of the old and harassed sixth earl. The only practical benefit Lee appeared to receive was a later promise of a £500 loan from the old earl in summer 1590, a promise that Gilbert Talbot reneged upon on his father's death in November 1590. In June 1591, Lee was even prepared to speak up for Eleanor Britton, who was promised some 'harde meanes' by the new earl, not a move for a gentleman wishing to endear himself with the seventh earl of Shrewsbury.

Lee's friendships were not confined to nobles; several lesser men both in court and out, such as the Alexander alias Zinzan family who trained the royal horses and rode professionally in the tournaments, benefited from Lee's interest. In September 1597, Lee wrote to Cecil requesting a pension for his friend and this was not an isolated incidence.[92]

There were two interesting testimonies that bear witness to the number of friends Sir Henry Lee amassed during his long lifetime. After the spectacular entertainment staged by Lee after his retirement tournament in

[89] LPL, Talbot papers MS, 3198 f. 362-4 (13 August 1587).
[90] LPL, Talbot papers MS, 3198 f. 359-60 (15 July 1587).
[91] LPL, Talbot papers MS, 3198 f. 365 (6 September 1587).
[92] Cecil MS 55.77 (HMC Salis. VII p. 402).

1590, he presented the Queen with a cloak, set with gold buttons, each embroidered with a nobleman's device. Segar notes here that Lee had said 'I would that all my friends might have bene remembered in these buttons, but there is not roome enough to contain them'.[93] Similarly in 1597, Lee received a near-unanimous vote from the *Comes* to the Order of the Garter and the roll-call of the nine peers who endorsed Lee's election can be read not only as a testimony to the high personal esteem in which he was held but as a list of those whom he had helped during his life.[94] Lee's affiliations with Lord Burghley, his proposer, went back to the 1560s, and his affection and support for the earl of Essex dated from the earl's first appearance on the tournament ground in 1586. Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham was Lee's old tilting partner from the 1570s and Lord Sheffield was the legitimate half-brother of Lee's godson, Sir Robert Dudley. Lord Gilbert Talbot, now the seventh earl of Shrewsbury, still maintained a lively correspondence with Lee and endorsed his candidature. The earl of Cumberland had tilted with Lee for many years and had succeeded him as the Queen's personal champion in 1590. Lord Buckhurst was a long-time friend of Lee's at Court. Lee also received votes from Lord Burgh, soon to be appointed briefly as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and the earl of Ormond.[95] Only the earl of Northumberland withheld his vote.[96] The Queen might have been unwilling to appoint Lee, a mere gentlemen, but the overwhelming support for him from peers of the realm ensured his election.

In reality, not all Sir Henry Lee's friendships were as harmonious as they might first appear and it would have been unusual if they had been. In one of the very few surviving letters addressed to Lee, Sir Christopher Hatton's secretary, Samuel Cox, upbraided Lee for a harsh reaction to Cox's tardy repayment of a loan.[97] The circumstances are only obliquely referred to in the letter of November 1587. The friendship between Cox and Lee was

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[93] Nichols, *Elizabeth,* iii p. 49, quoting from from Segar *'Honors'* ,1602.
[94] BL, Add. MS, 36768, *Regulations of the Order of the Garter.*
[95] Lord Burgh's son was being raised in the house of Lee's friend Essex. One assumes that Ormond's vote was by proxy as Ormond, brother-in-law to Lord Sheffield, was in Ireland at the time.
[96] It is unclear whether this was through enmity with Essex or resentment over Lee's links with the Tower, where Northumberland's father had mysteriously died in 1585.
[97] Letter Book of Sir Christopher Hatton, BL, Add. MS, 15891, transcribed in Harris Nicholas, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London, 1846), p. xxxviii.

long-standing; Cox writes that he had specifically 'made choice to live near you' at Fulbrook, Oxfordshire and Lee had stayed with him there in September 1587. Cox had severely overstretched his resources by his purchase of the manor and may have been relying on Lee to help him financially. Cox voiced surprise 'that so small a matter could draw you so quickly to forsake your friend' but in November 1587 Lee was facing his own grave financial embarrassments.

Lee's disappointment at his failure to secure the Vice-Chamberlainship after 1595 also brought him some temporary disillusionment with his friends and might have occasioned the portrait of Lee with his large mastiff, executed by Gheeraerts around that date. *(Fig. 18).* The portrait, traditionally commemorating the occasion when Lee was saved from burglars at Ditchley by the barking of his dog, bears the sonnet

> Reason in Man cannot effect such love
> As nature doth in them that reason wante
> Ulisses true and kinde his dog did prove
> When faith in better frendes was very scante.
>
> My travailes for my frendes have been as true
> Though not so farre as fortune did him beare
> No frendes my love and faith devided knewe
> Though neyther this nor that once equalde were.
>
> Only my Dog whereof I made no store
> I finde more love then them I trusted more.

There are similarities between this portrait and that of the earl of Leicester, attributed to Steven van der Meulen (c. 1564), now at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire. Lee may have been quoting, and even parodying it.[98] *(Fig. 19).* Leicester, in white or silver doublet, trunk hose and canions, is proudly wearing the Order of the Garter around his neck, and the motif is echoed in the Garter crests behind him. At his right hand, his faithful dog gazes up in admiration. Lee, similarly dressed in white or silver, also has his faithful dog, but he has neither a chain or office or Order of the Garter around his neck - only a cord holding no decoration. In place of the Garter crests, he has his sonnet of disillusionment and the *impresa* 'More faithfull than favoured'.

[98] I am grateful to Tracey Wedge at the University of Southampton Textile Conservation Centre, Winchester, for pointing out the similarity between the two pictures.

Fig. 18

Sir Henry Lee with dog by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

Fig. 19

Lord Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester
(attributed to Steven van der Meulen, c. 1564)

In 1596, Lee not only failed to achieve the Vice-Chamberlainship, but only received one vote for his election to the Order of the Garter.

This, the most endearing portrait of Lee's collection, still hangs in Ditchley.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIR HENRY LEE'S ART COLLECTION.

Lee was neither a vain man nor one for self-glorification, but like most prosperous landowning gentry, he knew his status in the social order of his day and was well aware of his own worth in the public and private spheres. It is also clear that he regarded friendship as central to his life. It is therefore apposite that, in retirement, one of his principal interests was his collection of portraits – of himself, his family and his friends. Much has been written on the politics and inner meaning of Tudor portraiture; while Lee would have agreed with Sir John Harrington in seeing an art collection as being 'the pleasing ornaments of a house and good remembrance of our friends', he also chose to celebrate those occasions when his social status was enhanced.[99]

There had been a tradition of family portraits in Lee's family – his maternal grandfather Sir Henry Wyatt had commissioned portraits of himself, his son Sir Thomas Wyatt and Lee's mother Margaret from Hans Holbein. Sir Henry Lee himself had sat to Antonis Mor during his Antwerp journey in 1568 and Lee's lifelong fascination with symbolism was marked even in this first portrait. *(Fig. 1).* The armillary spheres on his shirt have already been discussed, but the symbolism of his malformed left thumb through a ring hung by red cord around the neck has baffled many commentators. James Hall suggests that the prominent display of the wounded left thumb, imprisoned in a ring and supported by the red cord adheres to the Petrarchean symbolism of the left side being wounded for love, as seen in Moroni's portrait of 'A knight with a jousting Helmet'.[100] He is of the opinion that Lee, with his bold display of truelove knots, rings and the erotic position of his wounded left thumb is conveying the message that he has been wounded for love, possibly by the Queen herself. Hall's thesis is somewhat undermined by the fact that in the

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[99] J. Peacock, 'The politics of Portraiture', in K. Sharpe and P. Lake, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke,1994), pp. 195-228. Harington's comment is from his 1591 translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso,* quoted by Peacock.

[100] J. Hall, *Sinister Developments: a Lost Key to Western Art* (Oxford, forthcoming).

companion portrait of Lord Edward Windsor, it is Windsor's right finger that is suspended through a ring. Considering Lee's portrait remained at Ditchley until 1932, one wonders exactly who viewed the work.

When Lee began to build his portrait collection in earnest after 1590, he turned to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. Gheeraerts was born around 1561 in Bruges and fled to London in 1568 with his father Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder. Father and son joined the Protestant Dutch strangers' church in London which numbered several artists among their congregation, and Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder obtained several prestigious Court commissions. Although he enrolled in the painters' guild in Antwerp in 1577, it is possible both he and his son continued to reside in London.[101] Lee had possibly made the acquaintance of several of the Dutch artists earlier at Court or at Kenilworth in 1575 – Lee's Woodstock entertainment of that year had featured 'enchanted pictures' but the artist involved is unknown.[102] Gheeraerts the Elder died around 1587, but his son sought commissions from courtiers, especially Sir Henry Lee. In 1592, when the Queen returned on progress to Woodstock, Lee commissioned a very large portrait of the Queen as an integral part of the dramatic presentation he staged for her at his home at nearby Ditchley. The iconographic portrait of Elizabeth became the cornerstone of Lee's collection. Gheeraerts produced other portraits for Lee and many of his early commissions came from Lee's circle of friends.

At a time when great aristocrats such as Leicester and John, Lord Lumley were building up art collections that presaged those of the Stuart Court, mere gentleman such as Lee tended to follow less ambitious conventions, commissioning portraits to demonstrate loyalty to the monarch and to commemorate family and friends. Lee also followed the contemporary convention of building a long gallery at Ditchley to house his collection. In addition to the Antonis Mor portrait (1568) and the Ditchley portrait of Elizabeth I (1592), Lee's collection comprised Gheeraerts' full-length study of Sir Henry's cousin Captain Thomas Lee (1594), Sir Henry Lee with his dog,

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[101] E. Tahon, 'Marcus Gheeraerts de Oude Brugge ca. 1521-1587 Londen?' in *Brugge en de Renaissance. Van Memling tot Pourbus* ed. M.P.J. Martens (s.l., 1998), p. 231.

[102] Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder is attributed with a panel now in private hands 'Queen Elizabeth and her Court at Kenilworth, 1575'. See A.C.Sewter, 'Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth', *Burlington Magazine*, LXXVI (March 1940), pp 70 -76.

(c.1596) and five matching portraits of Sir Henry and his four brothers – Robert, Cromwell, Thomas and Richard (1600). In 1602, Gheeraerts completed a full-length study of Lee in his Garter robes and Lee later acquired a Gheeraerts' portrait of Henry, Prince of Wales, possibly given him by James I. The collection also included portraits of Sir Henry's numerous friends, such as Sir Christopher Hatton by Cornelius Ketel, Philip Sidney and the earl of Essex. Lee later commissioned a full-length portrait of Anne Vavasour from Gheeraerts' brother-in-law John de Critz in 1605.[103]

Whereas Lee's choice of subject was conventional, what he required in a portrait was not that simple. Several of the portraits associated with Lee are unusual in a collection for a country gentleman, and suggest that Lee specified certain elements. In at least two portraits, Gheeraerts placed the sitter in a landscape background, a feature only found in his portrait of Essex at this time. Three portraits contain rich allegorical symbols and references with which Lee would have been familiar through his long experience of tournament *imprese*. The pattern was set by the Ditchley portrait which placed Elizabeth on a map of England, with sunshine and storms behind her, and filled with allegorical references, *imprese* mottoes and a sonnet. The use of a natural setting for a portrait was used again in the portrait of Captain Thomas Lee in 1594, together with allegorical references to Scaveola and his faithfulness to his country in the face of adversity. The portrait of Sir Henry Lee with his dog also included a sonnet, playing on Lee's family motto and stressing the fidelity and constancy of the animal.

The similarity of the symbolism, sonnets and calligraphy found in portraits connected with Sir Henry Lee has led Roy Strong to argue forcefully for Lee's hand in the creation of the mysterious and enigmatic *'Unknown Lady in a Fancy Dress'* portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts, painted around 1600.[104] *(Fig. 20).* The portrait, rich in symbolism, is of a pregnant lady in 'strange fantastick habit', possibly Persian, her headdress and costume scattered with

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[103] H.A. Dillon, *Catalogue of Paintings in the Possession of Viscount Dillon at Ditchley, Oxfordshire* (Oxford,1908); Roy Strong, 'Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger', *Burlington Magazine*, CV (April 1963), pp. 149-157; Oliver Millar, 'Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, a sequel through inscriptions', *Burlington Magazine*, CV (Dec.,1963), pp. 533-541. Dillon quotes George Vertue as having seen two full-length portraits of Mary and Anne Fitton, dated 1601 in the collection, but the connection with Lee is unclear.

[104] R. Strong, 'My weeping stag I crowne', in Michael Bath, John Manning and Alan Young, eds., *The Art of the Emblem: Essays in Honour of Karl Josef Holtgen* (New York,1993), pp. 103-141.

Fig. 20

Unknown Lady in Fancy Dress by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

pansies, set in a woodland background with her hand resting on a white stag. Like the Ditchley portrait, there are three enigmatic mottoes in Latin, one being *Iniusti Justa querela* –'a just complaint for injustice', and a sonnet framed in a cartouche, obliquely referring to the grief of the lady and the weeping stag. What is important in the context to Lee is the purpose of the portrait.

