

## Goodere at Court, 1603–1610: The Early Jacobean Decline of a Catholic Sympathizer and Its Bearing on Donne's Letters

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At the accession of King James I, Sir Henry Goodere's fortunes had been for some time on a markedly downward course, though Goodere himself continued to resist the decline of his family and the political tide against them. Preparing for the succession of the king, Donne's friend had tried to capitalize on his late uncle's long past but unforgettably rash solicitude for the case of Mary Queen of Scots. In the early 1570s, the elder Goodere (also named Sir Henry) had been caught and charged with treason, suspected of complicity with the doomed Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; Goodere had quickly confessed to having devised for and supplied the imprisoned queen with a cipher she could use to maintain correspondence with supporters. Throughout his imprisonment and likely beyond, Goodere had continued to wear on his cape and doublet buttons of gold that had been given to him by Mary Stuart. This furtive gesture, he had promised his cousin John Somerville,

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<sup>1</sup>The editors of the Oxford University Press edition of Donne's letters have assigned to some of the letters cited in this essay dates and addressees that vary from those customarily assigned. We will present evidence for these departures in the forthcoming edition. Also to be documented in the edition will be our extensive reliance in this essay on unpublished notes of the late I. A. Shapiro held by the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham.

he would forever continue for her sake.<sup>2</sup> Released from the Tower of London, the elder Goodere had nonetheless been regarded with suspicion, closely watched by the Earl of Leicester and other government officials, who had forced him to supply lots of money for, and even armed participation in, several government interests and campaigns both ruinous and unsavoury to him. The resulting encumbrance of his estate at Polesworth, Warwickshire, bequeathed to his nephew in 1595, was estimated by the unhappy heir as a debt of “twenty thousand poundes at the least.”<sup>3</sup>

At the death-bed of his uncle, the younger Sir Henry had been “conjured” to support the English succession of King James VI “upon all occasions,”<sup>4</sup> advice he followed consistently in the years before the death of Queen Elizabeth. Goodere’s adherence to the Earl of Essex (another supporter of King James’s succession) in these years was, in accord with his uncle’s advice, comparatively principled. Having returned with Essex from Ireland, at some point Goodere went north (perhaps after the earl was executed), accompanying to Scotland a number of Englishmen who had anticipated that James would become their king and who sought his

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<sup>2</sup>Examination of John Somerville, 6 October 1583 (TNA, SP12/163/4). On Goodere’s family and associations, see Frederick C. Cass, *Monken Hadley* (Westminster: J. B. Nichols, 1880), pp. 138–154; and Bernard H. Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and His Circle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), chapters 3–7.

<sup>3</sup>Goodere to Robert Cecil, Baron of Essendon, after 13 May 1603 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 189/124). According to MeasuringWorth.com, consulted on 14 October 2012, the relative value of £20,000 in 1603 would be at least £3,750,000 today.

<sup>4</sup>Goodere to Robert Cecil, Baron of Essendon, after 13 May 1603 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 189/124). Goodere maintained these perspectives on his family’s fortune throughout his life. See his letter to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, 24 February 1619 (Kent Archives, Sackville MS 2451): “his Ma<sup>ty</sup> in Scotland receaved mee before almost all others into his service and care, affirming mee in y<sup>e</sup> word of a Prince that hee would by imputation make my predecessours merritts myne, and repayre y<sup>e</sup> ruynes of my poore family w<sup>ch</sup> care hee expressed most graciously both y<sup>e</sup> last time I was w<sup>th</sup> his Ma<sup>ty</sup>: in yo<sup>r</sup> presence, and many times before, when hee gave mee divers graunts of good valiew w<sup>ch</sup> were ever crossed by my Lo: of Salisbury and y<sup>e</sup> Howardes. So y<sup>i</sup> I protest before God to this day I never had in recompence of my vnckles losses (w<sup>ch</sup> exceeded 20,000<sup>l</sup>) or of myne owne chargeable services, above the valiew of 1300<sup>l</sup> in impropriations. . . .”

early favor.<sup>5</sup> Many of these men represented English court factions, but among them were two types who went to Scotland to gain a foothold in James's future English entourage: one type appealed to the king as hunting companions and horsemen; the others were potential bureaucrats. Goodere presented no such attractions to the king; his service, while designed in part to reverse his family's fortunes, was more naively connected to notions of honor derived from his uncle's doomed loyalty to the king's mother and hapless resistance to corrupt practice in Elizabethan government. Neither a bluff huntsman nor a scheming secretary, Goodere was noted for his hawking and stood in some ways for the antique values of his uncle's embattled companion, Sir Philip Sidney: his courtly endeavors would be crossed by exemplars of the other two types, John Lepton and Edmund Lassells. Of particular significance here was the role played at court, in relation to all three of these men, by meteoric Sir Robert Cecil, within a couple of years created Baron of Essendon (1603), Viscount Cranborne (1604), and Earl of Salisbury (1605).

Among English horsemen in Scotland was John Lepton, descended from Yorkshire recusants<sup>6</sup> but himself more notably aligned with pursuits ancillary to the hunt, such as the horse-race, maw (the king's favorite card game), and the debasement of coinage, a.k.a. "alchemy."<sup>7</sup> Lepton's claim to fame, recalled by Thomas Fuller among the exploits of the English *Worthies*, was his winning wager of May 1605 to race during daylight hours from Aldersgate to York in six consecutive days on horseback.<sup>8</sup> By this time he was established at the royal court as a groom of the privy chamber,<sup>9</sup> a place inferior to that of Goodere, who too had

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<sup>5</sup>Daniel Starza Smith, in his University of London, 2010, doctoral thesis forthcoming from Oxford University Press, has found Goodere present in Scotland prior to the new reign, citing Huntington Library, EL6862.

<sup>6</sup>"Mr. Savile" to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, May 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/25).

<sup>7</sup>George Nicholson to Sir Robert Cecil, 10 October 1601; same to same, 19 March 1602; and same to same, 16 April 1602 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 88/108, 3; 92/47; and 92/130.2 respectively).

<sup>8</sup>Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, 3 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 3:468.

<sup>9</sup>Grant to John Lepton of £20 per year for life, as well as stuff for his livery, "the same as other Grooms of the Chamber," 7 October 1603 (TNA, SP38/7).

returned to England with the king in 1603 and been appointed a gentleman of the privy chamber.<sup>10</sup> Despite this difference in rank, Lepton, shrewd and without scruple, had sought and gained immediate advantages beyond his groom's livery and grant of £20 per year for life.

In late summer of 1603, he threw bureaucracy into prolonged confusion by petitioning the king to erect a new, absentee office at the Council of the North, through which Lepton could usurp certain duties of the existing secretaries as well as encroach on the prerogatives of the receiver of York.<sup>11</sup> After this proposal was debated and stalled, the king, over various official objections, granted his huntsman reversions of the York receivership<sup>12</sup> and of the clerkship of the Council of the North.<sup>13</sup> When by 1607 these and the other proposed arrangements were protested by Tudor-appointed York officials, who found them "an occasion of extortion and oppression,"<sup>14</sup> the king referred the matter to Salisbury, whose judgment favored the impositions of Lepton, wittily confirming that his Majesty's servants were entitled to "much that is gotten out of the goose quill by clerks and attorneys."<sup>15</sup> One form of corruption could be driven out by another.

Lepton meanwhile had prevailed on the king to give him other rewards and offices: e.g., the searchership of the port of Hull<sup>16</sup> and an apparently unique supplemental grant doubling his income as a privy

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<sup>10</sup>List of gentlemen of the privy chamber in attendance from 20 November 1603 (British Library, Add. 11388/170v).

