that his reader will 'take good, and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible Example', 6 we should not think him to be exaggerating the value of what he is offering his reader. Whether or not Bacon himself actually experienced such a crisis of conscience, built into his understanding of Spira's circumstances and torments is an acceptance of their reality as Bolton evokes it. The fascinating implication is, of course, that Bacon, when he made the translation and, later, when it was published, seriously envisaged the possibility that he and others like him would be called to account for their convictions, and might succumb to the pressure to conform, against conscience, thus falling into the desperate condition of

apostasy as exemplified by Spira.

I want now to give some indication of what Bacon's other publications tell us about his attitudes and commitments. In broad terms, they reflect the confluence of historical, legal and religious interests applied to questions about the constitution of the state, its proper government, and the place of the individual within it. By concentrating on the individual case, in A Relation, Bacon shows the state in operation but at a distance through one of its representatives (in this instance, Giovanni della Casa, author of Galatea and the sonnets which were such an influential model for Milton, and described as 'one that wanted neither malice... nor craftiness to effect his malicious purposes'). This state is shown exercising all its power to make him act against his conscience and deny the truth. For Bacon, of course, in a protestant context, to see the Church of Rome acting in this manner is simply to have one's expectations fully confirmed, although the example has most unsettling implications when all the local parallels are drawn.

It is, however, in his other publications that Bacon develops his view of the state and strongly asserts the pertinence of understanding the past as a prime means of interpreting the present. A work which is both professional and innovative in these respects is his Annals of Ipswiche, published in 1654 and subtitled The lawes, Customes and Government of the Same. Collected out of the record bookes and writings of that Towne. It is professional in that it is a product of his position as Recorder, to which he was elected in 1642, and innovative in the sense that the city now had what it had never before possessed, a collation and interpretation of the records and documents which defined its history and legal integrity.

It was another work of this kind which both made Bacon's reputation as a political and legal historian and perpetuated it into the late eighteenth century. In 1647 he published An Historical Discourse of the Uniformity of the Government of England. The First Part. From the First Times Until the Reign of Edward the Third. Just as with the first edition of Spira, this work was anonymous. It was not until 1651