The subject, Strong argues, is the pregnant Frances Walsingham, wife of the earl of Essex. In March 1599, Essex had departed for Ireland with the greatest army ever to leave England in Tudor times, only to return unexpectedly on 24 September 1599 to defend himself from domestic enemies. His precipitous entry into the Queen's apartments at Nonsuch palace caught the Queen in a state of undress; by lunchtime that day he had been exiled from Court and the Queen's presence. Elizabeth, if anyone, would have understood the classical reference in the painting to Actaeon, who was changed into a stag for disturbing the goddess Diana and her nymphs while bathing. For Essex, caught between house arrest, mental and physical degeneration and increasing financial embarrassment, it was imperative both to regain access to the Queen and renew his licence on sweet wines, due to expire on 30 October 1600. By November 1600, he had exhausted his own repertoire of appeals, and Strong argues that the creation of the portrait of the suppliant and pregnant Countess of Essex was Lee's attempt to break the *impasse* between Essex and the Queen.

The portrait was to be presented to the Queen at an opportune moment. Strong notes, 'Lee knew more than anyone what pleased [the Queen], and in the Persian lady we should be looking at his work'. Certainly the scenario of the portrait was typical of the tactful approach to the Queen that Lee had always used which contrasted markedly to that of Essex. Lee was no great earl; he was a gentleman who both in 1575 and 1592 had made bold requests to Elizabeth, using 'enchanted portraits' and entertainments to intrigue the Queen, to flatter her knowledge of allegory and classical illusion, and to seek forgiveness. In the summer of 1598 when Essex was originally barred from the Queen's presence, Lee had advised him to swallow his pride and to appeal to Elizabeth as a woman as well as a monarch. Now the message of the faithful wife in the portrait and in the sonnet repeated the

same tactful approach. Lee was not alone in suggesting ways of reconciling Essex and Elizabeth; in November 1600, the Countess of Warwick, as a Lady of the Bedchamber, had also advised the earl to surprise the Queen when she was in a good mood and cast himself at her feet, begging her forgiveness.

If this was the purpose of the portrait, the attempt failed. For some reason the portrait was never presented to the Queen and perhaps the appeal was futile from the start. Elizabeth might have been prepared to forgive her old knight who timed his indiscretions with Anne Vavasour to coincide with his retirement, but she was not prepared to forgive a leading nobleman who had deserted his post as military commander and had become an embarrassment she no longer needed. But if Strong's suggestion that Sir Henry Lee had a major input in the creation of this particular portrait is correct, it reinforces the image of a highly creative and innovative mind that was the guiding force behind the Quarrendon garden and the Ditchley portrait.

CONCLUSION.

In many ways, Sir Henry Lee's private life typified standards, concerns, responsibilities and enthusiasms of his contemporaries among the landowning gentry. Sir Henry Lee felt his family responsibilities keenly and his actions reflected the whole patronage system that existed in late Elizabethan society. Great men at Court could show their power and influence by obtaining positions for their suppliants, ensuring the placement of men whom they could trust, and obligations on which they could call when the occasion arose. In similar style, gentlemen such as Lee could demonstrate their influence on such leading lights of the Court, when obtaining positions for their own family. Occasionally cream rose to the top, but the Tudor method of allocating government positions both great and small did not necessarily depend on talent or fitness for purpose. In the tangled web of obligation and patronage, Sir Henry Lee, as head of his family, clearly knew the rules and played his part deftly. His long experience in Court circles and his genial nature made him a good friend to have, a fact appreciated by those both in and out of favour with the Queen.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SIR HENRY LEE IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I

1603-1611

The months following the death of Queen Elizabeth on 24 March 1603 were busy for anyone in royal service. Sir Henry Lee travelled from Woodstock to attend the lavish funeral of his royal mistress on 28 April in his formal capacity as Master of the Armoury. He was among the knights who rode out to Stamford Hill to welcome James I to London on 7 May when he was attended by sixty mounted men, thirty of them on 'great horses', all wearing yellow scarves embroidered with Lee's motto *Fide et Constantia.* It was recorded that 'to this old Knight his majestie spake very lovingly, and so paced through his Troupes very well pleased'.[1] It was a pleasant gesture that cost the new king little and was typical of James's actions as he progressed through the kingdom to his capital. As a Knight of the Garter, Lee had already attended the St. George's Day ceremonies on 23 April at Whitehall when nine year-old Prince Henry was chosen to join their number and was again present at his investiture at Windsor on 2 July. It is not known whether Lee was present at James' coronation on 25 July 1603; of necessity the numbers were kept to a minimum as virulent plague was raging in London that would claim more than a quarter of the city's population.[2] As Master of the Armoury, Lee took part in the long-postponed state entry of King James and Queen Anne into the city of London on 15 March 1604 and acted as judge in the Accession Day tournament held on the new date of 24 March at Whitehall.[3] In addition, Lee played host when the King, Queen and Court visited Woodstock in September 1603 and again in summer 1604. For a man in his seventh decade, it was a busy schedule.

How was an old knight, the quintessential Elizabethan courtier, going to adapt to the new reign? Inevitably Sir Henry Lee was increasingly going to play the part of bystander which he had often claimed in the past. At seventy, he was

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[1] J. Nichols, *The progresses, processions and magnificent festivities of King James the First* (4 vols., London, 1824; New York, 1969), i p. 113.
[2] The earl of Worcester's letter to the earl of Shrewsbury 19 June 1603 outlined the discussion among the Garter knights whether 'we should make ayny shewe at all'. Lodge, *Illustrations,* iii pp. 166-7.
[3] BL, Stowe MS, 574 f. 46.

largely freed from the need to importune for office or play much of a part at Court, and retirement absolved him from the rush for honours or positions that accompanied the accession of the new king. Age was against any chance of Lee's elevation to the peerage. He had already failed to secure any lucrative prominent household position in the latter days of Elizabeth's reign, and the few courtiers who had been promoted suffered from the Queen's reluctance to grant titles.[4] When James became king in 1603, the honours went to younger men; Sir William Knollys, the Treasurer of the household, was elevated to the peerage in 1603, Lord Henry Howard, who had worked with Cecil for James's smooth accession, was created earl of Northampton in May 1604 and Cecil himself became the earl of Salisbury in 1605. Sir John Stanhope, erstwhile Vice-Chamberlain of Elizabeth's household and closer to Lee in rank, became Baron Stanhope in the same year. Had Lee been ten years younger, the story might have been different; as it was, he merely received an annuity of some £200 from the crown.[5] In truth, he had little to gain from attendance at Court. What appearances he did make at Court were on a few well-chosen occasions and his letters after 1606 reflect more his own concerns and interests as a country gentleman. This 'antient and redoubted Champion ... this remarkable old Warrior and accomplished Courtier' could afford to observe the new reign at some leisure from his home at Ditchley or from Woodstock.[6]

LEE AND WOODSTOCK.

If Lee did not go to Court, the Court clearly came to him on numerous occasions. Woodstock, with some of the best hunting in England, had been a favourite venue for Elizabeth in the late summer months, and the Stuart royal family followed her example. With plague rife in London in summer 1603, the Court escaped to the country although Sir Thomas Edmonds reported to the earl of Shrewsbury,

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[4] Charles Howard, three years younger than Lee and of noble birth was a rare exception, having been created earl of Nottingham in 1597.
[5] *CSPD* 1603-10, p. 58. (10 Dec. 1603).
[6] Lodge, *Illustrations.* iii, pp. 171-3. Lodge's opinion of Lee, of course, was from the eighteenth century.

> the Court has been so contynnuallie haunted with the sicknes by reason of the disorderlie companie that doe followe us ... and doe infect all places where we come.[7]

Lee received the King and the whole Court from 11 to 15 September 1603. There had been no royal visit Woodstock since 1592 and it was no small undertaking for Lee to accommodate everyone. Sir Robert Cecil was scathing in his opinion of Woodstock, writing that

> this place is unholsom all the house standing uppon springe ... only the K & Q w[i]th the privy cham[ber] ladyes and 3 or 4 of the Scottish counsaile are lodged in the house and neyther Chamberlain nor English counsailor have a room ... once a week one or other [person] dyes in our tents.[8]

The king, however, was delighted with Woodstock; all thought of business was abandoned and he gave himself over whole-heartedly to his passion for hunting. On 15 September, James and his Queen, Anne of Denmark, dined privately with Lee at Lee's Rest, Ditchley and Arbella Stuart, who was at Court, reported to the earl of Shrewsbury, they

> weare accompanied by the French imbassador and a Dutch Duke ... I will not say we weare merry at the Dutchkin, least you complaine of me for telling tales out of the Queene's coche.[9]

For King James, Woodstock provided exactly what he wanted – his own lodge and deer park with close proximity to the well-stocked forest of Wychwood. He came to hunt privately in December 1603 and the Court returned on its summer progress in August 1604.

New monarchs brought changes, and despite Lee's thirty-three years in charge of the royal hunting and palace at Woodstock, James was preparing to replace him there. Lee had been ill after the 1603 royal visit, and in 1604, the king granted the reversion of the lieutenancy at Woodstock to two young favourites, James, Lord Hay and Sir Philip Herbert. It was suggested that Lee should offer his resignation, with a promise to 'dyscharge [his] dette consyderyng

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[7] Nichols, *James*, iii, p. 258; Lodge *Illustrations,* iii, p. 186.
[8] Cecil to Shrewsbury 17 Sept. 1603 from Lodge, *Illustrations,* iii, p. 187.
[9] LPL, Talbot MS. 3201; Lodge, *Illustrations,* ii, p. 25. Arbella Stuart to Shrewsbury 16 Sept. 1603. Arbella Stuart, the somewhat unbalanced grand-daughter of Bess of Hardwick, was of royal blood and James preferred to keep her close to the Court.

the great rents this xxxiii years [he had] payed'.[10] Lee knew how to muster heavyweight opposition; he wrote to the earl of Northampton, Baron Home of Berwick the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to Sir Robert Cecil, now Viscount Cranbourne, requesting help in retaining his office. If the King remained adamant, he confessed he would 'quench the overmuch affection I carry for this place ... and so drawe my selfe to a pryvate tyme of lyfe to pray for his Ma[jes]tie'.[11] It is not clear if there had been accusations of maladministration at Woodstock; Lee, an old hand at Court politics, was quick to assert that 'tyme the tryar of truthe wyll dyscover howe ... my innocence was clouded to cowller the imperfections of others'. Lee retained his office. The royal progress to Woodstock became a regular feature of the late summer Court calendar, although Lee complained in 1606 that 'the kinges oft beinge heere has number of deere killed, many carryed a waye to the newe parke at Richmond'.[12] It is probable that Lee relinquished oversight of the palace at Woodstock to others while retaining supervision of the deer park.[13] After 1606, his letters were coming from Ditchley and not from Woodstock itself, and, ever conscious of his own reputation, Lee was clearly working with an eye to the future. In 1607 he asked the Council for assistance in safeguarding his

> priviledges belonginge to woodstocke ... [to] keepe thynge here aboutes in better order that I may leve this place in such sorte as shall become me, both to the satisfyeing of his Ma[jes]tie and my selfe.[14]

LEE AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

In the light of Lee's infrequent Court attendance, it was fortunate he shared quite discrete interests with the three leading members of the royal family. With King James, he shared an obvious passion for hunting; if Lee could not actively participate in the hard riding exercise favoured by James during his

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[10] *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 152 (25 Sept. 1604); TNA, PRO, SP14/9/152.
[11] Cecil MS 107.124 (HMC Salis. XVI p. 355). (Lee to Cecil, now Viscount Cranbourne, 14 November 1604).
[12] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 98 f. 191. Summer progresses were made to Woodstock in 1603, 1604, 1605, 1608, 1610, and after Lee's death, in 1612, 1614, 1616, 1617, 1619, 1621 and 1624.
[13] *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 40. (4 Feb. 1608 - warrant to pay Sir Henry Lee £40 for hay for feeding the King's deer at Woodstock).
[14] Cecil MS 123.65 (HMC Salis. XIX p 347). (Lee to the Council 30 November 1607).

many visits, he could appreciate the royal achievement of the kill. There still remain at Ditchley six sets of stags' heads, testimony to royal kills in August 1605 and in August 1610. Such was the honour conferred on Lee by the gifts that not only were these stags' heads mounted and accompanied with verses inscribed in brass to 'Great Britain's King', but Lee's successors had them transferred to the new house at Ditchley Park in 1722.

With Queen Anne, Lee was the quintessential Elizabethan courtier, well-practised at charming great ladies. The Queen dined with Lee in 1603 and shared his love of portraiture. She became an active patron of Lee's favourite artist Marcus Gheeraerts, who became the leading Court painter, and Lee was given a full-length portrait of Henry Prince of Wales in his Garter robes. In September 1608, with a fine disregard for convention, Anne dined with Lee and Anne Vavasour at their home at Lee's Rest and indulged in a long feminine heart-to-heart with Lee's mistress, the only record of Anne Vavasour ever receiving any feminine sympathy. It was reported that

> The Queen ... dined with Sir Henry Lee ... and gave great countenance and had long discourse with Mrs Vavasour; and within a day or two after, sent a very fair jewell valued at above £100; which favour had put such new life into the old man, to see his sweet-heart so graced.[15]

As Lee had composed at least two poems for Queen Elizabeth, it behoved him to write one for Queen Anne on this occasion. Like all Lee's poems, it was self-referential and benefited much from being set to music by John Dowland.[16] Lee might still have the spirit to flatter a Queen, but at seventy-five, the flesh was weak.