<sup>11</sup>King James to Essendon, 17 September 1603 (TNA, SP14/3/74); and, on the following day, Essendon to his elder brother Thomas Cecil, Baron of Burghley, Lord President of the Council of the North (TNA, SP38/7).

<sup>12</sup>Grant in reversion to John Lepton of the receivership of Yorkshire, 14 March 1606 (TNA, Ind. Wt. Bk., p. 46).

<sup>13</sup>Grant in reversion to John Lepton of the office of Clerk of the Council in the North, 14 June 1606 (TNA, Ind. Wt. Bk., p. 57).

<sup>14</sup>Sir John Ferne and Sir William Gee, secretaries of the Council of the North, to King James, 1 September 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 122/57); and Ferne and Gee to Salisbury, 3 September 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 122/60). See earlier the King's 2 August demand that Ferne and Gee implement his grant to Lepton (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 194/40).

<sup>15</sup>Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, to Sir Thomas Lake, October 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 194/80).

<sup>16</sup>King James to Lord Treasurer Thomas Sackville, Baron of Buckhurst, 20 May 1603 (TNA, SP14/1/91).

chamber groom.<sup>17</sup> His experienced effort to gain further profit through debasement of English coinage with a patent to make brass and latten half-pence was evidently discouraged by Cranborne.<sup>18</sup> But he was more successful in a suit to acquire the lion's share of the concealed goods and chattels of the late Sir John Perrott,<sup>19</sup> strangled in the Tower of London during the last reign, having been convicted of treason by Cranborne's father, "who, before and throughout the trial, presented himself in public as a friend and ally but in secret wrought his destruction."<sup>20</sup>

This business of Lepton's, to acquire Perrott's property, was opposed by Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland. In his letter of advice to Cranborne, Attorney-General Sir Edward Coke warned that granting Lepton's suit, "I verily think, . . . will turn to my Lord of Northumberland's great vexation";<sup>21</sup> and sure enough, in a letter to Cecil, Northumberland himself complained about Lepton's suit: "I hear you have given order that his book should pass. My desire is that it should be stayed until I know the contents of it, and how far it may wrong me or until I may make his Majesty acquainted how much it may concern me."<sup>22</sup> Cranborne did not withdraw his support for Lepton, and the Perrott property became two-thirds Lepton's, one-third the king's.<sup>23</sup> Following discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, in effect further to damage the prospects of Salisbury's only significant political opponent, Lepton rode north at Salisbury's direction to track down Thomas Percy, Northumberland's cousin and estate officer, one of the fleeing plotters;

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<sup>17</sup>Warrant to Sir Henry Cock, cofferer of the royal household, 20 October 1603 (TNA, SP14/4/25).

<sup>18</sup>Unsigned, undated letter to Robert Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, endorsed "1604," listing reasons against Lepton's suit (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 189/61). On Lepton's reputation as an "alchemist" see note 7 above.

<sup>19</sup>Edward Coke, Attorney-General, to Cranborne, November 1604 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 108/5).

<sup>20</sup>Roger Turvey, "Perrot, Sir John (1528–1592)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>21</sup>Coke to Cranborne, November 1604 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 108/5).

<sup>22</sup>Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, to Cranborne, November 1604 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 108/152).

<sup>23</sup>Grant to Lepton of two parts of all goods and chattels concealed, lately belonging to Sir John Perrot, attainted, 28 November 1604 (TNA, SP14/10/docquet).

riding all the way to Scotland to get his man,<sup>24</sup> Lepton must have been disappointed when he learned that Percy had instead been shot by someone else in Staffordshire. Nevertheless, on his return to court Lepton was rewarded by the king with a New Year's gift for 1606.<sup>25</sup>

Appointed a groom of the privy chamber at the same time as Lepton, Edmund Lassells was no hunter or horseman and is not known to have traveled to Scotland. But he descended from a family with connections to Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who owned a country house near the Lassells's home at Worksop, Nottinghamshire.<sup>26</sup> In Shrewsbury's service, the officious Lassells seems somehow to have come to King James's attention before the death of Queen Elizabeth; he probably attended an April 1603 reception Shrewsbury held at Worksop for King James, on his way from Scotland to London.<sup>27</sup> In any case, appointment as a privy chamber groom soon gave Lassells access to much interesting news, and for some time he maintained a correspondence with Shrewsbury and his wife whenever they were not at court.<sup>28</sup> In addition to his groom's livery and grant of £20 per year, Lassells evidently sued early for and had, preceding Lepton, obtained a first reversion of the receivership of York, showing an initiative that Lepton too would show. Further, Lassells followed up his success by obtaining a reversion of the archdeaconry of Richmond, as well as grants of land in Rutland and other counties.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Sir John Ferne, secretary of the Council of the North, to Salisbury, 11 November 1605 (TNA, SP14/16/51). See also Mark Nicholls, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 11.

<sup>25</sup>John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First*, 4 vols. (London, J. B. Nichols, 1828), 1:600.

<sup>26</sup>Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners*, 3 vols. (London: John Chidley, 1838), 3:109. "Lassells" was the spelling used by Edmund Lassells himself, although others have spelled the name "Lascelles."

<sup>27</sup>G. P. V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 18.

<sup>28</sup>Lodge, 3:107–109, 143–146, etc.

<sup>29</sup>Grants to Edmund Lassells of £20 per year for life, as well as stuff for his livery, "the same as other Grooms of the Chamber," 7 October 1603; in reversion, of the receivership of Yorkshire and York; of the parish of Kingston-upon-Hull; and of the archdeaconry of Richmond, 19 February 1604; and of Wing manor, Rutland and other lands in several counties, 9 June 1604 (TNA, SP38/7).

In the summer of 1605, however, Lassells decided to travel to the war zone in the Low Countries “to see the armies,”<sup>30</sup> as he at first explained to Shrewsbury and also to Cecil when asking the latter for a letter of introduction to English officials abroad.<sup>31</sup> In fact, as Lassells later testified under interrogation, the real reason for his trip was that he was exceedingly indebted and supposed a tour of the Low Countries might somehow lead to “a Commission from the States to leavye a Companye against the next sommer,” affording him some “increase” with which to pay his debts.<sup>32</sup> He was for this purpose out of the country for most of August and September and appears by the end of September to have been headed back to England, well before the start of investigation into the Gunpowder Plot.<sup>33</sup> But it soon became known to investigators that some of the conspirators had earlier visited Flanders, and Lassells’s inopportune travel to the continent came under suspicion.

In particular, Salisbury seems to have thought that Lassells might have requested his letter of introduction in order to cover his involvement in a political conspiracy. Inquiries were apparently made of the Earl and Lady Shrewsbury, and by 14 December Lassells had been imprisoned in the Fleet for questioning about remarks he had made to Lady Shrewsbury and to the Scottish Lord Roxburghe, to the effect that “Papists would be verye willing to subbmit themselves to any conditions that should be required of them to purchase the kings favor and that theare were some that would be willing to vndertake that service to deale with the Papists, if it weare a course liked of.”<sup>34</sup> In his own defense, Lassells told the interrogators that his plan to visit Flanders was no conspiracy since he had spoken openly about it in prospect as early as the spring of 1605, discussing it with Goodere as they rode with the king’s hunt in Marylebone Park. But Lassells’s self-exculpatory citing of

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<sup>30</sup>Lassells to Shrewsbury, 6 August 1605 (Lodge, 3:170).

