

'good lordship' and become a member of a great man's clientele. It was advantageous, indeed for the ambitious it was necessary to do so, and the client's own prestige was enhanced by that connexion. The very fact that the Tudor faction was a social phenomenon, however, made it a rather fluid, amorphous grouping. It is impossible to draw up the personnel list of a faction, because clients came and went, had more than one patron, or were themselves patrons as well. Factions overlapped, coalesced, fragmented, whilst some men stood in intimate relationship to a patron yet were not of his clientele.

However, the patron client mechanism and faction acquired a political aspect too, especially because of the poverty of the Tudor state. The state could not afford a standing army, a police force or a nationwide, salaried bureaucracy. Local government depended on unpaid, over-burdened justices of the peace. According to W. T. MacCaffrey only 1,200 salaried offices in central and local administration were 'worth a gentleman's having' at a time when 2,500 Elizabethan gentry were competing for them. Lawrence Stone queried these calculations and concluded that, at a guess, 'it would be that the ratio of aspirants to suitable jobs under Elizabeth was about 2 to 1 for the aristocracy, 5 to 1 for the 500 leading county families, and anything up to 30 to 1 for the parochial gentry'. Moreover, only twenty royal offices opened up prospects of a fortune. Even in these cases profit derived not from the official salary but from the extent to which they could be exploited for financial gain. The Elizabethan Lord Admiral, for example, received only £200 in fees and annuities, but in 1601 was reckoned to be worth more than £3,000.² Most officers in central government were grossly underpaid or only nominally paid. In compensation the Crown allowed them to charge a recognised scale of fees to the public for services rendered.

More important, however, was the way in which it supplemented meagre incomes with patronage. Royal patronage took many forms: titles, offices, pensions, leases of crown lands, monopolies and economic benefits and so on. Of course there was never enough to go round. That simple fact bred competition, with patrons as the vital intermediaries and the faction as the natural mechanism through which to lobby for a share. This can be illustrated through the rich collection of Sir Robert Cecil's papers. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, died in 1598. His patron's mantle passed to his second son, Robert, and, in 1599, so did his office of Master of the Court of Wards. It was an office rich in patronage potential. Clients queued up to ingratiate themselves with Robert. The Dean of Gloucester wrote, 'Had I been as well known to you as I was to your father for many years, then I should not lie in the