> Far from triumphing Court and wonted glory
> He dwelt in shady unfrequented places,
> Time's prisoner now, he made his pastime story;
> Gladly forgets Court's erst-afforded graces.
> That goddess whom he served to heaven is gone,
> And he on earth in darkness left to moan.
> But lo, a glorious light from his dark rest
> Shone from the place where erst this goddess dwelt;

[15] John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 40; Nichols, *James* ii. p. 208.
[16] Published in Robert Dowland's, *A Musicall Banquet* (London, 1610) (anthology of lute songs), RSTC 7099.

A light whose beams the world with fruit hath blest;
Blest was the knight while he that light beheld.
Since then a star fixed on his head hath shined,
And a saint's image in his heart is shrined.

Ravished with joy, so graced by such a saint,
He quite forgat his cell and self denaid;
He thought it shame in thankfulness to faint,
Debts due to princes must be duly paid;
Nothing so hateful to a noble mind
As finding kindness for to prove unkind.

But ah! poor knight, though thus in dream he ranged,
Hoping to serve this saint in sort most meet,
Time with his golden locks to silver changed
Hath with age-fetters bound him hands and feet.
Ay me! he cries, goddess, my limbs grow faint,
Though I Time's prisoner be, be you my saint.

The 'fruit' that had so blest the world to which Lee refers were the royal children born to Queen Anne, and especially Prince Henry, for whom Lee had a special regard. Although there is no written evidence that this regard was ever reciprocated, Lee and the prince shared many interests, such as the practice of arms and a love of the tournament and it seems highly unlikely that Prince Henry would have come to Woodstock and not met Lee personally. Contemporary descriptions of the young prince show he took the utmost pleasure in practising his tournament skills every day, and his earliest public appearance was running at the ring at the age of twelve during the visit of his uncle Christian IV of Denmark in August 1606. Prince Henry, who died prior to his nineteenth birthday, was never old enough to participate in a full tournament, but always included chivalric elements such as barriers in his entertainments. Roy Strong is of the opinion that the Prince, had he lived, would have been the leader of a pan-European Protestant crusade against Catholicism and the future creator of a Court that would surpass that of Gloriana.[17]

[17] Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London, 1986). See also Timothy Wilks, 'The Court culture of Prince Henry and his circle 1603-1613' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1987).

Sir Henry Lee himself believed that the young Prince would at least revive the glories of the Accession Day tournaments and the practical chivalric values they represented. Lee had long emulated the practice advocated by Ramon Lull of encouraging young men in knightly practice and virtues, and had been the tournament mentor of many, his 'sons in chivalry'. Now in old age, in an undated letter to the young Prince Henry, he wrote that his wish

> is to bestow the remnant of my tyme all I may to please you. Your Highnes aptnenes to horsemanship, and matters of armes is such, that a meane director may make you most perfect in that exercise, on whom my duty shall never fayle, when it shall please so greate, so devine and so mightie a Prince to comaund me. [18]

What practical use the old man might have been to the young Prince is not clear, but in 1608 Lee presented Prince Henry with armour worth £200, made at the Greenwich workshop. The armour embodied Lee's hopes for the young prince, despite John Chamberlain's derisive letter to Dudley Carleton that it would 'within a year or two will serve ... neither in jest or earnest'.[19] Lee's gift was one of several suits of armour given to the heir to the throne, and as Prince Henry grew, it became obvious that the tournament was as much a passion with him as hunting was to his father.

Prince Henry also continued the ideas developed by Lee of seeing the tournament as something more than an unscripted passage of arms for the entertainment of the Court. Lee's 'Hemetes the hermit' in 1575 had been one of the first to incorporate a tournament into a scripted entertainment, and it is possible to see a direct line of development from this through Sidney's 1581 *Fortress of Perfect Beauty* and Essex's ill-advised 1594 *Erophilus* to the entertainments of Prince Henry that revolved around the tournament theme. In particular, this is true of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones's masque *Barriers,* which inaugurated the Prince's public career in January 1610. Lee would not have been in Whitehall to see the chivalric triumph of the Accession Day tournament in March 1610, staged by the Prince's followers to impress the visiting Duke of

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[18] BL, Harl. MS, 7008 f. 279.
[19] *CSPD* 1603-10, p.40; Nichols *James*, ii. p.208.

Württemberg and the Prince of Brunswick, but in the eyes of many, what had been started by Sir Henry Lee now appeared to be in good hands.

As he developed his own Court, Prince Henry shared many other tastes with Lee. Both collected pictures although Prince Henry preferred the work of Robert Peake to that of Gheeraerts.[20] Lee sent gifts of venison to the Prince and Woodstock itself was being refurnished for the use of the Prince, a somewhat strange choice as Prince Henry was known to despise his father's addiction to the chase and shared little enthusiasm for it.[21] Woodstock under Prince Henry would have been a very different place; before his death he was actively planning a water-garden there similar to that in his palace at Richmond, and again, he and Lee would have shared a common interest. At Prince Henry's last visit to Woodstock, which took place between 28 August and 2 September 1612, after Lee's death and just before his own in November 1612, the Prince staged a chivalric entertainment for his family where Lee had staged one for his Queen thirty-seven years before.

LEE AS A PUBLIC SERVANT IN RETIREMENT.

Despite his preference for a country life, Lee still had official responsibilities in retirement. He retained his position as Master of the Armoury until 1611 but the practical work was usually delegated to his deputy and the clerk at the Armoury. Regardless of who was actually doing the work, all warrants dormant to pay the wages of the Greenwich armourers or the staff at the various armouries across the country continued to be paid in the name of Sir Henry Lee.[22] It is clear that the Exchequer held Lee personally responsible for the Armoury from 'the accompte beganne the ffyrste day of January 1601 [1602]

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[20] In 'Time stands still', *Early Music,* xxxiv, 3 (2006), p. 13, Anthony Rooley suggests, somewhat improbably, that the figure of Time in Peake's *Portrait of Prince Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales* at the tilt barrier, c.1610, now at Parham House, is modelled on Lee himself. The image of a generic old man would fit any number of men of that age.

[21] 41 Pat. James I 1610-11 (Grant to Henry Prince of Wales of the manor house and Manor of Woodstock).

[22] See *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 434 (28 May 1608 warrant dormant to pay Sir Henry Lee Master of the Armoury to the Clerk of the Armoury at Greenwich the wages of the twenty-one armourers); *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 445 (4 July 1608 Warrant dormant to pay Sir Henry Lee £400 a year for the service of the armouries at the Tower, Hampton Court, Westminster Windsor Greenwich and Portsmouth and Woolwich.); *CPSD* 1603-10 p. 524 (3 July 1609 Warrant to pay Sir Henry Lee £600.)

and ended the laste day of December 1610'. This, delivered to Lee's heir and executor in 1611, which listed monies paid bi-annually into 'Sir Henry Lee's handes' totalling £5,593.17s 8d.[23] When the very substantial costs for 'repayring and keepinge clene the armors within the Tower of London, Grenewich and Wollwich', wages of named individuals employed there, charges for provision and carriage of swords for Ireland, and the costs of a coronation tournament for James I in 1603 and a 'triumph' for the visit of the Danish king in 1606 were subtracted, a bill of £389. 3s 7d was presented, payable from Lee's personal estate.[24] Lee continued to sign all the Armoury accounts until his death, and while not greatly improving the administrative situation there, managed to keep himself free of the corruption at the Tower that would engulf his successor at the Armoury, Sir Thomas Monson, by 1616.

Another position Sir Henry Lee still held was the constableship of Harlech castle originally purchased in 1587 and held jointly with his nephew Owen Cooke.[25] It was clear from the first that local elites resented the appointment of 'a stranger among them', and a quarrel had rapidly developed between Lee and the local Member of Parliament, William Maurice. As Constable and Mayor of Harlech, Lee owned land in Harlech Marsh, which Maurice forcibly enclosed in 1592.[26] Lee visited Harlech in that year and wrote to Cecil on behalf of the townspeople, requesting to have the Quarter Sessions and Assizes of Merioneth held in the castle regularly. The townspeople had, he reported, given £100 to 'some who rule in those parts', to no avail. Although Cecil raised the matter in parliament, Harlech failed to get the assizes on a regular basis, but William Maurice continued to take monetary gifts from the town. Sir Henry Lee outlived his young nephew but despite the undivided constableship reverting back to him in 1603, he spent little time in Harlech. It is clear that Maurice coveted Lee's position, frequently claiming that, unlike Lee, his ancestors had been constables

[23] Surrey History Centre, Loseley MSS, LM/64.
[24] The very detailed provision of tiltstaves, long pikes and partingstaves for barriers, swords, vamplates and coronels in June 1603 would suggest that a coronation tournament had been planned for James I, and cancelled because of the plague.
[25]. Cecil MS 38.23 (HMC Salis. XIII p. 467).
[26] N[ational] L[ibrary of] W[ales], Brogyntyn archives, Clenennau letters and papers 58. Sir William Maurice was MP for Harlech 1592-1614.

who dwelled in the castle and kept it in good repair. By 1608, Maurice had enlisted the services of Ralph, Lord Eure, Lord President of the Marches of Wales to press his case against Lee. Eure complained to Salisbury that Harlech

> a castle of strength ... [is] not fit to be in strangers' hands who neither remain nor come at any time into that country but make benefit off the fee of £50 paid without respect to the King's service. [27]

Maurice wrote to the Privy Council in 1609, accusing Lee of letting the castle fall into decay and also wrote to Lee in 1610 raising the matter. Lee's last existing letter from Ditchley in February 1610 shows that even at seventy-seven, he was fully in charge of his faculties. He may have been an absentee constable, but he noted that the last repair he effected on the castle had been funded in full, a rare occurrence. But if Maurice had 'bene better with me touching the land I have in the marshe', Lee intimated, he might have been more successful in purchasing Lee's constableship.[28]

The incident illustrates much about the interests of local gentry at this time. Undoubtedly Lee had bought the position at Harlech for his nephew and after 1603, it became little more than a profitable sinecure. The ambitious William Maurice, busily acquiring substantial estates in North Wales and Shropshire through marriage and enclosure, also became Member of Parliament for Merioneth from 1594, sheriff of Caernarvonshire and Beaumaris, was knighted in 1603 and was bailiff of Harlech. Profitable local perquisites were not numerous, and typically Maurice resented the Constableship remaining in the inactive hands of an aged courtier from the previous reign. He might, however, have had more success in purchasing the position from Lee, had he not enclosed Lee's lands in 1592. In matters of property, Sir Henry Lee was not one to forget an affront.

In his latter years, Lee made the journey to London for specific reasons and seldom for pleasure. In 1604 he appeared as a deponent in the Star Chamber case between his godson Sir Robert Dudley and the Countess of Leicester, who contested Dudley's claim to legitimacy. Lee's deposition has not

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[27] Cecil MS 126.108 (HMC Salis. XX p. 295).
[28] NLW, Clenennau letters and papers 253. (Lee to Maurice 8 Feb. 1609/10).

survived and what aid he could have provided for his godson was little.[29] In December 1604, Lee and Anne Vavasour travelled up to London to stand as godparents to Marcus Gheeraerts' fifth child, Henry, at the Dutch church, but by March 1605, Lee was writing to Sir Michael Hickes that 'our coming to London is like to be seldome'. Later that year Lee Symonds, Lee's agent, noted that various items such as the ornate saddles used on Lee's great horses were being moved from London to Ditchley.[30] Lee's appearance at the Garter feasts and processions at Windsor ceased after 1605 although he appeared at the Accession Day tournament in 1606 in an honorary capacity. Lee made his last journey to London in the summer of 1608 to present Prince Henry with a suit of armour, and that year he gave up the very substantial lodgings he had held at the Savoy since 1563.[31] Even at seventy-five, Lee remained interested in the affairs of the Court and after Queen Anne's visit to Ditchley in September 1608, he claimed he wanted 'one fling more at the Court before he die, though he thought he had taken his leave this summer'.[32]

Lee also exercised local responsibilities. He was mayor of New Woodstock and was entitled to receive a 'sugar loffe 9s 6d and a cake 9s' each Christmas.[33] He was involved in setting up a grammar school at Woodstock, endowed in 1585 by Richard Cornwall, a London skinner and Lee himself gave two messuages of land for a grammar school in Aylesbury. The old practice of leaving charitable works for posterity in one's last years was deeply ingrained, although Aylesbury fared better than Woodstock. Lee was still holding £55 of the Woodstock legacy money himself on loan on his death, and the debt was paid from his estate.

In retirement at Ditchley, Lee was not forgotten by his friends even among the great. In 1607, Sir Thomas Lake forwarded a letter to Salisbury for the King

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[29] CKS, (Penshurst Papers) U1475 L2/4 item 3 r.81, (Sir Edward Stafford's deposition in the case of Sir Robert Dudley). Stafford had married Sir Robert Dudley's mother, Douglas, Lady Sheffield.
[30] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 82 f. 160 (3 March 1605).
[31] See *Walford's Antiquarian,* ed. E. Walford, viii July-Dec (London, 1885), pp.119-124 for an inventory of Lee's Savoy apartment.
[32] *CSPD* 1603-10 p. 459; J.C. Nichols, *James* ii. p. 208.
[33] M. Maslen ed., *Woodstock Chamberlain's Accounts 1609-1650,* Oxfordshire Record Society, lviii (Stroud, 1993) p. 3.

from the Prince of Nassau and also included a 'letter of the Prince's to Sir Henry Lee', which has not survived.[34]

LEE - RETIREMENT INTO PRIVATE LIFE.