<sup>31</sup>Salisbury to Sir Ralph Winwood, 10 August 1605 (Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, 3 vols. [London: T. Ward, 1724], 2:106).

<sup>32</sup>Testimony of Edmund Lassells, 14 December 1605 (TNA, SP14/17/40); and Petition of Edmund Lassells to the privy council, 20 December 1605 (TNA, SP14/17/27).

<sup>33</sup>John Throckmorton to Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, 27 September 1605 (HMC *Dudley & DeLisle*, 3:210).

<sup>34</sup>Testimony of Lassells, 14 December 1605 (TNA, SP14/17/40).

Goodere as a character witness had the unintended effect of casting Goodere too under suspicion.

In fact, by December 1605 Goodere had already fallen under suspicion, if we can so construe anonymous annotations inscribed on a letter sent by Dudley Carleton to Salisbury's factotum Sir Walter Cope from Paris on 14 October.<sup>35</sup> Reassuring Cope that he was being unavoidably detained in France, Carleton wrote before discovery of the Plot; but at length, returned from France, Carleton became a target of investigation. Immediately he was imprisoned in the Tower and then held under house arrest for several weeks at the end of 1605, largely because from 1603 to early 1605 he had served as controller of Northumberland's household and thus "had unwittingly played a role in leasing the vault for storage of the gunpowder."<sup>36</sup> Someone in connection with this investigation inscribed on Carleton's letter to Cope a list of Catholics and Catholic sympathizers, apparently an imagined network of suspects, that included Goodere's name among the names of other acquaintances of Carleton, such as Henry Constable and Toby Matthew. The suspect Lassells's mention of Goodere was then probably viewed with added suspicion, especially in consideration of Lassells's own friendly tie to Northumberland's brother Alan Percy. By January 1606, Lassells had at some point been moved from the Fleet to the Gatehouse prison. Soon after, he was released but discharged from the king's service; for the rest of his life he struggled to regain political favor and relief for his family.

While these developments and associations did nothing to further Goodere's success or reputation, his career had already suffered a series of reversals even before he was suspect in connection with the Gunpowder Plot. Less able than Lepton or Lassells to turn his position in the privy chamber to any advantage, Goodere never experienced success as a suitor at the royal court. He intended first to capitalize on the availability of grants of lands held in concealment by recusants trying to avoid payment of fines. As an approach to this course, Goodere's initial letter to Essendon, written after his May 1603 appointment to the privy chamber,

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<sup>35</sup>Dudley Carleton to Sir Walter Cope, 14 October 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 191/54).

<sup>36</sup>L. J. Reeve, "Carleton, Dudley, Viscount Dorchester (1574–1632)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.



tried blandly to confess that he had always, since first approaching the Elizabethan court in the 1590s, had an “inward intention” to serve Cecil but that “notw<sup>th</sup>standing my watch-full desire” he had never “found any meanes to manifest the same”; and he concluded by asserting that “I must either find some speedy frutes of his Ma<sup>ties</sup> bounty, or els w<sup>th</sup> draw my selfe into some corner confounded w<sup>th</sup> shame of my want.”<sup>37</sup>

Following his first quarter of service in the privy chamber (November 1603 to February 1604), he wrote again to Cecil (now Viscount Cranborne), reviewing the fruitless course of his first year’s suits for concealed lands and his failure even to have secured an appointment to discuss them with Cranborne.<sup>38</sup> These complaints may have brought conversation, but no actual relief, during a second year; and apparently adding to the distress Goodere endured near the end of February 1605 was the reported theft from his court chamber at Greenwich of £120,<sup>39</sup> equivalent to more than £15,000 today. Appointed to attend expensively on the expensive embassy of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (to ratify the 1604 Anglo-Spanish treaty at the court of the Habsburg archdukes), Goodere may have intended at least some of this money to buy clothes and other equipment for the forthcoming trip to Brussels and Antwerp.

At this point, having sued unsuccessfully for two royal grants of the concealed goods and lands of recusants, Goodere in evident despair developed a new approach, which he prepared by soliciting a letter of recommendation from a Cranborne adherent at court, Sir John Stanhope, support that turned out to be tepid and reserved.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, before departing with Hertford, Goodere submitted a petition to the king suing for the concealed goods and lands of his late cousin John Somerville, a Catholic. Somerville had been convicted not of recusancy but of treason, and though “mentally ill” he had been strangled in prison prior to his scheduled execution in 1583.<sup>41</sup> Goodere’s petition called attention to the consequent plight of Somerville’s daughters, “poore gentleweemen my neere kinsweemen,” who “have importuned

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<sup>37</sup>Goodere to Essendon, after 13 May 1603 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 189/124).

<sup>38</sup>Goodere to Cranborne, 12 July 1604 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 190/131).

<sup>39</sup>Dudley Carleton to Winwood, 10 March 1605 (Winwood, 2:52).

<sup>40</sup>Stanhope to Cranborne, March 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 114/154).

<sup>41</sup>William Wizeman, “Somerville, John (1560–1583),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

mee to be a sutor unto your Majestie,” and who had earlier submitted similar suits on their own behalf, to no good effect.<sup>42</sup> By Goodere’s reckoning, this suit might realize for him £70 a year (perhaps as much as £10,000 a year today), a part of which he would gallantly use for the benefit of the Somerville women.

Whether Goodere expected better results from this scheme is not clear. His petition’s reference to denial of previous suits submitted by the Somerville daughters was a palpable allusion to earlier decisions shared in by both Cranborne and his father. Clearly he knew that his petition would, in accord with protocol, be referred to the commissioners (Cranborne chief among them) appointed to vet all suits drawing on the royal largesse. Goodere addressed an insincere letter of apology to Cranborne, admitting that in the “allegations” of the daughters (which his petition repeated) “there may seeme to bee some blemish to y<sup>e</sup> last goverment”; but explaining that in his own petition these contentions “were only sette downe as private motives of commiseration in his Ma<sup>ty</sup>,” and not to publish the least scandall to y<sup>e</sup> state and goverment, w<sup>ch</sup> no man doth call to mind w<sup>th</sup> more reverence and admiration than my selfe.”<sup>43</sup> Goodere incredibly seems to have believed that Cranborne might respond sympathetically to this vein of irony and/or insincerity; on the other hand, in a list of “Reasons to shewe the equity of this suit,” apparently enclosed for the information of the commissioners, Goodere himself asserts that Somerville had been unjustly and irregularly tried and convicted as well as murdered in his cell.<sup>44</sup>

At some point before sailing for Brussels, Goodere had sent copies of his petition and related papers to his friend John Donne, asking Donne’s opinion about them. Donne was preoccupied (not only with his own preparations for travel but with arranging his pregnant wife’s imminent childbirth and post-natal care at her sister’s home in Peckham) and delivered his opinion only after Goodere had departed with the Hertford embassy. Taking an apologetic tone, Donne wrote:

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<sup>42</sup>Petition of Sir Henry Goodere to King James, April 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 485/86, Petition 2349; published in *Publications of the Catholic Record Society* 53 [1961]: 184).

<sup>43</sup>Goodere to Cranborne, April 1605 (TNA, SP14/13/87). The letter is addressed to Viscount “Cramburne.”

<sup>44</sup>Addendum to Goodere’s petition (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 485/86, Petition 2349a; published in *PCRS* 53 [1961]: 185–186).

