

one of the mildly conservative, anti-clerical politicians who were prominent in Mary's reign. Whilst Paget had acquiesced in the Edwardian reformation, he was of an essentially secular cast of mind, which expressed itself in his anti-clerical hostility to Gardiner. His preference was for Henrician catholicism, which would accommodate the Queen's religious doctrines and, at the same time, exclude papal authority. Furthermore, unlike Gardiner, he was an early supporter of her marriage to the Spanish-catholic-Habsburg, Prince Philip, and, at the same time, a protector of her protestant half-sister, Elizabeth. In these matters he may have been ignorant of the Queen's real intentions. Whatever Paget's motives were—and they probably included a calculated self-interest and an eye to the future—he and Gardiner disagreed on every urgent issue of the day.²⁷ The result was a bitter conciliar conflict which was transferred onto the floor of both houses in the first three Marian parliaments. Gardiner secured the election of 20–30 clients and allies to each of them. In the first he organised an unsuccessful bicameral campaign to persuade Mary into an English marriage. Pliable politician that he was, he then embraced wholeheartedly the Spanish match. In the second parliament he mounted an independent, pro-papal catholic and anti-protestant anti-Elizabethan legislative programme which Paget, his allies and clients wrecked and, in the process, sank some of Mary's own measures. Finally, in the third parliament, Gardiner possibly used clients in the Commons to enlarge the authority of the Queen's husband, Philip of Spain. Gardiner—'Wily Winchester'—was the prototype of the managerial politician and patron who exploited parliament to political ends.²⁸

Although Gardiner's clientele served him faithfully in parliament, there were clear limits to the parliamentary obligations and loyalties of clients. One of Gardiner's more formidable opponents was the Earl of Pembroke, many of whose men were nominated by him through the decayed cloth towns of the Cotswolds and Wiltshire. Pembroke was of protestant inclination, as were many of his clients. In 1555 the Commons debated a bill to penalise protestant exiles. During the debate an ardent papist and the chief government spokesman, Sir Edward Hastings, and Sir George Howard, a reformer, almost came to blows on the floor of the house. When the discussion continued afterwards at Pembroke's house, the Earl sided with Hastings. Sir John Perrott, 'his most favourite and familiar gentleman' disagreed with him. Pembroke, in a fury, dismissed him, whereupon 'Many other gentlemen in the Earl's service took their leave of him'.²⁹

In contrast, it looks as if clients had responded to the call of their great noble patrons in the parliament of 1554–5. The Commons (and possibly Gardiner's clients in particular) had transformed a