One of the best indications as to how Sir Henry Lee passed his last few years comes from eight lively letters he wrote to Sir Michael Hickes from 1603 to 1608. Lee had been borrowing steadily from Hickes since 1598, mostly short-term loans to finance his substantial building works at Ditchley and Quarrendon and these letters, written very much in a spirit of friendship between the two men, reveal many aspects of Lee's private life. By 1604 Lee finally admitted the illegibility of his own handwriting and employed his nephew Lee Symonds as amanuensis and bookkeeper. Ostensibly, the purpose of the letters was financial, dealing with Lee's loans. In 1606, Lee still owed Hickes £300 which he was repaying at a £100 a year plus ten percent interest, payable bi-annually. In March he wrote to Hickes to say that Symonds had sent £10 and £110 would be paid shortly, with 'the rest' being provided in November. Lee asked Hickes' forbearance for 'one of the two hundred pounds three months longer'.[35] In April 1607, Lee refers to the 'remaynt of the three hundred pounds', as £130 had been paid Hickes 'a yere past' via Lee's clothier Harry Russell of 'Cyssitter' - an interesting insight on the circulation of money at that time. £120 was promised for 1607 with the £110 remaining to be paid in 1608.

Lee was now grappling with his own accounts again, which had been thrown into disarray in 1607 by 'the deathe of Lee Symonds who kept these reckonninges, whose notes I fynd not'.[36] There were the first indications that wool prices, which had been buoyant for a decade, were beginning to drop; Lee added that he preferred to repay Hickes in July 1608 when 'my woole monney should come' but it was possible he would withold his clip as 'I shall not sell it [to] my further losse'.[37] In 4 July 1608 Lee wrote from Ditchley asking for a year's

[34] Cecil MS 128.42 (HMC Salis. XIX p. 334).
[35] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 82 f. 160.
[36] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 36 f. 72 (from Ditchley 20 April 1607. 'Cyssitter' is Cirencester).
[37] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 36 f. 72.

indulgence. He was, he said, 'out £1200 rent ... which will not come in until midsummer next ... when, if God will, I shall be able to do much more than I can now'.[38] Despite what Lee called his 'bad fortune and former unthriftiness', borrowing was not necessarily a sign of impecunity. It reflected more the cash flow problems that could face even prosperous wool graziers, dependent on a bi-annual income from the shear and from rents.

Lee's need for Hickes' money to finance his passion for building continued long into his retirement. His work on his 'four goodly manors', begun around 1595, continued with the emparking of Ditchley in 1605, but his chief concern was his ancestral lands in Buckinghamshire.[39] In 1607 Lee had building work in hand at Quarrendon on the church and possibly the almshouse, and invited Hickes to 'come this way ... [to] see my further preparations for this tyme and the tyme to come'.[40] In July 1608, Lee apologized to Hickes that since he had 'sondry fron[d]s in the fyre and [was] mending my house at Burstone in Buckingham shyre ... the payinge of your mony at your tyme appoynted.' was in doubt.[41] Lee was not spending his retirement in idleness.

What is remarkable about Lee's letters to Hickes is that, for all the financial dealings between them, Hickes retained the genuine affection and friendship of Lee. There were numerous invitations for Hickes and his wife to visit. In August 1606, Lee wrote that

> the kinge of Denmark ... is upon his departure, all the shewe at Tibbalts finished, your care lighted and the tyme of the yeare more fitt for pleasure and visitynge of freinds. It is but sixteen myles further to come to this homely manner and I think I heare my lady say she will accompany you.[42]

In May 1607, Lee urged Hickes

> if you will make a sommer voyage ... I will meete you and my lady at my house nearest to London not above 27 or 28 myles of[f] ... from hence would I guyde you from one house to another with the help of an Alehouse

[38] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 98 f. 196.
[39] ORO Dil xxi/17.
[40] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 36 f. 72.(20 April 1607)
[41] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 98 f. 196.
[42] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 98 f. 191. (8 August 1606).

> untill you come to Woodstocke from hence to Ditchley [and] so to Lee's Rest. [43]

In one of his last letters to Hickes in November 1607, Lee paid his friend the compliment of writing that

> more kyndnes more truthe and playne meaning I never found than in Sir Michael Hickes ... my debts by bond ... may have an end but my love for your kynd courtesy must end when I leave the world. [44]

Sir Michael Hickes, apart from being an excellent friend, was Lee's social equal, having risen to be a 'country gentleman and man of affairs' through his work as patronage secretary to Burghley and as intimate of Sir Robert Cecil, now earl of Salisbury.[45] Lee clearly felt that he could mention his mistress Anne Vavasour to Hickes in a way he could never do in his correspondence with Salisbury or the earl of Shrewsbury, and the letters give an insight into the domestic felicity that existed for some twenty-one years between Lee and his mistress. Anne Vavasour is mentioned in all eight letters to Hickes and Lee never neglected to send their joint love to Lady Hickes as from an established married couple. Lee's Rest, which Lee had built for Anne at Ditchley in the mid 1590s, became their home and all invitations were issued jointly. There had never been any question of Anne returning to Court, but she received the King and Queen at Lee's Rest in 1603 and 1608. Lee, unable to give Anne his name, did his best to shield her from scandal and harassment. Her husband, John Finch, must have reappeared in 1605 as Lee gave him an annuity for £20 which he subsequently sold. If Anne was fortunate that she found both love and protection from a courtier who was untroubled by her past, it is clear that Lee's longevity was, to some extent, the result of her care. In 1606, he sent Hickes 'well wishes from Mrs Vauasor ... through whose louinge care & diligence I doe throughe gods goodness continewe the longer.'[46] He described Lee's Rest as 'my corner of resolution ... where by good loue I will leve the world and end my

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[43] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 37. f. 74 (4 May 1607).
[44] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 48 f.95 (23 Nov. 1607).
[45] Smith, *Servant to the Cecils*, p. 109.
[46] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 82 f. 160 (3 March 1606).

last days'.[47] Evidence of such domestic contentment was rare in the correspondence of courtiers.

LEE'S HEALTH.

For the greater part of his life, Sir Henry Lee enjoyed remarkably good health. The fact he tilted until his fifty-seventh year is notable in itself, and the scored cheque for 1590 confirms that Lee's participation was far from merely ceremonial. The alterations made to his third suit of armour would suggest that he wore field armour well into his sixties - probably in 1596 when he visited the earl of Essex at Plymouth prior to the Cadiz expedition. He certainly hunted well into his seventh decade. Lee outlived not only his immediate contemporaries, such as the Queen and the earl of Leicester, but his five younger brothers. Like many of his contemporaries he suffered from gout - in his letters to Burghley he described it as 'their joint enemy' - and given his physically active life, he probably had arthritis.[48] When necessary, Lee consulted the leading physicians of the day; in June 1575 he obtained permission to seek 'councell in physicke' from the Catholic Dr Atslowe, then imprisoned at the Tower of London for his support of Mary Stuart.[49]

Lee's health appeared robust until early in 1587 when, on a visit to his brother at Hatfield, Yorkshire, he 'fell sycke of a contynuall fever which held me xxii dayes ... excedynge wecke'.[50] This probably accounted for Lee's uncharacteristic absence from the funeral of his friend Sir Philip Sidney in February 1587. Atslowe attended Lee on this occasion and Lee wrote to Walsingham in February 1587, requesting the doctor visit him again so he might be 'clered of the drages of my dyssease'.[51] Lee could recover rapidly when necessary and later that year was covering many miles on horseback, mediating

[47] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 37. f. 74 (4 May 1607).
[48] On several occasions Lee described his limbs as 'fast bound'. He appeared at some date at the tournament as 'the inchaunted knight whose armes be locked for a tyme' and who sends the damsel of the Queen of the Fairies with a cupid jewel brooch to present to the Queen, BL,Add. MS 41499A ff. 1-16.
[49] Dasent, *APC* VIII p. 396 (10 June 1575).
[50] BL, Harl. MS, 286, f. 100. Feb 1587. (Lee to Walsingham).
[51] Atslowe was also attending the son of earl of Northumberland, who died in 1587, probably in the north of England.

between Gilbert Talbot in London and the earl of Shrewsbury in Sheffield. Lee was eager to serve his Queen when invasion from Spain threatened in 1588 and wrote to Walsingham that 'my body, (God be thanked) never better in younger years never lustier nore my mind never warmer to prove myself '.[52]

Lee's retirement from the tilt in 1590 was timely. In September 1591, he confessed to Heneage that he could no longer follow the Queen's summer progress as

> I am owld ... the payne and fluxe I fele in my eye doth rather increase than dymynyshe. I fynd myselfe evill provyded for of all thynges necessesary for me ... the inconvenyences of progresses [make me] more fytte to pray for her Ma[jes]tie than ... to wrestell wth the umors of cowrt.[53]

Despite this, Lee travelled to Harlech in February 1592 and received the Queen on progress at Woodstock and Ditchley in September. From 1595 until 1597, he was prepared to entertain the possibility of becoming either Vice-Chamberlain or Comptroller of the Household, both demanding Court positions. In June 1596, in his capacity of master of the Armoury, he accompanied Fulke Greville to inspect the fleet at Plymouth.[54] His health affected his most triumphant moment at Windsor in 1597; his formidable cousin Elizabeth, Dowager Lady Russell related to Sir Robert Cecil that Lee's 'payne' had forced him to leave his Garter investiture early, but had thanked Cecil for 'sending George [the Order of the Garter medal] from his own neck'.[55] Lee recovered to attend the annual Garter feasts and processions on a fairly regularly basis.

From 1598, there are few of Lee's letters that did not mention his physical condition, especially the lameness associated with gout.[56] When Orsini, Duke of Bracciano visited Woodstock to hunt in December 1600 during his visit to England, Lee received him from his bed at Woodstock Lodge 'much against my wil'.[57] The ten weeks that Lee was 'forsed to keep his bedde ' provided him with

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[52] TNA, PRO, SP12/213/95; *CSPD* 1581-90 p. 515 (28 June 1588).
[53] Cecil MS 20.26 (HMC Salis. IV p. 136). (Lee to Heneage from the Vyne 18 September 1591).
[54] Cecil MS 14.46 (HMC Salis. VI p. 208). (Gorges to Cecil 3 June 1596).
[55] Cecil MS 58.53 (HMC Salis VII p. 536). (Lady Russell to Sir Robert Cecil April 1597).
[56] See for example Cecil MS 177.123 (HMC Salis. VIII p. 403) (Lee to Essex 1598); Cecil MS 70.87 (HMC Salis. p. IX p. 196 (Lee to Cecil 1599).
[57] Cecil MS 82.80, (HMC Salis. X p. 427). (Lee to Cecil. 22 December 1600).

a good excuse not to ride to London when news reached him on 8 February 1601 of the Essex rebellion and the arrest and execution of his cousin Thomas Lee.[58] To amend his 'newe passyon of the gowte', Lee wrote to Cecil in March 1601 that he intended 'to see Bathe' and then to 'pylgrymage ... to the welles in Cheshire'.[59] Lee was in vogue; the therapeutic well at Utkinton, Cheshire had only been made public in August 1600 and by 1601 was attracting more than two thousand visitors a day.[60] By May 1601, Lee was reporting to Cecil that, having reached Bath, 'the death of Mr Done, the governer of [the] Cheshire welles and some other of my friends who sought health and found death in that place' had halted his journey until 'time shall make trial' whether the Cheshire wells were efficacious or not.[61] The news of the death of Mr Done, Forester Royal of Utkinton Hall was somewhat premature, but Lee refrained from travelling north. Lee's correspondence with Sir Robert Cecil about his health was typical of the time; both Cecil and his father Burghley had a preoccupation with their own health and kept meticulous notes on the medications they took. Healing waters and 'physick' were not the only remedies - Lee wrote to Cecil that 'exercyce is as necessary for your healthe as chaynge of ayer'.[62]

Despite his earlier incapacity, in 1603 Lee threw himself into six hectic months' service for King James I. Such effort took its toll on a septuagenarian; in December 1603 he wrote to Hickes that 'it is now nine weeks synce I came owt of my chamber', possibly accounting for the King's attempt to replace him at Woodstock.[63] Lee, although not suffering from any major illness, increasingly fell prey to the crippling effects of gout, which seriously affected his general mobility. In August 1606, he complained to Hickes that 'the gowte had too longe

[58] Cecil MS 76.70 (HMC Salis. XI p. 52) (Lee to Cecil 14 Feb 1601); Cecil MS 76.79 (HMC Salis. XI p. 58) (Lee to Cecil 16 Feb 1601).
[59] Cecil MS 77.33 (HMC Salis.XI p. 110-11) (6 March 1601).
[60] BL, *Newes out of Cheshire of the new found Well,* by G.W. (London, 1600), RSTC 24904.
[61] Cecil MS 98. 139 (HMC Salis. XIV p. 178). (27 May 1601).
[62] Cecil MS 81.74, (HMC Salis. X p.307). Lee was not alone in this; in 1573, Leicester had advised Elizabeth that 'so good a medycyne I have alway found exersise with the open good ayre ... my best remedye ageynst those dellycate deceases gotten about yor deynty cytty of London', TNA, PRO, SP 15/17/205.
[63] BL, Lansdowne MS, 88 no. 94 f. 185.

possesion of my ioyntes, therefore my retourne to London very unlikely'.[64] In 1607, he was treated by the eminent Sir William Paddy, former physician to Lord Burghley and personal physician to James I. Like many of his contemporaries, Lee suffered acutely from constipation and haemorrhoids, and Paddy's notebook gives graphic details of results from his prescriptions for 'a purging physike and a puke'.[65] By July 1608, despite journeying to London and travelling between his various estates, Lee was writing to Hickes that 'my hand cannott nowe aid me to wryte muche nor my legges to cary my body one pace. My strength [is] dyminished as my yeares increaseth'.[66] He used an amanuensis against his will, signed all his later letters and appeared to have stayed mentally alert to the end. At his death, he was being attended by Oxford physician John Cheynell.