SIR,

Though you escape my lifting up of your latch by removing, you cannot my Letters; yet of this Letter I do not much accuse my self, for I serve your Commandment in it, for it is only to convey to you this paper opposed to those, with which you trusted me. It is (I cannot say the waightyest, but truly) the saddest lucubration and nights passage that ever I had. For it exercised those hours, which, with extreme danger of her, whom I should hardly have abstained from recompensing for her company in this world, with accompanying her out of it, encreased my poor family with a son. Though her anguish, and my fears, and hopes, seem divers and wild distractions from this small businesse of your papers, yet because they all narrowed themselves, and met in *Via regia*, which is the consideration of our selves, and God, I thought it time not unfit for this dispatch. Thus much more then needed I have told you, whilst my fire was lighting at Tricombs 10 a clock.

Yours ever intirely  
J. Donne.<sup>45</sup>

Donne's "paper opposed" to the course of action Goodere was taking is not extant, and in his cover letter he does not even hint at his reasons for opposition; instead his letter avoids mention of Goodere's passively indignant suit, focusing instead on the more personal events of a terrible night.

At the end of May 1605 a royal warrant was issued to grant "our servant" Goodere, from the known goods and revenues of Somerville's lands, up to £50 a year and, in addition, all such of his lands as "are yet concealed, and no rent answered to us for the same, and shall be discovered and found out at the chardge and industry of our said servant or by his means or procurements," reserving for the Crown only the yearly rent owed on them.<sup>46</sup> This warrant certainly expressed an intention to grant the substance of Goodere's suit. A warrant, of course, is not a grant; several documents suggest that Goodere's petition prompted,

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<sup>45</sup>Donne to Goodere, early May 1605 (*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* [London: Richard Marriot, 1651], pp. 146–147).

<sup>46</sup>Warrant for grant to Goodere of Sommerville's concealed lands, 30 May 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/19).

during the following month, extended discussion within the privy council and beyond about what to do in cases of this kind.

First, Attorney-General Coke answered Salisbury's request for advice on the matter with bitter irony, pointing out that granting Goodere's petition would require the unthinkable, a re-opening the 1583 prosecution of Somerville and necessarily also of his accused co-conspirator, Edward Arden, who had argued that they had both been convicted to be put to death not on any evidence of treason but only because they were Catholics. Goodere's grant would now raise this matter all over again, because the cases of both Somerville and Arden would in effect be reargued, evidence of their treason reconsidered, if Goodere were to initiate a legal process to show what had never yet been shown, that Somerville had been a recusant with concealed lands or goods. Further, Coke suggested sarcastically that Salisbury consult in this matter the lengthy legal memory of Sir Francis Gawdy, septuagenarian Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.<sup>47</sup> The "firm-minded" Gawdy, who had served in a prosecutorial role as queen's serjeant in the 1580s, was reputed to have thought Coke's 1603 prosecution of Sir Walter Raleigh "an affront to justice"; it has also been suggested that Gawdy "may have harboured Catholic sympathies."<sup>48</sup>

At about the same time, in June 1605, a list of discussion points was drawn up (evidently an internal document for the privy council's use) questioning the grounds and purpose of the long-established practice of granting the proceeds of recusant concealments to "his Ma<sup>ties</sup> servants and others," particularly in cases involving "the children or heires of Recusants, themselves being none, who sue for discharges of debts due for Recusancy by their predecessors."<sup>49</sup> Although Somerville's daughters could not yet officially be classified as children of a recusant, implied in this unwonted solicitude for such persons was an argument not to grant suits such as the one that had been warranted for Goodere.

Subsequently, the privy council drew up two new form letters for use in communicating to government officers decisions of the king and

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<sup>47</sup>Coke to Salisbury, June 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/63).

<sup>48</sup>David Ibbetson, "Gawdy, Sir Francis (d. 1605)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>49</sup>Queries in the matter of grants of recusant lands, June 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/66).

council about the disposition of recusant lands. A letter from the king was devised instructing Salisbury to authorize grants of recusant lands only after certification by the treasury that a recusant “is according to the course of o<sup>r</sup> lawes duely convicted, his land seised and founde to our vse”; but an innovation in this letter was a stipulation limiting new prosecutions for recusancy by a time-limit of one year, after which, even if any further potentially remunerative concealments of lands or goods should be made a matter of record, “this our warrant shalbe voide and of none effect.”<sup>50</sup> A second form letter was devised (and bears Salisbury’s endorsement) by which the privy council directed that grantees of concealed recusant lands and goods “shall recave such benefitt, as shall arise therby, yf the same prove no greater, vpon their conviction than shall stand w<sup>t</sup> his Ma<sup>ties</sup> gracious lyking; w<sup>ch</sup> yf it be, his Ma<sup>tie</sup> will than dispose of as much, or as little, as he shall think fitt.”<sup>51</sup> In other words, despite the need for considerable expense and industry of grantees in pursuing prosecutions and ferreting out concealments within the limits of a specified year, their grant at the end of such process would in any case stand and extend only as far as the continuance of the king’s “gracious lyking.” No extant record beyond these documents can confirm whether or not Goodere’s grant was ever formally issued. In any case, Goodere never gained from it or any other suit anything near what he had hoped for.

While Lassells was suffering in prison and losing his court post, Goodere next attempted to gain relief from an obligation he had imprudently undertaken as surety for a debt (or debts) owed by Lassells, whose creditor (or creditors) now sought to avoid the loss threatened by his imminent default. Early in November 1605, before discovery of his possible implication in plotting, Lassells had noted the arrest of an Oxfordshire man charged with stealing sheep. Anticipating the man’s conviction for the felony, Lassells quickly sued for and gained a conditional grant of the escheat in advance of the trial, scheduled for early December.<sup>52</sup> In January 1606, evidently under pressure to make

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<sup>50</sup>Form for grants of recusant lands, June 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/67).

<sup>51</sup>Form for grants of recusant lands, June 1605 (TNA, SP14/14/65).

<sup>52</sup>Petition of Lassells to King James respecting the escheat of John Harmon of Stony Middleton, Oxon., November 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury petition 1183).

good on Lassells's obligation, Goodere sought to have his name added as a co-grantee of the sheep-thief's escheat.

One advantage of this scheme was that it did not depend on Salisbury's esteem for Goodere, since it involved a grant already made to Lassells before his disgrace, a grant to which Goodere merely sought to attach his name as surety of the imprisoned grantee. He therefore was able in this matter to deal more directly with the king without recourse to Salisbury, through Lord Treasurer Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset. Goodere "wayted long" on 18 January for Dorset's letter to Salisbury signifying the royal assent,<sup>53</sup> which he enclosed with a desperate letter of his own to Salisbury, mentioning again his series of suits to king and council, in effect denied despite "y<sup>e</sup> benefitte w<sup>ch</sup> was intended mee by yo<sup>r</sup> Lopp:s out of the estates of some recusants, and out of y<sup>e</sup> concealement of Io[hn] Somerfields landes, by neither of w<sup>ch</sup> have I reaped any other frute then chardges, and payne to my selfe." Goodere concluded his letter with the wish that Salisbury would "have a favourable consideration" of this latest scheme for his relief;<sup>54</sup> but it must have seemed to Goodere as likely not to benefit him as his earlier suits. As it turned out, this attempt to get around Salisbury was a disaster, eventually with other incidents provoking the Secretary's open opposition, no longer opposition veiled with courtesy.

