

economic lobbies searched for powerful patrons with the same object in view. Sometimes this activity could cause parliamentary friction, although the social bonds within parliament usually absorbed such stresses and indeed served to facilitate the effective despatch of business.

Nevertheless this brief study of patron client relationships does suggest further lines of enquiry. Revisionists have charged the school of 'political' parliamentary historians with a concentration on the politics of parliament, whilst neglecting its business—and rightly so. Yet, paradoxically, the revisionists' own emphasis on business has drawn increasing attention to the political mechanisms of patrons, clients and factions. They have discovered that bills are not always what they seem to be—that behind the ordered legislative process lies a subtle interplay of local, sectional, economic and Court politics. Several points of political significance are emerging. First, that the invisible socio-political influence of patronage enhanced the authority of the House of Lords (where most of the great patrons sat) in its dealings with the Commons (to which many of their clients had been elected). Secondly, that we need to know much more about competition and conflict within/between boroughs and economic interests, both during parliamentary sessions and in the interim. Finally, it is now clear that, as in the seventeenth century (though probably less so), Court politics had their parliamentary repercussions. As revisionists master the institutional niceties of parliaments and their business, they need to return to politics again. I do not mean 'high' constitutional conflict (which for the most part did not exist in the sixteenth century), but the parliamentary lobbying and politicking of individuals, families, communities and, in particular, of Court factions.

REFERENCES

- 1 For important studies of patronage and the patron client mechanism see e.g. J. E. Neale, 'The Elizabethan Political Scene', in *The Age of Catherine de Medici and Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1965), pp. 145-70; W. T. MacCaffrey, 'Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics', in S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C. H. Williams (eds), *Elizabethan Government and Society* (London, 1961), pp. 95-126; L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 398-504; A. G. R. Smith, *The Government of Elizabethan England* (London, 1967), pp. 57-69; *idem*, *Servant of the Cecils: The Life of Sir Michael Hickes* (London, 1977), pp. 51-80; R. C. Braddock, 'The Rewards of