LEE'S WILL.

Lee was certainly well in possession of his faculties when his will was drawn up on 6 October 1609.[67] As a result of various legal devices, Lee was free to leave his properties as he wished. With a consciousness of what was due to his family name and in the same spirit with which he developed the Lee hereditary holdings at Quarrendon, he dug deep into his own family tree to secure an heir. Lee outlived not only his own generation, but the majority of his nephews, few of whom were legitimate. He appears to have wanted an heir of his own name and eventually identified the grandson of his grandfather's brother, 'a one-eied young man' Henry Lee, later first baronet.[68] The inquisition taken after Lee's death shows that the settlement of Lee's multiple land interests and leases was complicated, and already encumbered with a considerable jointure of £700 a year settled on Anne Vavasour for sixty years or the term of her life. Lee had foreseen that his own demise would leave his mistress and their bastard son vulnerable and he tried his utmost to deal with the situation. Anne was still

[64] BL, Lansdowne MS, 89 no. 98 f. 191.
[65] Bodl. MS, Rawlinson A 369 f. 74 (6 March 1607).
[66] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 98 f. 196 (4 June 1608).
[67] TNA, PRO, PROB 11/117.
[68] John Aubrey's description, *Brief Lives,* ii. p. 30. Until 1932, all owners of Ditchley had 'Henry Lee' somewhere in their names.

technically married to John Finch and as her husband he would have had rights over her property. Lee left to his executors, Sir Thomas Vavasour, Anne's brother, and John Walter Lee, the houses and furnishings of Lee's Rest at Ditchley and Laelius in Buckinghamshire, together with half his furniture and plate, for such uses as he appointed in writing. These were clearly for the use of Anne with the reversion going to Lee's heir, and she was required to submit an inventory of all furnishings. Among the usual small legacies was an annuity to Lee's natural son Thomas Vavasour of £40.

SIR HENRY LEE AND RELIGION.

Consciousness of imminent death was not unusual in Tudor correspondence. As early as 1587, Lee was making reference to 'when god shall call me awaye' and this was a refrain he repeated regularly as he grew older.[69] Lee made no statement whatsoever as to his religious views and there is little to suggest that he was anything other than conventionally religious, not particularly devout and without extreme opinions. His letters reveal nothing more than the customary 'god be thanked', for example, when referring to an improvement in his health. As a major local landowner, Lee held the advowson of St. Mary's, Aylesbury and presented at least three incumbents as the lessee tenant under the Prebendary.[70] None of these, John Hitchcock in 1572, John Price in 1597 and Robert Bell in 1598, were notable for holding anything other than conventional beliefs. The same is true of Lee's other presentments - he appeared more intent on helping friends or fellows of his own New College, Oxford and his brother's St. John's College than furthering any specific religious tenet. In 1567, Lee presented Robert Challoner, his own household steward, to the living at Fleetmarston and in 1594, tried unsuccessfully to obtain the wardenship of Winchester College for William Swaddon, a fellow of New College. Cromwell Lee's illegitimate son, John Lee of St. John's College, Oxford became

[69] BL, Harl. MS, 286 f. 100.
[70] Aylesbury, in the diocese of Lincoln retained its prebendary, and the Prebendary of Aylesbury occasionally occupied the living himself. More usually, Lee was allowed to present the next incumbent.

rector of Fleetmarston and Wootton in 1601, and was followed by two other St. John's men, Thomas Jones in 1609 and Theophilus Tuer in 1610.

By the standards of the day, the virtual absence of any religious statement in a very long life is interesting, although Lee's contemporary John Selden, in his *Table Talk,* noted that 'gentlemen have ever been Temperate in their Religion'.[71] It is possible Lee deliberately kept his religious beliefs above suspicion. His wife, Anne Paget, had been a member of the large recusant Paget family and whereas her father, Sir William Paget had been at the best a *politique* in religion, Lady Lee, her five sisters and their husbands, and her two brothers Thomas and Charles Paget maintained dangerous and potentially treasonable Catholic affiliations throughout Elizabeth's reign. Lee took pains to separate himself from the whole Paget clan.

Frances Yates and others have taken Lee's poems, especially 'Time's eldest son' and the better-known 'My golden locks time hath to silver turned', as proof of the Elizabethans' substitution of the Virgin Mary by the Virgin Queen.[72] By extension, it has been presumed that Lee must have shared these sentiments and be conversant with the words of the Catholic liturgy which sprang easily to his lips.[73]

> Time's eldest son, old age, the heyre of ease,
> Strengths foe, loves woe, and foster to devotion,
> Bids gallant youthes in martial prowes please'
> As for himselfe hee hath no earthly motion,
> But thinkes sighes, teares, vowes, praiers and sacrifice
> As good as shewes, maskes, justes or tilt devises.
>
> Then sit thee downe and say thy *Nunc dimittis,*
> With *De profundis, Credo* and *Te Deum,*
> Chant *Miserere*, for what now so fit is
> As that, or this, *Paratum est cor meum*?
> O that thy Saint would take in worth thy hart,
> Thou canst not please hir with a better part.

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[71] John Selden, *Table Talk* (London, 1689), p. 64. Wing S2437.
[72] See E.C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (London, 1966 c.1939), p.206; F. Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* xx, 1957, p.74; R. H. Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queen and the Cult of Elizabeth* (London, 1983), p. 46.
[73] John Dowland, *Second Book of Songs,* nos. VI-VIII in Fellowes p. 469; S. May, *The English Courtier Poets: the poems and their contexts* (Columbia, 1999), pp. 356-7.

When others sings *Venite exultemus*
Stand by, and turne to *Noli aemulari*;
For *quare fremuerunt* use *Oremus*,
Vivat Eliza for an *Ave Maria*;
And teach those swains that lives [sic] about thy cell
To say *Amen* when thou dost pray so well.

Helen Hackett makes the telling point that the Latin phrases quoted were not necessarily a sign of Catholicism but were still in continual use by the Elizabethan church in the Book of Common Prayer.[74] She also points out that Lee, like the Queen and the earl of Leicester, were of a generation that would have known the Catholic liturgy from childhood, regardless what their own adult views might have been. In some ways, there may have been some truth in Frances Yates' assertions. Lee made no reference whatsoever to his own religious beliefs; all his actions and writings reveal his devotion to his sovereign and the tenets of chivalry. Possibly there was little room for anything else.

LEE'S TOMB AND FUNERAL.

With an old man's zeal, Lee devoted much time to the preparation of his lavish tomb in St Peter's church at Quarrendon and that of Anne Vavasour, when she should need it.[75] These two tombs with their inscriptions were finished by 1609, and tombs for Lee's mother and father were also erected. Money was left in Lee's will for tombs for his brothers, his sister Joyce and even for his uncle Sir Thomas Wyatt but these do not appear to have been constructed. Lee's monument was described as an altar tomb of white and red veined marble, bearing the painted and gilded alabaster figure of a recumbent mailed knight with sword in hand and the accoutrements of the Order of the Garter. The inscriptions, under Lee's motto of *Fide et Constantia,* were more a statement of Lee's knightly virtues than testimony of any devout beliefs. Above Lee's tomb

[74] H. Hackett, *Virgin Mother*, pp. 144-150.
[75] Chambers gives a detailed description of the Quarrendon tombs in *Lee,* pp. 301-308. His descriptions are reconstructed from BL, Lansdowne MS, 874 f. 35 and f. 50b (Nicholas Charles' *Inscriptions,* 1611); Browne Willis (12 April 1704); Bodleian Willis MS, 13 f.111v. and George Lipscomb in *Gentleman's Magazine* lxxxvii (1817) i. p. 504 and ii. p. 105; lxxxviii (1818) i. p. 116.

was his *Memoriae Sacrum*, composed by his kinsman William Scott. The adjacent empty tomb of Anne Vavasour was said to have had an effigy of a kneeling lady; the inscription on it was simple, and in an era when virtue, piety and fecundity were paramount in women, Lee's testimony to their love is very moving.[76]

> Vnder this stone intombed lies a faire & worthy Dame
> daughter of Henry Vauasor Ann Vauasour her name
> Shee liuing with Sir Henry Lee for loue long tyme did dwell
> Death Could not part them but that here they rest within one cell.

Sir Henry Lee died on 12 February 1611.[77] With his accustomed thoroughness, the preparations for his funeral had long been complete and Lee received a spectacular funeral as behoved an Elizabethan Knight of the Garter on 4 April 1611 at Quarrendon.[78] His heir, soon to be promoted to baronet, and distant members of his family attended, as did his executors and servants, his great horses, Garter King of Arms and Lancaster and Chester Heralds, representatives for the King and Oxford University, members of leading Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire family and some eighty poor men to represent the years of Lee's life. Somewhere among the lower ranks of mourners marched his bastard son, his only descendant. William Swaddon, who Lee had tried to help in 1594, was now Prebendary of Aylesbury and preached at the funeral. Such great funerals, similar to that of Philip Sidney or Sir Henry Unton, were not uncommon among gentleman at this time, and were more a testimony to worldly achievement than a statement of devout faith.

Lee's monuments were never completed and did not last long. Anne Vavasour's monument lasted only briefly; within a year it was the subject of crude graffiti and demolished by order of the bishop.[79] Anne herself was hounded for

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[76] BL, Add. MS, 14417 p. 22v. - Proceedings at the funeral of Sir Henry Lee at Quarrendon on April 4 1611. Also D. Lysons and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia,* i. (1806) p. 624.
[77] From Lee's *Memoriae Sacrum.*
[78] BL, Add.MS, 14417 f.22b. Nicholas Charles' papers, 'Proceedings at the funerals of ... Sir Henry Lee KG'.
[79] The graffiti was much repeated and read;
> Here lies the good old knight Sir Harry,
> Who loved well but would not marry;
> While he lived and had his feeling,

her possessions by Lee's heir and after a salacious epigram by Sir John Harington to 'Lelia' was published in 1615, she again found herself the subject of ribald slander. When she remarried in 1618, Sir Henry Lee (Bart.) was swift to pounce. He discovered John Finch still alive and the new Sir Henry had a charge of bigamy brought against her, potentially a capital offence. When the case came before the High Commission in 1621, Anne, at nearly sixty years of age, was condemned to pay a fine of £2,000 but with 'dispensation from public penitence or other bodily penalty'.[80] With the abandonment of Quarrendon by the Lees, Sir Henry Lee's tomb fell into disrepair and was subsequently demolished. *Sic transit gloria.*

CONCLUSION.

For many at Court, by 1611 Lee was more a curiosity of a bygone age than a figure of any significance. Despite the lavishness of the funeral, there were few statements of regret or surprise at his passing; it became merely another item of interest in letters sent from the Court that the old man had finally died.[81] Lee's coveted official offices at Woodstock, at the Armoury and at Harlech Castle were rapidly occupied by others and his stall at Windsor filled by a new knight of the Garter. But if Sir Henry Lee was not particularly missed, he, the great Elizabethan, also avoided seeing the changes of the years to come. Living only until 1611 and at some remove from the Court, Lee could partake in the hopes and expectations of the new Jacobean age without experiencing its later concomitant disappointments. On 29 March 1611 Samuel Calvert wrote to William Trumbull, the ambassador in Brussels that 'Viscount Bindon and Sir Henry Lea are dead, and two Garters void ... when you are returned, you may find a change at Court, not the houses or mansions, but the men and manners,

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She did lie and he was kneeling.
Now he's dead and cannot feel,
He doth lie and she doth kneel.

[80] Pat. Roll, 2272. *CSPD* 1619-23 p. 239.

[81] See HMC Buccleuch MS, I p. 97 (19 February 1611, George Blundell to Sir Ralph Winwood); NLW, Clenennau letter and papers 484 (19 February 1611 Sir William Maurice to Ralph Lord Eure.); Birch, *James,* i. 108 (6 March 1611 John Sanford to Sir Thomas Edmondes), HMC Downshire MS, III p. 28.

both growing from worse to stark naught'.[82] It was a change that Sir Henry Lee was not called upon to witness.

[82] HMC Downshire MS, II p. 42.

CONCLUSION

Few men are unique, but many have singular talents which set them apart from their contemporaries. Sir Henry Lee was one such man, and worth studying in his own right. He was a member of the elite gentry, of long-established wealth and only one degree below the peerage. Lee lived a very long and sociable life, and to study him is to become acquainted with a wide range of his contemporaries and social equals. Such a study can therefore give insights into the lives of other courtier gentlemen, and show something of their typical concerns, values, expectations and frustrations.