Three years after the opening of the reign, Goodere's career at court had never really gotten off the ground; and it never would, impeded perhaps less by the lack of Salisbury's support than by his own unfortunate associations and ineptitude. For another example of the latter, Goodere was present at Nonsuch palace in early August 1605 when the boy Robert Sidney, son of Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, knifed his tutor in an angry dispute that interrupted summer pastimes in the company of Prince Henry. In the manner of Lepton, Goodere took it on himself to report this incident to the king, riding posthaste from Nonsuch to the court, on progress in Northamptonshire, to tell a story immediately characterized by Lisle, in a letter to Salisbury, as "untrew" and presented "most falsly and maliciously."<sup>55</sup> More confidentially, in a letter to Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Lisle complained that "report

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<sup>53</sup>Dorset to Salisbury, 14 January 1606 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 109/117).

<sup>54</sup>Goodere to Salisbury, 18 January 1606 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 190/32).

<sup>55</sup>Lisle to Salisbury, 6 August 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 191/3).

of the matter was made by Goodiere vnto the King. whoe I doubt not hath filled the court w<sup>th</sup> the like tale. I besech your Lo: to beleue neuer a worde hee spake. For I doe say that his relation was altogether fals: and so I vndertake to make appear.”<sup>56</sup> Goodere certainly did not need the enmity of Lisle at court, driving his reputation to further precarious depths just as his association with Lassells and fallout from the Gunpowder Plot were about to render him radioactive. Potentially damaging in addition was Lassells’s gossiping letter on the same day to Shrewsbury,<sup>57</sup> passing along from the royal progress Goodere’s version of the incident.

All these events round out a context for the unraveling of what may have been Goodere’s most significant support at court, his longstanding family relationship with the Haringtons of Exton, especially with Lucy (Harington) Russell, Countess of Bedford. This association had begun in Lucy Harington’s childhood; in 1593 or 1594, at the age of twelve, she stood godmother for Goodere’s daughter Lucy. In 1603, Lady Bedford traveled north to join the court of the new queen. This sphere of the countess’s activities was one where Goodere subsequently had consistent, though hardly remunerative, preferment. On occasions at both royal courts, as a servant of the countess he played a defined role, sometimes participating in entertainments, dancing in masques and swordplay at barriers. There is also evidence of Goodere’s having served on at least one occasion as a messenger between Lady Bedford and Salisbury, carrying her petition for some grant. A letter to Salisbury from the countess in June 1605 mentioned Goodere’s report of Salisbury’s generosity towards her, “as by yo<sup>r</sup> owne hand and S<sup>r</sup> Henry Goodere his more perticuler relation I am assured,” despite Salisbury’s having found her suit “vnfitt to be graunted.”<sup>58</sup>

Without specifying the particularity of Goodere’s “relation,” the countess professed that both she and Goodere understood Salisbury’s friendship and solicitude for her; and she added an odd postscript pleading (and noting Goodere’s explicit request that she do so) the messenger’s despairing concern that his own suit, unlike hers, be granted.

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<sup>56</sup>Lisle to Suffolk, 6 August 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 191/4).

<sup>57</sup>Lassells to Shrewsbury, 6 August 1605 (Lodge, 3:171).

<sup>58</sup>Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, to Salisbury, June 1605 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 111/96).

Very likely this suit was Goodere's petition for the Somerville lands, still under privy council discussion in June 1605. Goodere's entreaty that the countess mention his suit in the context of acknowledging Salisbury's unfavorable response to her own (a clear attempt to trade on her submission to Salisbury's denial) was obviously tactless and inappropriate, a breach of courtesy that she could hardly afford to honor, though clearly she did so. Associating herself with Goodere's Somerville petition would prove an unprofitable gambit, ultimately another discredit to her. If she did not register its tactlessness at the time, she later probably regretted having told Salisbury that she would count his favor to Goodere in the matter of that suit "an obligation layd on me." This set of transactions, taking place just prior to Goodere's several embarrassments beginning in the summer of 1605, may have opened the way to Lady Bedford's gradually dispensing with his services as a messenger. For his part, Salisbury could only imagine what particulars Goodere had used to gild what he had written to the countess; but the transparency of a maneuver designed to set up Lady Bedford's thankfulness in being graciously denied as a pretext for urging Goodere's suit was not likely to impress him favorably.

What this letter of 1605 suggests about Goodere's ability to function in courtly maneuvers managed by Salisbury should be seen in the context of another, better defined negotiation in which Goodere seems to have had no effective part. Salisbury's papers preserve an exchange, a year and a half later, of extraordinarily subtle letters between himself and the Countess of Bedford's father John Lord Harington regarding the proposal of a marriage between Harington's fifteen-year-old son John, one of the closest companions of Prince Henry, and Salisbury's fourteen-year-old daughter Frances, kept away from court "to shield her from the taunts" and consequent "misery" her inherited deformity had caused her there.<sup>59</sup> Although the letter containing this proposal is not extant, it is clear from Salisbury's reply that Lady Bedford, as well as her father, was involved in trying to negotiate this marriage: Salisbury's response states

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<sup>59</sup>Pauline Croft, "Cecil, Robert, first earl of Salisbury (1563–1612)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.



that the countess had “deliuered” to him some “papers” setting out the “perticularities” of Harington’s offer.<sup>60</sup>

It is unlikely that Lady Bedford herself was the letter-carrier. Rather, Salisbury is telling Harington that he is aware that the countess, as the family’s representative at court, has played a prominent role in conveying if not suggesting the terms of her family’s proposal. Salisbury’s letter acknowledges that other “parties” have also been involved in urging the marriage; and in replying directly to Harington, he emphasizes his deliberation not only “in good manners to writ myne owne answere” (although he begins this letter by pointedly noting that “in matters of Marriadges, letters are not alwayes the best meanes to expresse mens mutual purposes”) but also by this direct approach to Harington not “to press her La<sup>pp</sup> to wright that w<sup>ch</sup> she dothe not approue.” Salisbury’s consideration for the countess here spares Lady Bedford the embarrassment of an additional refusal but also stresses that “whatsoever yow haue heard or shall heare discoursed hereafter of my carriadge in this particuler matter, or any thing els concerning yow and yours may be no further beleaued, then youe shalbe informed by your noble daughter.” While Salisbury professes that he wants to “do all parties right that haue dealt in this cause,” he is clearly displeased that others have involved themselves in the proceeding.<sup>61</sup>

Salisbury rejects Harington’s proposal outright, on the ground that the young Harington might well grow to feel such a wife “farr short of his expectation.” Presenting an acerbic contrast between the two children—John Harington, “not onely an heyre to his fathers ho<sup>or</sup> and fortune, but in himselfe extraordinarily qualified”; and, on the other hand, Frances Cecil, “intiteled to nothing but a marriadge portion and in her selfe promising little, worthy affection”—he emphasizes that he had in vain discouraged the countess from expecting the proposal to succeed:

I must be thus farr bowld w<sup>th</sup> my Lady the Countesse, as to say that if her La<sup>p</sup>: had not more resembled her sex in louing her owne will then she dothe in those other, noble and discrette parts of her mynd (wherein she hathe so great a portion

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<sup>60</sup>Salisbury to John Lord Harington, January 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 114/130).

<sup>61</sup>Salisbury to John Lord Harington, January 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 114/130).

beyond most of those that I haue knowne) she might haue moued y<sup>r</sup> Lop to suspend the sending vpp of any particularities at this tyme.<sup>62</sup>

Implied here is some earlier communication about the mooted marriage (probably not in a letter), in which Salisbury believed he had made clear to Lady Bedford that the matter ought not to be pursued. Salisbury further intimates that the countess, while acting in accord with her father's wishes, has not only shaped those wishes herself but has been indiscreet in persuading her father to let her act on his behalf:

I haue not hidd it from her selfe, that I haue found her so absolutly fixed vppon a resolution to allow of no reason w<sup>ch</sup> she finds not iustly concurrant w<sup>th</sup> your satisfaction, (an argument of that reuerence and obedience to all your commandements, w<sup>ch</sup> is more obserued by the world in all her carriadge then is vsual in this adge towards parents) as I thought it not onely fitt and in good manners to writ myne owne answere but most necessarie to enlarge it thus particularly rather then to press her La<sup>pp</sup> to wright that w<sup>ch</sup> she dothe not approue.<sup>63</sup>

The "will" of the countess in this matter has been so forceful, so stubborn, so unmannerly in departing from the etiquette of patriarchy, that Salisbury feels unable to respond directly to it; he is unwilling to answer Harington's proposal except over her head, directly in this letter to her father, rather than communicate with him through a reciprocating message of any sort to be delivered by Lady Bedford (or her agent) to Harington. Writing to her father, Salisbury is also sending a message to the countess. His reference to her in the letter to Harington takes care to compliment her but makes clear that her indiscretion is a source of his displeasure.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Salisbury to John Lord Harington, January 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 114/130).

<sup>63</sup>Salisbury to John Lord Harington, January 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 114/130).

<sup>64</sup>Margaret Maurer, "The Real Presence of Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, and the Terms of John Donne's 'Honour Is So Sublime Perfection,'" *ELH* 47 (1980): 218–223.

One sentence of the letter suggests that the countess had indeed not physically carried her father's papers but instead had used her messenger, a particular person whose name Salisbury does not mention, but to whom he alludes with faint contempt:

whatsoever yow haue heard or shall heare discoursed hereafter  
of my carriadge in this pticuler matter, or any thing els  
concerning yow and yours may be no further beleaued, then  
youe shalbe informed by your noble daughter, who is made of  
a better mould to discern truth and report it then many others  
in this place.<sup>65</sup>

Salisbury here seems to tell Harington that he should not trust anything he hears about the transaction from Bedford's messenger, who, as in that earlier communication with Salisbury, may well have been Goodere. Among other matters, Goodere's implication in Lady Bedford's courtly short-fall of June 1605 and his inappropriate perceptions and behavior in the Lisle business suggest Goodere's behavior as the pattern of ineffective courtiership Salisbury would scorn.

Harington's response to Salisbury may have been framed in collaboration with his daughter. If so, it makes clear that she had mastered considerably more sophisticated variations on the strategies she had employed with Salisbury in 1605 (see pp. 75–76 above). On the main point in question, Harington assures Salisbury that the proposed marriage is still hoped for with patience by him and by Lady Bedford; and he offers the prospect that the logic of the proposal may at some point be clearer to everyone concerned:

This (I vowe to God) hathe ben on of the greteste cawses that  
I and my daughter of B: hathe desired the spedier Conclusion  
w<sup>th</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> L<sup>p</sup>: wherein if my daughter or my self, haue proceded  
further then hathe ben plesinge to yow, I hoppe yow will  
bearre therw<sup>th</sup>, Consideringe it proceded, of hers and my Carre  
of her Brother's Good, w<sup>th</sup>out meninge to ofende yow. And

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<sup>65</sup>Salisbury to Harington, January 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 114/130).

not that shee or I haue any thought, ether to sleeke, entertaine  
or treatte of any other matche, but wholly Relye on yo<sup>r</sup> Lp.<sup>66</sup>

Notably, this wording makes no challenge to any presumption of Salisbury's letter, that Lady Bedford is not only her father's partner in this matter but is leading the way. That suggestion of Salisbury's is tacitly accepted here, where the words of Harington give his daughter precedence in referring to "hers and my Carre of her Brother's Good." He concludes by expressing hope that despite Salisbury's rejection he and Frances Cecil still may at some point be willing to entertain the proposal:

so will I reste for this motion, so longe as yo<sup>r</sup> L.p. shall be  
pleased therw<sup>th</sup>. And that yo<sup>r</sup> honorable daughter shall not  
dislicke thereof, ether by dislicke of my Sonne him self, his  
meannesse, or my wantte of a Greter Fortune.<sup>67</sup>

Harington's reference to his son's "meannesse" and to his family's "wantte of a Greter Fortune" shows shrewd intuition of Salisbury's true concerns, dismissing them under cover of flattery. Salisbury's ignoble heritage was a staple of court gossip. Harington here turns to his advantage Salisbury's insistence that they deal directly with one another rather than through the countess. For her, now allied in marriage to the house of Russell, to have hazarded such a guess would have been a plain affront. Of course, the Haringtons knew their man in this. Three years later, paying a dowry of £6000, Salisbury married Frances to Henry Clifford, who would become fifth Earl of Cumberland.

There is thus an irony and an unspoken agenda in Harington's letter, carefully expressed to signify understanding of all Salisbury's own subtle and unspoken emphases. Particularly noteworthy is the reply to Salisbury's contemptuous allusion to unnamed, possible go-betweens whom Salisbury had been concerned to discredit:

I understand by my daughter and S<sup>r</sup> Will. Bulstrode how  
willinge yo<sup>r</sup> L.p. is to further my Sutte, ffor the w<sup>ch</sup> I humbly

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<sup>66</sup>Harington to Salisbury, 10 February 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 115/102).

<sup>67</sup>Harington to Salisbury, 10 February 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 115/102).

thanke yow, Acknoleging yo<sup>r</sup> L.p. the nobliste ffriend I haue euer ffounde. And therfor I haue no doutte of yo<sup>r</sup> Lp. favor to me and myn, beinge sorry I can by no means deserve it otherwis then by my love and faithfull service w<sup>th</sup> whileste I live I shall neuer be wantinge in, wherein soeuer it shall pleas yow to Comande me. Wher also yow would not have me beleve in this matter but what I maye vnderstand ffrom my daughter, my Lord I know I deale w<sup>th</sup> yow: ffrom whom, I can reseave nothing But honorably.<sup>68</sup>

Overtly, Harington assures Salisbury that his conviction of the latter's honor and good will would be proof against even his daughter's suggestion of the contrary. This follows, however, on a report of Salisbury's favor in another context that mentions not only the countess but Sir William Bulstrode, his own customary and, as far as we know, unexceptionable emissary for dealings with Salisbury and the privy council, in matters such as the separate suit referenced here (Harington's petition to obtain an increased allowance for his expenses as caretaker for the Princess Elizabeth). The effect is to counter Salisbury's objection to any intermediary except Lady Bedford by recalling a matter for which Harington had relied on reports from his daughter and another messenger to whom Cecil evidently had no objection. Harington would not have mentioned Bulstrode in this way had he in fact been the messenger whose name Salisbury had not deigned to use. There is no evidence that Harington, as opposed to his daughter, ever chose Goodere as a go-between.

What seems to have been Goodere's ineptitude did not prevent his continuing in active service to Lady Bedford at least up to the spring of 1607, when Sir Thomas Lake, having acquired a reversionary lease of the former house of Sir Francis Bacon at Twickenham Park, assigned his lease to both Goodere and Edward Woodward, a servant of the countess's mother; they in turn made over their lease to George Lord Carew and George Croke, "in trust for Lucy, wife to Edward Earl of Bedford."<sup>69</sup> These complicated transactions may have been related to a

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<sup>68</sup>Harington to Salisbury, 10 February 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 115/102).