It is possible to discern three groups within the category of 'elite gentry', distinct but not necessarily exclusive. A gentleman could be a member of all three groups, and in his time, Lee demonstrated affinity with each. The majority of 'elite gentry' belonged to the first category, the county gentry – wealthy landowners whose principal interests lay in sheep-breeding and the acquisition and management of their estates. These would briefly be 'courtier gentlemen' - visiting the Court in their youth to pay homage and service to their monarch. They would then return home to become the backbone of the Elizabethan commonweal, serving as local magistrates, Members of Parliament and muster-masters. The dependence the government placed upon these gentlemen to provide stability in the provinces is illustrated in the Lord Keeper's speech in November 1599 as he exhorted Members of Parliament to return to their estates

> there to maynteyne hospitalitie, and relieve their poure neighboures, and to see good order kept, whereby natural Love will growe, and be continued between Landlordes and their Tenants and the gentlemen and those of the poorer and meaner sorte ... for the goode and quiet of the Common Weale. [1]

The county gentlemen might entertain the Queen when on progress, at their own cost, and might erect a royal coat-of-arms or portrait in their houses as mute and lasting testimony to the event.[2] They would pay their taxes, but their priorities lay with their lands and the promotion of their families through

[1] TNA, PRO, SP12/273/35.
[2] See Cole, *The Portable Queen,* p. 181-202 for a list of Elizabeth's hosts when on progress.

advantageous marriages. Some, like the Spencers and the Dormers, would choose to concentrate on their family wealth and estates; some, like the Treshams, would be forced into a provincial role by their adherence to the Catholic faith. Many would build new fashionable houses and with the coming of James I, purchase a title for themselves and their heirs. Lee, as a substantial landowner, played the role expected of him as magistrate and Member of Parliament for his county. But despite telling the earl of Shrewsbury that he was 'a mere contry man, no cowrtyar', the comfortable role of county gentleman was insufficiently stimulating for Sir Henry Lee.[3]

A second group were the courtier gentlemen who sought profitable service at Court, sometimes of a bureaucratic nature, sometimes as a Gentleman Pensioner or in the royal household. For some, like Cecil, Buckhurst, Hatton, Heneage, Walsingham and Stanhope, there was a clear route from university through the Inns of Court to royal service. The rewards could be great, even occasionally rising to a peerage. For many others, like Edward Dyer, constant attendance at Court in the faint hope of gaining some lucrative position was a frustrating path to financial ruin. Lee cherished his Crown appointments and the status they gave him, as well as the opportunity to serve his Queen. They also brought him many frustrations, and overall, little financial reward. His role as Steward and Lieutenant at Woodstock gave him some freedom of action, but his decisions could be over-ruled. His position as Master of the Armoury required attendance in London, the financial rewards were few and the task of combating the corruption in the system impossible. Some of the frustration he felt in his uncharacteristic pursuit of the Vice-Chamberlainship can be seen in his portrait with his dog.

There remained a third group, the courtier gentlemen who preferred to serve the Queen away from Court, in roles which offered them greater freedom of action, and promised the possibility of greater rewards. Several, like Sir Francis Drake, speculated with foreign trade and exploration in the New World, others, like Sir Jerome Horsey and Sir Jerome Bowes, travelled to Russia, and acted as ambassadors to Moscow and agents of the Muscovy Company. Others, like Sir Thomas Shirley of Wiston House, Sussex, sought

[3] LPL Shrewsbury Papers 701 f. 145 (15 July 1594).

to further English trade with Persia and the Levant. Many served themselves before they served their Queen, but there was a wealth of potential talent in this group of gentlemen. Each is worthy of a study; it was unfortunate that Burghley and Walsingham could channel only some of these talents for the benefit of the commonweal. Sir Henry Lee fits in well with this group – more devoted than most, unique in the specific service he brought his Queen, but typical of a group of men who all had singular talents. An important factor in the success of these men was the extent to which they enjoyed freedom of action and freedom of choice – and here Lee was fortunate.

WHY DID SIR HENRY LEE ENJOY GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION THAN MANY OTHER COURTIER GENTLEMEN?

What gave Sir Henry Lee his freedom of action? It is, perhaps, what Lee was not, which gave him the freedom to choose what he would become.

First, Lee was neither a peer of the realm nor scion of a noble house; he was, and remained, a gentleman. In the late Tudor Court, the distinction between the aristocracy and the gentry was clear, even though the boundaries could be porous. If we are to believe Fulke Greville, Queen Elizabeth herself, when intervening in the quarrel between Philip Sidney and the earl of Oxford in 1581, stressed 'the difference in degree between earls and gentlemen, the respect inferiors ought to show their superiors, and the necessity in Princes to maintain their own creations'.[4] Sidney, reminded by his father of 'the noble blood yow are descended of' and the need to 'be an Ornament to that illustre Famylie' was acutely conscious of the gap between his lineage and talents, and his status at Court.[5] Philip Sidney had a position to maintain, which was expensive. Lacking his own fortune, and with a father financially ruined in royal service, Sidney was heir to both his uncles, the earls of Leicester and Warwick, but his hopes and expectations could be dashed by the birth of a legitimate heir to either of them. Neither Sidney nor Robert Devereux, earl of Essex had freedom of action to pursue military action or travel when they chose.

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[4] *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke,* ed. J. Gouws (Oxford, 1986), p. 41; Stone, *Crisis,* p 747.
[5] Collins, *Letters,* i p. 294.

Lee, on the other hand, had the freedom of choice to follow what career he wished. He also had the advantage in being secure and content with his pedigree; the Lees had been armigerous for several generations. Unlike more aspiring gentlemen, for example, Sir Henry Sidney, Lee saw no need to resort to the popular tactic of procuring a pedigree from the College of Arms proving descent from some fictitious twelfth century ancestor.[6] Unlike Sir Roger Manners, third son of the earl of Rutland, Lee had no great family interests to uphold at Court, and with the exception of the unfortunate Thomas Lee, no nephews or cousins to rescue from their follies.

Second, Lee was not a poor man; neither had he experienced a long wait to inherit his estates. In this he was reasonably unusual; the gap between coming to maturity and inheriting land from a dominant father often saw young gentlemen forced to importune for some lowly office at Court, pursue an unwelcome legal training, seek military service abroad or, if all else failed, pursue some wealthy widow. Lee needed none of these expedients, and this again gave him considerable freedom of action. His finances fluctuated throughout his life, his attendance at Court was costly, but he had both the security of considerable lands and the optimistic assurance of a man who had had never known the need to struggle financially. In addition, he did not have a large family of hopeful children - often the ruination of prosperous county gentlemen.

Third, Lee did not appear to have any great ambitions towards political office, if one takes his pursuit of the Vice-Chamberlainship from 1596 to 1597 as only a response to the flattering suggestion by Burghley and Cecil that he should do so. This was not because of lack of interest; Lee's many letters, to his brother Sir Richard Lee, to Burghley and to Cecil reveal that he followed foreign and military affairs closely. He had political views, but seldom gave advice and displayed no aspirations to a seat on the Privy Council. Gentlemen wishing to pursue a political career needed an influential patron, an informed concern for interest groups at Court, an eye on the next political opportunity and continuous expensive attendance in London. It was possible for ambitious sons of merchants such as Sir Thomas Lake, Sir Thomas Smith

[6] CKS (Penshurst Papers) U1475 T4/1-25; U1475 F15 (Pedigree prepared by Robert Cooke, Chester Herald proving Sidney descent from the fictitious Sir William de Sidenie c.1151-1208).

and Sir Michael Hickes to become gentlemen with political influence, having beaten a lucrative path from local grammar school to university and employment with a great noble. Lee, on the other hand, was largely apolitical and appeared to place little value on political office. This gave him the freedom to make friendships where he chose and to absent himself from Court for long periods of time.

Lee was no religious zealot. He kept his own religious beliefs private and demonstrated only conventional conformity to the established church. He chose to keep his distance from Catholic recusant gentry, especially in his wife's family. Neither had he leanings towards extreme Protestantism and embarked on no crusade that would detract from the service of his Queen.

Lastly, Sir Henry Lee was no callow youth when he came into royal favour. He was thirty-five, somewhat divorced from youth's ambitions, whims, enthusiasms and expediencies. He had had time to decide what his priorities were, and unlike many of his contemporaries, had the freedom and the money to realise them.

WHAT MADE SIR HENRY LEE SO SINGULAR?

Little was written directly about Sir Henry Lee, apart from some over-effusive book dedications, until Sir William Segar produced his *Boke of honor and armes*, published in 1590 and *Honor military and civille* in 1602. Although Segar's principal motive may have been to enhance the reputation of the College of Arms by association with the most famous proponent of the tournament, the primary sources do show that his choice of chivalric hero was apposite. Many gentlemen of Sir Henry Lee's status and the majority of nobles claimed adherence to chivalric values as the accepted code of conduct among men of honour. Whereas Lee would have had to be a saint to live up to Segar's descriptions of his chivalric virtues, he was better placed than many to live up to this code. Other men were often forced to compromise their principles by political ambitions, family circumstances, religion or financial problems; Lee left himself sufficient freedom of action to follow the tenets of chivalry. As 'the Queen's knight', it was fortunate he did.

The Elizabethan tournaments may now be seen as anachronistic, but in the popular imagination of the time, they represented something tangible, a

code of knightly conduct, an order of chivalry. The public spectacle of the Virgin Queen, surrounded by her knights doing battle in her honour, was a powerful symbol. The tenets of chivalric conduct might have been difficult to define precisely, and even more difficult to find at Court, but it behoved knights who set themselves up to protect the Queen's honour to at least attempt to demonstrate them. Nobles, like Oxford, could behave in a manner less than chivalrous and still maintain the Queen's favour; a mere gentleman, who boldly claimed the unique position of Queen's champion in the tournaments, had a far greater duty to show that the chivalric virtues were not merely hypothetical. Annually for twenty years, Lee led out the troops in the Queen's name before a crowd of up to twelve thousand spectators. Any scandal or slander attached to his name would reflect on his monarch.

WHAT WERE THE TENETS OF CHIVALRY THAT LEE DEMONSTRATED?

Few treatises surpass the thirteenth century *Booke of the Ordre of Chyualry* by Ramon Lull, as a standard against which a man's chivalric virtues can be measured.[7] Whether Lee personally possessed a copy is unknown, but his writings and his actions demonstrate that chivalry as defined by Lull was a principal motivator of his life. It is a moot point whether Lee consciously set out to follow Lull's ideals. If that was the case, it would have been a major undertaking and commitment. Lee was as realistic as the next man, but had been raised in an environment where a natural code of gentlemanly behaviour was expected. Whereas the nobility could voraciously claim to have rediscovered a code of chivalry in later Tudor England that could be used to assuage their aristocratic pride, many of the older gentry were quietly following the example of their fathers and grandfathers, and behaving in a manner many succeeding generations would recognise as 'conduct becoming a gentlemen'. Lee was fortunate in that he had the upbringing, inclination and circumstances to come much closer than most to Lull's ideal of the chivalric knight.

[7] Ramon Lull, *The Booke of the Ordre of Chyualry* trans. and printed by William Caxton, 1484, ed. A. Byles (London, 1926). Immediately after Lee's death in 1611, a copy of the book came into the possession of St. John's College Oxford, a college closely associated with both Sir Henry and Cromwell Lee.

Paramount among chivalric virtues was loyalty and service to one's monarch - a knight's duty to ' maintain and defend his worldly lord'. Lee's *Memoriae Sacrum* states that he 'served five succeedinge princes'. John Aubrey later claimed that Lee was the 'supposed brother of queen Elizabeth', and whereas dates make this highly unlikely and there is no evidence that Lee was even aware of the rumour, he could not have had greater care for his Queen if it had been true.[8] Lee demonstrated loyalty to the Queen's interests regardless of personal cost, and by extension, loyalty to the state. Few courtier gentlemen rivalled Lee in the immense gift he bestowed on his Queen – an annual occasion that brought her the public adulation of thousands. The Accession Day tournaments, Lee's own creation, were a massive display of public diplomacy in the Queen's honour, unprecedented in Europe.

What we do not know, is Elizabeth's attitude to Lee. One hears everything from Lee's side, from his writings, his letters and actions; one hears nothing from the Queen. Lee clearly spoke to her on numerous occasions, hunted with her and played cards with her in old age, but we only know this from the pens of Court gossips. He rode to her side to report on the state of affairs in the North in both 1573 and 1588; her honour and her interests were the focus of his life. There is no doubt that the Queen's wishes were paramount at Court, and everyone knew them, although they could change radically. Her opinions must have been conveyed orally; there is little evidence as to how courtiers including Lee knew what would please the Queen. Lee expressed his loyalty to her in every letter to Burghley and Cecil; what few references Elizabeth made to Lee in letters to others came in the early 1570s when first he came into favour. After that, lacking evidence to the contrary, we can merely assume that what he did was acceptable.

Whereas monarchs took members of the aristocracy for granted at their peril, it was their prerogative to take the service of their courtier gentlemen for granted, especially one as undemanding as Lee. It is only surprising that it was not until 1600 that Lee voiced any dissent when the Queen 'threatened a progress'. As Elizabeth had never stayed at Lee's home in Ditchley, one assumes the progress would have been to Woodstock. What

[8]John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. O. Lawson Dick (two vols., London, 1949), ii. p. 32.

right Lee had to object to the Queen's visit to her own property is unclear, but his letter to Cecil does confirm that the Queen's visits to Woodstock cost Lee personally. Elizabeth frequently treated even her most loyal gentlemen servants parsimoniously; both Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Thomas Heneage were deeply in debt to the Queen on death. In comparison Lee escaped quite lightly.