<sup>69</sup>Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London*, 4 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1792) 3:565, citing title-deeds and other documents apparently no longer extant,

number of documents calendared in 1607, involving the interests of the Earl of Bedford and his brother William, Baron Russell of Thornhaugh, as well as some suit of Lady Bedford's, further complications that seem to have been investigated or in part negotiated by Salisbury.<sup>70</sup> However, the 1607 deed of Twickenham Park seems to have been the last recorded evidence of Goodere's material service to the countess.

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This circumstantial trajectory of Goodere's court career during the early Jacobean period can serve as support for a new and more precise understanding of the series of extant letters Donne wrote to him during these years. In particular, Donne's relationship with the Countess of Bedford, at first through Goodere but gradually more and more independent of Goodere's mediation, appears ultimately to have made Donne an intermediary between Goodere and Bedford instead of Goodere the intermediary between Bedford and Donne.

A letter to Goodere from Donne's London pied-à-terre in the late summer or early autumn of 1606 is evidence of the configuration in the early stage of Donne's acquaintance with the countess. Answering Goodere's unexpected letter, Donne included a request that Goodere "when you finde that good Lady emptiest of businesse and pleasure, present my humble thanks." It is not immediately clear for what Donne here wanted to thank the countess, but whatever it was seems to have come through Goodere, as also went Donne's thanks for it. He continued with a set of exquisite distinctions expressing his view of himself in relation to Lady Bedford and to Goodere as the bearer of his thanks to her: "you can do me no favour, which I need not, nor any, which I cannot have some hope to deserve, but this [i.e., thanking her], for I have made her opinion of me, the ballance by which I weigh my

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obtained from Lord William Cavendish, who owned Twickenham Park until 1803.

<sup>70</sup>Notes on debts of Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, February 1607 (TNA, SP14/26/33–36); Negotiations on behalf of the Earl of Bedford relative to entailed lands for suit of the Countess of Bedford, February 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 75/89); Countess of Bedford to Salisbury, March 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 123/161); and Note on the effect of the C. of Bedford's suit, March 1607 (Hatfield, Salisbury MSS 124/126).

self.”<sup>71</sup> The last words of this passage may imply that the gift conveyed from the countess was a compliment, possibly a response to one or more of Donne’s poems, delivered or shown to her at some point by Goodere. Having asked Goodere to thank her, Donne finished his letter with a passage that included consideration of his already ongoing correspondence with Lady Bedford’s younger brother, Sir John Harington. As if responding to an invitation, he promised soon to join Goodere and Harington (with perhaps the countess as well), possibly at Richmond palace, where Harington, serving as one of the closest companions of Prince Henry, may have been residing with the prince at this time.<sup>72</sup> How Donne made the acquaintance of Harington we do not know, but probably this too had come about through Goodere.

By the end of December 1607, the configuration of this triangle—Lady Bedford, Goodere, and Donne—had changed somewhat, as is implied by a letter Donne wrote from London to Goodere,<sup>73</sup> enclosing for delivery a letter addressed to Lady Bedford.<sup>74</sup> Goodere’s role in receiving and delivering this letter is diminished in comparison to his role in 1606. While he is as before Donne’s go-between in communicating with the countess, the delivery Goodere is now to make is different, whether or not Donne had sealed this letter: not a message expressed through his own mouth but Donne’s letter, enclosed for the countess, the earliest extant and probably the first letter, in prose or verse, that Donne ever wrote to her, transcendent prose that was probably designed as a New Year’s gift.

By the first half of March 1608, matters had developed further in the same direction. Beginning at this time, Donne addressed a number of letters, from Mitcham and from his London lodgings, to Goodere at Polesworth. Following the 20 February conclusion of his fifth third-quarter of service in the privy chamber, Goodere had departed from the court and London unusually and abruptly in late February, among other reasons perhaps partly because of his January appointment to the

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<sup>71</sup>Donne to Goodere, 31 August > < 1 November 1606 (*Letters*, pp. 150–151).

<sup>72</sup>Thomas Birch, *The Life of Henry Prince of Wales* (London: A. Millar, 1760), pp. 74–75.

<sup>73</sup>Donne to Goodere, 31 December 1607 (*Letters*, p. 204).

<sup>74</sup>Donne to Lady Bedford, Christmas season 1607 (*Letters*, pp. 22–24).

Warwickshire subsidy commission.<sup>75</sup> In a letter of 8 March, Donne notes that Goodere's absence from London has prevented his carrying out a trivial duty still expected of him at Bedford house:

Whilest I write this Tuesday morning, from *Bartlet* house one brings me a packet to your Master: he is gone; and that Lady and all the company is from town. I thought I might be pardoned, if I thought my self your man for that service to open it, which I did, and for the Letters I will deliver them.<sup>76</sup>

Goodere's London residence was in the house of Sir Thomas Bartlett, in the same neighborhood as Bedford house and Donne's lodgings in the Strand.<sup>77</sup> The packet of letters had been sent to Goodere, whose normal business evidently would still have included delivery of letters addressed to the Earl and Countess of Bedford, as well as perhaps to others. Packets for Goodere delivered to Bartlett house could in his absence easily be forwarded for further disposition to Donne, an arrangement that seems to have been used at least on this occasion. Donne took it on himself to do Goodere's apparent duty, delivering those of the letters addressed to the Russells, as well, perhaps, as letters addressed to others. Donne here intervened as a friendly substitute for the absent Goodere, honorably supplying what the latter's courtship left wanting.

Six days later, Donne began a letter of 14 March by expressing puzzlement, which he implies is shared by Lady Bedford, at Goodere's continuing and unexplained absence from London, now for more than two weeks: "When I saw your good Countesse last, she let me think that her message by her foot-man would hasten you up." He himself urges Goodere's "hast hither," although Goodere's most recent letter, "brought to me to Micham yesterday, but left at my [London] lodging two days sooner," had made no mention of his return. Later in his letter, Donne expressed his understanding of the reason why Goodere had left, referring to "that business which drew you down [i.e., from London]," for the purpose of which "your fortune and honour are a paire of good

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<sup>75</sup>Names of the Commissioners for Subsidies in England and Wales, for the year 1608, January 1608 (TNA, SP14/31/1).

<sup>76</sup>Donne to Goodere, 8 March 1608 (*Letters*, p. 216).

<sup>77</sup>See Donne to Goodere, December–January 1604–1605 (*Poems by J. D.* [London: John Marriot, 1633], p. 351).



spurs.” But he goes on to urge Goodere’s return to London and the court, because “here also you have both true businesse and many *Quasi negotia*, which go two and two to a businesse; which are visitations, and such, as though they be not full businesses, yet are so near them that they serve as for excuses in omissions of the other.” Considering the tone of Donne’s letter from the start, especially the reference to Lady Bedford and her footman, this passage suggests a concern on Donne’s part about Goodere’s ability in courtship, about maintaining his service with Lady Bedford, even if he has been assigned no particular business at this time. Donne seems anxious to convey his “perplexity” about Goodere’s absence from London and at the same time takes care to say that he does “not so much intimate [Goodere’s] infirmity, as frankly confess [his] own.” It is clear, however, that he had established himself as a routine visitor to Bedford house while Goodere had, for reasons Donne cannot wholly approve, withdrawn himself. Donne’s closing prompt, “returne to your pleasures” (presumably because they are what has been interrupted by the reading of Donne’s letter), may imply reproof.<sup>78</sup>

Donne’s developing, independent relationship with the countess is most obvious in a letter he directed to her, without mentioning Goodere or Goodere’s mediation, at some point in the late spring or early summer of 1608:

*Happiest and worthiest Lady,*

I Do not remember that ever I have seene a petition in verse, I would not therefore be singular, nor adde these to your other papers. I have yet adventured so neare as to make a petition for verse, It is for those your Ladiship did me the honor to see in a Twickenham garden, except you repent your making & having mended your judgement by thinking worse, that is, better, because juster, of their subject. They must needs be an excellent exercise of your wit, which speake so well of so ill. I humbly begge them of your Ladiship, with two such promises, as to any other of your compositions were threatnings: That I will not shew them, & that I will not beleieve them; And nothing should be so used which comes from your braine or heart. If I should confesse a fault in the boldnesse of asking them, or make a fault by doing it in a longer letter, your

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<sup>78</sup>Donne to Goodere, 14 March 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 140–143).