A second major tenet of the code of chivalry was a knight's personal honour and integrity. Lee wrote to Sir Michael Hickes in November 1607, towards the end of his life, claiming, with some truth, that 'I have bene ever carefull to deale kyndly with such as deale kyndly with me.'[9] There is little evidence that Lee ever had to compromise his personal integrity; it is not obvious that there were many occasions when he was called upon to do so. After his appointment at Woodstock, he did, to all practical purposes, desert his wife, but was not unusual for the Queen's courtiers to see little of their spouses. By 1571, Lee had lived with his wife for some twenty years and it was not until the 1580s that an actual rift was confirmed. Anne Lee, on the other hand, was spending increasing amounts of time with her mother after 1572. It appears obvious that, regardless of marriage vows taken as minors, there was little to keep Lee and his wife together.

Lee found it easier to demonstrate his personal integrity in his two positions as a royal servant, which he chose to exercise personally. At Woodstock, he changed his entire lifestyle to accommodate his duties and prosecuted the Queen's interests with some zeal against those who would encroach on her demesne. At the Tower, he kept himself above the sordid intrigues of the Ordinance office, if failing to remedy entrenched corruption. By the standards of the day, his prosecution of the patents of manumission were what was expected of a patentee; at least there is no record of Lee hounding villeins to prison.

The code of chivalry also involved shared ideals of fellowship and comradeship. In a profoundly hierarchical world, Lee's prowess at the tournament enabled him to approach all ranks of men as equals, and made him a welcome guest at many courts. In the absence of genuine warfare,

[9] BL, Lansdowne MS, 90 no. 48 f. 95.

participation in the tournament, like very few other contemporary sports, was seen as an affirmation of masculinity, a feeling of men testing themselves against each other, and when the test was over, a feeling of comradeship. Whether this was all the more necessary in a Court dominated by a Queen is a subject for a whole new debate. Lee's personal friends were drawn from the ranks of the nobility as much as from the gentry, and his election to the Order of the Garter reflected the esteem in which his comradeship was held.

A knight was expected to show prowess in the battlefield – not an easy thing to do in an England that studiously eschewed warfare from 1563 until 1584. Gentlemen eager to prove themselves had three options – to be content with the tournaments, to seek service abroad or to seize the few occasions for military action that presented themselves. Gentlemen and nobles who merely fought at tournaments were often accused of vain posturing, a source of great frustration to the likes of Philip Sidney and Essex, who longed to see genuine action. Some, like John Smythe and Sir Thomas Shirley sought mercenary service abroad, fighting the Turks or serving with rebel armies. Sir Henry Lee belonged to the third category; he had already seen military action against the Scots in 1558, and served again in the North in 1569, in 1573 and in 1588, with some distinction. Until 1584, there were few tilters who had not served as mercenaries who could claim such a record.

Lull's *Order of Chivalry* also exhorted knights to perfect their excellence in arms by jousts and tourneys, an instruction that Lee followed to the letter. He also complied with the exhortation to encourage and instruct younger men in the art; over his twenty-year period as Queen's champion, he provided opportunities for several generations of aspiring tilters. His 'sons in chivalry' were many.

Lastly, Lull stressed that the office of knight was to maintain and defend the weak - women, widows and orphans, men diseased and those who were neither powerful nor strong. It is only by putting together all the sources on Sir Henry Lee that it becomes clear that, throughout his life, he provided sympathy and practical help for unfortunates, usually those rendered so by their own misdeeds. If Lee had been seeking to make powerful friends or even gain financial reward, he was sadly misguided in whom he chose to

assist. There were too many of them for this to have been a minor aberration on his part.

Lee was present at the burning of heretics Latimer and Ridley in Oxford in 1555, his was the arm that steadied the traitorous Duke of Norfolk on the scaffold in 1572 and he was the recipient of Norfolk's last whispered words. He stood as godfather to Leicester's illegitimate son by Douglas Lady Sheffield in 1574, not a move guaranteed to endear him to the Queen. He openly supported Philip Sidney's actions which were frowned upon by Elizabeth, and twice attempted to get Robert Devereux, earl of Essex back into royal favour. His treatment of his wife has already been discussed, but his championship of the scarlet woman of the decade, Anne Vavasour, brought him lasting happiness. He also spoke up for the notorious Eleanor Britton, the mistress of George Talbot, sixteenth earl of Shrewsbury. He stood by his wayward cousin Thomas Lee until Thomas was arrested for treason, and even then attempted to help his cousin's unfortunate children. His quiet concern extended to more mundane and obscure cases; he served on the Parliamentary commission to investigate accusations of libellous publication, brought against Arthur Hall in 1581 and even attempted to help the fraudulent Edward Fisher in 1593.[10] There was little praise or reward for Lee's actions in this context, but he was clearly a good friend to have, and one whose good name and reputation was not tarnished by association with miscreants.

DID SIR HENRY LEE HAVE TALENTS BEYOND HIS CHIVALRIC VIRTUES?

Lee shared many of the fashionable interests of his day, yet here again, what he did was bound up with the chivalric values that defined him. Work that Lee commissioned, such as his portraits, was distinguished with wit and ingenuity, but their implications went further than similar commissions.

One example is the use Lee made of the newly-fashionable interest in maps, an interest he shared with others such as Leicester and Burghley.

[10] See BL, Lansdowne MS, 75 no. 65. Edward Fisher had sold a house to Sir John Puckering, Speaker of the House of Commons, in 1582, but the fraudulent nature of the transaction had necessitated an Act of Parliament confirming Puckering's title. In 1593, Sir Henry Goodere wrote to Burghley, stating that he and Sir Henry Lee were attempting to 'help Mr Edward Fisher in his distress'.

Burghley used his map collection largely for administrative purposes. The 1588 Armada portrait used a globe for propaganda purposes, and showed the victorious Queen pointing to the New World, denoting a desire for overseas empire. In 1592, Lee chose to unite Saxton's map of England with the Low Countries' expertise of Marcus Gheeraerts, not for English propaganda but in a way that would glorify Elizabeth personally. The Ditchley portrait shows the Queen, not merely standing on Oxfordshire, but as an autochthonous being, one with the land she ruled, or even as a goddess, descending to her people. This portrait of Elizabeth was full of enigmatic references, not all entirely explained even today, and the full implications of the symbolism in Lee's portrait collection remain the subject for speculation among art historians. The young Elizabeth Tanfield showed appreciation of Lee's interest in maps in her gift of Ortelius's *Mirror of the Worlde*. The symbolism contained in Lee's garden has barely been investigated. With a thorough modern review of Lee's whole life and career established, many specialist topics within it can be identified for further research.

FINALLY, CAN SIR HENRY LEE BE REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HIS LONG SERVICE TO THE QUEEN?

If Sir Henry Lee put material interests above personal values, he would have been a disappointed man. Early in his long career as a royal servant, he received some rewards, but overall his service to his Queen probably cost him more financially than he received. Honours from both Elizabeth I and James I passed him by, with the exception of the proud accolade of the Order of the Garter. Elizabeth opposed his receiving it; it came from the votes of his friends and he wore it more as a testimony to his character and values than as a reward for long service. His personal values were those of chivalry – a code which appeared to come naturally to him and that he took pride in following. Posterity may have soon forgotten him, but the picture of the man that emerges from this thesis is an engaging one. As such, he is worthy of a new biography.

One unpublished item in the Ditchley manuscript is an 'Epistle in praise of country life for the 3rd Kallendar Oct 1575'.[11] The author is unknown, but given the company Lee was keeping in 1575, it could have been Edward Dyer or even Philip Sidney. It is addressed to 'Layius' or Lee, who

> ... ever constant in a settled place,
> Doth scorne the toyes of all the common route
> Who void of care when phebus shewes his face
> Doth sleep secure, when he is falne about.
> And if I might according to my will
> Devise a lyfe that wold content me best
> No mare for pompe nor riches seed of ill
> Wold I desire, nor be triumphant drest;
>
> to Layius heare my frende I gladlie wold
> Die well to god, a great man & old.

If Sir Henry Lee did not die 'a great man', he certainly enjoyed a long life, and died more content and fulfilled than many others who chose the career of an Elizabethan courtier gentleman.

[11] BL, Add. MS, 41499A f. 8.

APPENDIX ONE

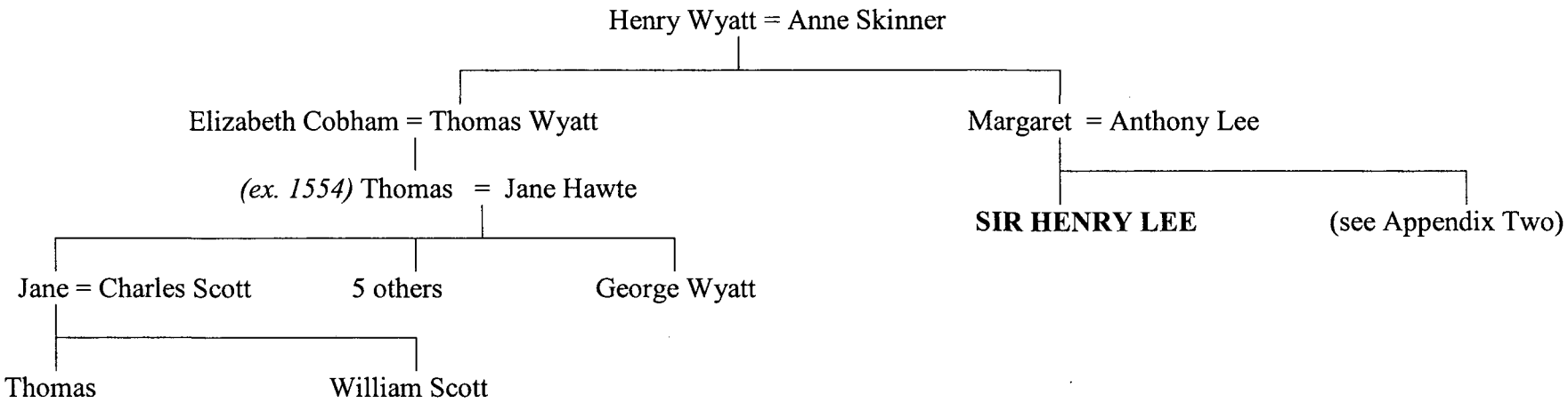
MEMORIAE SACRUM OF SIR HENRY LEE 1611

Sir Henry Lee, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, sonne of Sir Anthony Lee & Dame Margaret his wife, daughter to Sir Henry Wiat, that faithfull and Constant Servaunt & Counselour of the two Kings of famous Memory, Henries the 7th and eight. Hee owed his birth and Cildhood to Kent and his highly Honourable Uncle Sir Thomas Wiat at Alington castle, his Youthe to the VCourte and Kinge Henry the eight, to whose service he was sworne at 14. Yeares olde, His prime of Manhood (after the calme of that blest Prince Edward the sixth) to the Warrs of Scotland in Queen Maries Daies, till called home by her whose soddeine Death gave beginninge to the Glorious Reigne of Queene Elizabeth he gave himself to Voiage and Travaile into the florishinge States of France Ittaly & Germany, wher soone puttinge on all those Abbillities that become the backe of Honour, Especially Skill and Proofe in Armes, He lived in Grace and Gracinge the Courtes of the most renowmed princes of that Warlike Age, Returned home charged with the Reputation of a well formed Travailour & adorned with those flowers of Knighthood, Courtesie Bounty Valour, which quickly gave forth their Fruicte, as well in the ffeilde to the Advantages (at once) of ye two divided parts of this happely united State and to both their Princes his Soveraignes Successively in that Expedition into Scotland the Yeare 1573, when in goodly Equipage he Repayred to the Siege at Edinburgh, their quarteringe before the castle and commanding one of the Batteries he shared largely in the Honour of Ravishinge that Maiden Forte, as also in Court wher he shone in all those fayre partes became his profession & Vowes, honouringe his highlye gracious Mris with Reysinge thgose later Olimpiads of her Coronation Justs and Tournaments (Therby Tryinge & Treininge the Courtier in those Exercises of Armes that keepe the Person bright & steeled to Hardiness, That by Soft Ease Rusts & Weares) wherin still himselfe lead and Triumphed, caryinge away the Spoyles of Grace from his Soveraigne & Renowne from the Worlde for the fairest Man at Armes & most complete Courtier of his Times, till singled out by the choyce hand of his Sovereigne Mrs for med of his Worth (after the Lieutenancy of the Royal Manour of Woodstock & the Office of the Royal

Armory) He was called up an Assessour on the Bench of Honour Emonge Princes & Peeres Receivinge at her Majesties hands the Noblest Order of the Garter, whilst the Worme of time knowinge the Root of this plant, yeildinge to the Burden Age and the Industrie of an Active Youth imposed on him, full of the Glorye of the Court, He abated of his Sence to pay his better parte, resigned his Dignity & honour of her Maj[tes] Knight to the Adventurous Compt George Earle of Cumberland, Changinge pleasure for ease, for Tranquility honour, makinge Rest his Sollace & contemplation his Employment, so as absent from the Worle present with himselfe he chose to loose the fruit of publique Use & Action for that of Devotion & piety, in which time (besides the building of 4. goodly Mannors) he renued the Ruines of this Chappell, added these Manuments to honour his blood and Frends, Reised the foundation of the adjoininge Hospitall, & lastly as full of Yeares as of Honour, Havinge served five succeedinge princes and kept himself Reight & Steady in many dangerous Shokes & 3. utter Turnes of State, with a body bent to Earth & a mind erected to Heaven, Aged 80. Knighted 60. yeers, he mett his longe attended ende & now rests with his Redeemer leaving much Patrimony with his Name, honour with the Worlde, & plentifull Teares with his Freinds. Of wich Sacrifice he offers his part that beinge a sharer in his blood as well as in many his honourable Favours and an honourer of his vertues thus narrowly Registreth his spread worth to ensuinge Times.

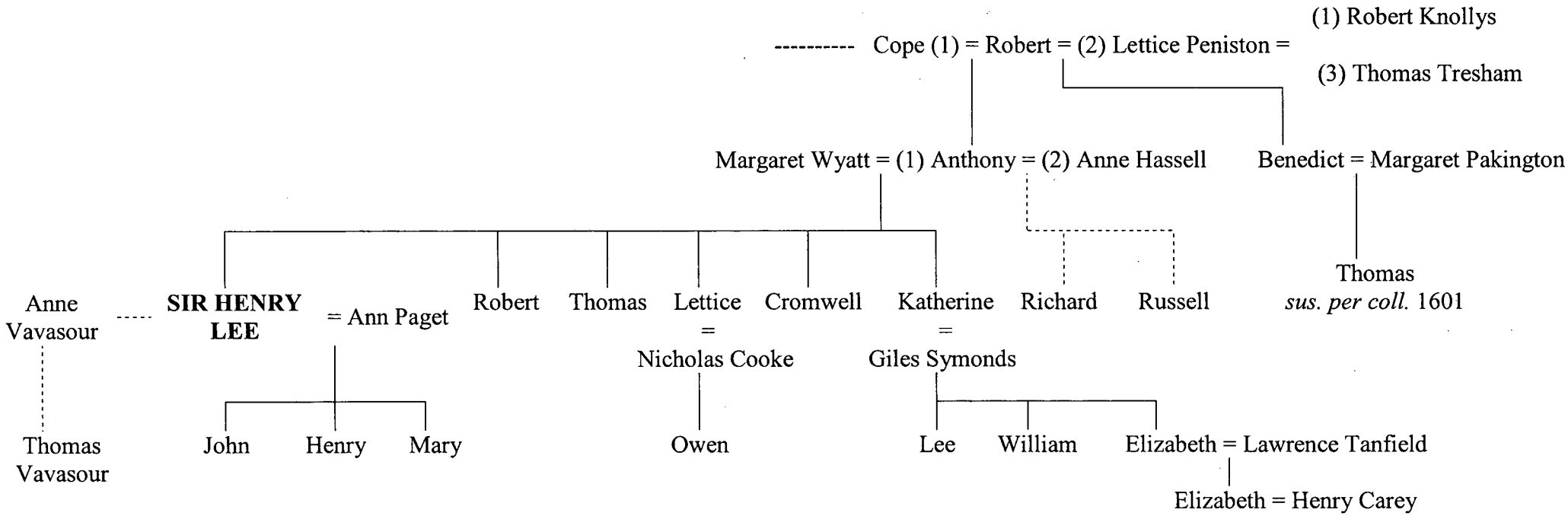
William Scott.

(Written by William Scott, grandson of Sir Reginald Scott of Scott Hall, Kent. His mother was Jane, daughter of Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger).



WYATT FAMILY TREE

Appendix Two



LEE FAMILY TREE

Appendix Three

APPENDIX FOUR

From 'A Journey made through England and Scotland made by Lupold von Wedel between the years 1584 and 1585', *T.R.H.S.*, new series ix (1895), pp. 258-259.

'Now approached the day, when on November 17 the tournament was to be held, as I mentioned before, St. Elizabeth's day being November 19th. About twelve o'clock the queen and her ladies placed themselves at the windows in a long room at Weithol [Whitehall] palace, near Westminster, opposite the barrier where the tournament was to be held. From this room, a broad staircase led downwards, and round the barrier stands were arranged by boards above the ground, so that everybody by paying 12d. could get a stand and see the play ... many thousand spectators, men, women and girls, got places, not to speak of those who were within the barrier and paid nothing.

During the whole time of the tournament all those who wished to fight entered the list by pairs, the trumpets being blown at the time and other musical instruments. The combatants had their servants clad in different colours, they, however, did not enter the barrier, but arranged themselves on both sides. Some of the servants were disguised like savages, or like Irishmen, with the hair hanging down to the girdle like women, others had horses manes over their heads, some came driving in a carriage, the horses being equipped like elephants, some carriages were drawn by men, others appeared to move by themselves; altogether the carriages were very odd in appearance. Some gentlemen had their horses with them and mounted in full armour directly from the carriage. There were some who showed very good horsemanship and were also in fine attire. The manner of the combat each had settled before entering the lists. The costs amounted to several thousand pounds each.

When a gentleman with his servants approached the barrier, on horseback or in a carriage, he stopped at the foot of the staircase leading to the queen's room, while one of his servants in pompous attire of a special pattern mounted the steps and addressed the queen in well-composed verses or with a ludicrous speech, making her and her ladies laugh. When the speech was ended he in the name of his lord offered to the queen a costly present, which was accepted and permission given to take part in the tournament. In fact, they make sure of the permission given before preparing for combat. Now always two by two rode against each other, breaking lances across the beam. On this day not only many fine horses were seen, but also beautiful ladies, not only in the royal suite, but likewise in the companie of gentlemen of nobility and citizens.

The fête lasted until five o'clock in the afternoon, when millurt [milard] Lester [Leicester], the royal Master of the Horse, gave the sign to stop. The queen handed the first prize to the Counts of Ocsenfortt (Oxford) and of Arundel, the latter being the eldest son of the Duke of Nortfech [Norfolk], whom the Queen had ordered to be beheaded. The son for a long time also [had] been in disgrace on account of his father, but he was pardoned and given permission to take part in the tournament. The others got prizes according to their performance, and thus the tournament ended'.

APPENDIX FIVE:
Works by Sir Philip Sidney reflecting the Tilt.

ASTROPHIL AND STELLA

41

Having this day my horse, my hand, my launce
Guided so well, that I obtain'd the prize,
Both by the judgement of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that sweet enemie *Fraunce;*
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advaunce;
Towne-folkes my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some luckie wits impute it but to chaunce;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My bloud from them, who did excell in this,
Thinke nature me a man of armes did make.
How farre they shoote awrie! the true cause is'
Stella lookt on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beames, which made so faire my race.

49

I on my horse, and *Love* on my doth trie
Our horsemanships, while by strange worke I prove
A horsman to my horse, a horse to Love;
And now man's wrongs in me, poore beast, descrie.
The raines wherewith my Rider doth me tie,
Are humbled thoughts, which bit of Reverence move,
Curb'd in with feare, but with guilt bosse above
Of Hope, which makes it seeme faire to the eye.
The Wand is Will, thou Fancie Saddle art,
Girt fast by memorie, and while I spurre
My horse, he spurres with sharpe desire my hart:
He sits me fast, how ever I do sturre:
And now hath made me to his hand so right,
That in the Manage myself takes delight.

51

In Martiall sports I had my cunning tride,
And yet to breake more staves did me addresse:
While with the people's shouts I must confesse,
Youth, lucke, and praise, even fild my veines with pride.
When *Cupid*, having me his slave descried
In *Marse's* liverie, prauncing in the presse:
'What now sir foole,' said he, 'I would no lesse,
Looke here, I say.' I look's, and *Stella* spide,
Who hard by made a window send forth light.
My heart then quak'd, then dazled were mine eyes,
One hand forgott to rule, th'other to fight.
Nor trumpets' sound I heard, not friendly cries;
My Foe came on, and beat the aire for me,
Till that her blush taught me my shame to see.

The poems of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. by William A. Ringler (Oxford, 1962), pp. 185-91.

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE'S *ARCADIA*

BOOK TWO, chapter 12.

'The time of the marrying that queen was, every year, by the extreme love of her husband and the serviceable love of the courtiers, made notable by some public honours which did as it were proclaim to the world how dear she was to that people: among other, none was either more grateful to the beholders, or more noble in itself, than justs both with sword and lance, maintained for a seven night together; wherein that nation doth so excel both for comeliness and ableness that from neighbour countries they ordinarily come, some to strive, some to learn and some to behold.

... we came into the field, where, I remember, the manner was that the forenoon they should run at tilt one after another, the afternoon in a broad field in manner of a battle, till either the stranger, or that country knights won the field.

The first that ran was a brave knight whose device was to come in all chained, with a nymph leading him. Against him came forth an Iberian, whose manner of entering was with bagpipes ... and by him a dozen apparelled like shepherds ... his impresa was a sheep marked with pitch, with this word, 'Spotted to be known' ... before the ladies departed from the windows - among whom ... that was the Star whereby his course was only directed - the shepherds attending upon Philisides went among them and sang a eclogue ... I only remember six verses.

...when he began to run against Laelius, it had near grown (though great love had ever been betwixt them) to a quarrel. For Philisides breaking his staves with great commendation, Laelius, who was known to be second to none in the perfection of that art, ran ever over his head but so finely, to the skilful eyes, that one might well see he showed more knowledge in missing than others did in hitting , for with so gallant a grace his staff came swimming close over the crest of the helmet, as if he would represent the kiss and not the stroke of Mars. But Philisides was much moved with it while he thought Laelius would show a contempt for his youth; till Laelius (who therefore would satisfy him because he was his friend) made him know that to such bondage he was for so many many courses tied by her, whose disgraces to him were graced by her excellency, and whose injuries he could never othrwise return than honours.

But so by Laelius' willing missing was the odds of the Iberian side, and continued so in the next by the excellent running of a knight ...'.

The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. M. Evans (Harmondsworth, 1977), ii, 21 pp. 351-355.

APPENDIX SIX.

Sir Henry Lee's to the earl of Essex, August 1598.

'By my occasion of being at courte, i did observe that w[hi]ch I was sorrye and glad to see a Court to naked without you, and yet not without a longing desire to have you there again. Mr Secretarie hath made report of your lordships good service in counsel, how well her Ma[jes]tie lyked of it, protesting that you wold doe better for othrs than for yorselfe. With Mr Secretarie both his opinion that all might and would be well, and his disposition to doethe best offices that laie in him not withstanding your L[or]dships hard conceit of him for some things, w[hi]ch whereof if nothing satisfie your L[or]dship he did not doubt but time should clear up. Her Ma[jes]tie veued upon me with great grace, but yet so that I might plainlie see her commendation of my kindness and care to please her, to be a secret complaintive that she could not find the like where she most desired it. I know how unfit I am to advise one wiser than myself in this case, where your honour is mor deare unto you than yor life. But yet may it please y[ou]r L[or]dship to consider these circumstances, she is your sovereigne, with whom you may not treate uppon equall conditions. She denies the ground of your difference, with [out?] a kinde of satisfaction, by all lyklyhood she would be glad to meete you half waie, if that w[hi]ch doth nowe not a little trouble her should further distemper her upon whose life and health you know howe many do depend. I am sure it would be a greater greife unto you than the loss of her favour, one the other side. That w[hi]ch you seeke, as ... your friends in Courte doe wiselie forsee, can be noe benefit to you. For admit you draw her to forgett her powers, and yeild in her affection to that w[hi]ch she is unwilling to doe, your peace cannot be without a matter of newe difference, in always as she will hardlie forgett to what unequal conditions you brought her, whereas if you present in kindness, and yeilde to her, to whome there is no disparagement to yeild to her will, all circumstances considered you shall do nothing unworthie yor selfe, you shall make a sure peace and come with more ease to it, w[hi]ch I take to be your owne end. I grant your wrongs to be greater than so noble a harte may well desgest, but consider, my good Lord, how great she is with whome you deal, how willing, with how little yielding to be conquered; what advantage by yielding when you are

wronged, what disadvantage by facinge her, whome though you deserve never somuch, you must rely upon for favour, how strong you make your enemies, how weake your friends, how provoked patience turning into furie and delaid anger into hatred, what opportunities her late loss, and the State's present necessity maye give you to benefit you and yours, and what offence the world may take if, to right yourself /and lastlie what offence the worlde that honoreth your virtue may take ... to right yourself,/ you neglect her.

But this at all in my loue I refer to your better judgement and only advise, that whatsoever peace you make you use no means but yourself, w[hi]ch will be more honorable for you and more acceptable to her'.

BL, Add. MS, 48126 f. 97.

GLOSSARY

Almain rivet — form of armour created in Germany around the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

burgonette — burgonet helmet

caliver — a light kind of musket or harquebus, lightest portable fire-arm, excepting the pistol.

coronel — the head of a tilting lance, ending in three short spreading points to prevent the lance penetrating armour.

corselett — a comparatively light cuirass, usually a breastplate.

cuirass — complete body-armour, including both the breast and the back plates.

jack of plate — type of armour comprising small iron plates sewn between layers of felt and canvas.

impresa — emblematic device consisting of a motto and symbolic picture relevant to the bearer. Painted onto paste-board *impresa* shields.

morrions — headpieces

rebated — blunt, as in lance tips.

running at the ring — catching a series of suspended rings on the point of a lance while riding along a line. More suitable for children.

tassets — plate armour designed to protect the upper legs

trunk hose and cannions — short padded hose. Very short trunk hose were worn over **cannions**, fitted hose that ended above the knee.

vamplate - — a plate fixed on a lance to serve as a guard for the hand in tilting.

Many others terms are explained as foot-notes.

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