Ladiship might use your stile and old fashion of the Court  
towards mee, and pay mee with a pardon. Here therefore I  
humbly kisse your Ladiships faire learned, hands and wish you  
good wishes and speedy grants.

Your Ladiships servant  
JO. DONNE.<sup>79</sup>

Clearly their relationship had progressed considerably during the weeks of Goodere's absence in the country since late February. Donne had attended on her, without Goodere, during a visit at her Twickenham home at some point in the earlier spring. On that occasion, Lady Bedford had evidently shown Donne some verses she had written for him, commendations of a poem (or poems) he had earlier shown or sent to her, or perhaps directly of Donne himself ("an excellent exercise of your wit, which speaks so well of so ill"). Nothing we know in the whole history of her relationship with Goodere can compare to the sort of mutual esteem and confidentiality shown in this exchange. Moreover, in this letter Donne requests a copy of her verses, "except you repent your making & having mended your judgement by thinking worse, that is, better, because juster, of their subject." He promises to keep them confidential and not to let them go to his head ("not beleieve them"); and he apologizes in advance if she can regard his request as a faulty piece of courtship. Lady Bedford's response to Donne's request is not known; nevertheless the request itself testifies to the growing strength of their confidence in one another.

In a letter written soon after from Mitcham to Goodere at Polesworth, probably in late July 1608, Donne closes with further interesting evidence about the development of his correspondence and relationship with the countess:

I send you, with this, a letter which I sent to the Countesse. It is not my use nor duty to do so. But for your having of it, there were but two consents, and I am sure you have mine, and you are sure you have hers: I also writ to her Ladiship for the verses shee shewed in the garden, which I did not onely to extort them, nor onely to keepe my promise of writing, for

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<sup>79</sup>Donne to Lady Bedford, May > < July 1608 (*Poems by J. D.* [London: John Marriot, 1633], p. 367).

that I had done in the other letter, and perchance shee hath forgotten the promise, nor onely because I thinke my letters just good enough for a Progresse, but because I would write apace to her, whilst it is possible to expresse that which I yet know of her, for by this growth I see how soone she will be ineffable.<sup>80</sup>

The letter to Lady Bedford that Donne encloses is clearly not the letter requesting her verses read at Twickenham but a copy of yet another, earlier letter. In fact, Donne makes it plain here that he has for some time been writing to the countess without Goodere's mediation and until now without showing Goodere any copies, before or after sending them. Moreover, he characterizes his enclosure of one of these letters as unusual ("not my use"; i. e., not my habitual practice) and not what he regards as a duty.

In a letter of 6 August 1608, the trend of these matters can again be glimpsed, although this letter was addressed not (as has sometimes been thought) to Goodere but to the boy Sir John Harington, with whom (as mentioned above) Donne had corresponded at least as early as the autumn of 1606. Donne writes from London to invite Harington's attendance at the christening of his daughter Lucy:

I am at *London* onely to provide for Monday, when I shall use that favour which my Lady *Bedford* hath afforded me, of giving her name to my daughter; which I mention to you, as well to shew that I covet any occasion of a gratefull speaking of her favours, as that, because I have thought the day is likely to bring you to *London*, I might tell you, that my poor house is in your way and you shall then finde such company, as (I think) you will not be loth to accompany to *London*.<sup>81</sup>

Presumably, Harington would have passed near Donne's house at Mitcham on his way to London from Nonsuch palace. Donne's further suggestion, that he and Harington ride together to London after the christening, suggests the closeness of his friendship with Prince Henry's

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<sup>80</sup>Donne to Goodere, late July 1608 (*Poems by J. D.*, p. 366).

<sup>81</sup>Donne to Sir John Harington, the younger, 6 August 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 118–119).

young attendant, and consequently implies the degree to which he had by this time in certain respects equalled or surpassed Goodere in the fluency of his Harington/Russell connections. Moreover, it appears that Goodere, whose own daughter Lucy had been Lady Bedford's god-daughter, did not attend the christening but remained at Polesworth.

In a letter of 14 August 1608, Donne wrote to Goodere again from Mitcham to Polesworth. Goodere seems to have remained in the country all spring and summer; no evidence confirms that he had ever returned after departing London in late February or early March, following his quarter of privy chamber service. He may even have been for some of this time unresponsive to Donne's letters, since Donne opens this letter with an explanation why, under the circumstances, he "would not discontinue my course of writing." In accord with his characterization elsewhere of friendship as "my second religion," he compares the writing of letters to church attendance, "a sacrifice, which though friends need not, friendship doth"; and he observes the necessity for friends to "sepose some certain times for the outward service thereof, though it be but formall and testimoniall." After dwelling on the lack of an occasion or news of any kind to enrich or justify this letter, Donne admits he has nothing to add to previous letters but finds instead a peculiar justification for writing:

in stead of a Letter to you, I send you one to another, to the best Lady, who did me the honour to acknowledge the receipt of one of mine, by one of hers; and who only hath power to cast the fetters of verse upon my free meditations: It should give you some delight, and some comfort, because you are the first which see it, and it is the last which you shall see of this kinde from me.<sup>82</sup>

Here again appears some development in the configuration of the triangle, development that Donne's letter evidently intends to acknowledge to Goodere: Donne sends Goodere one of his verse letters addressed to Lady Bedford, as previously when Goodere would deliver such writings to the countess, before Donne began to write and send to her directly. Donne states that no one (presumably including Lady Bedford) has seen this verse letter before Goodere, and therefore one

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<sup>82</sup>Donne to Goodere, 14 August 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 116–117).

would think that Goodere would indeed feel some comfort and, perhaps, some obligation soon to return to London and deliver the poem. Donne warns Goodere that he will not again provide such an occasion, implying that in their joint relations with the countess they are at a turning point.

Nevertheless, Goodere was still at Polesworth on 27 September 1608, when Donne addressed another letter to him there. This letter dwells at length on the hazards of courtship and in particular on Goodere's situation as a courtier:

your vertue keeps you secure, and your naturall disposition to mirth will preserve you; but lose none of these holds, a slip is often as dangerous as a bruise, and though you cannot fall to my lownesse, yet in a much lesse distraction you may meet my sadnesse; for he is no safer which falls from an high tower into the leads; then he which falls from thence to the ground: make therefore to your self some mark, and go towards it alegrement. Though I be in such a planetary and erratique fortune, that I can do nothing constantly, yet you may finde some constancy in my constant advising you to it.

The letter concludes with a postscript itself concluding with some news adverting to the triangle: "I will sup with the good Lady, and write again to morrow to you, if any thing be occasioned there, which concerns you, and I will tell her so."<sup>83</sup> Donne promises to represent Goodere's interests at Bedford house to the extent of relaying to him a report of any event or conversation at supper that might be of concern; moreover he assures Goodere that he will tell the lady of that relay—another, stronger effort on Donne's part to achieve the contact between his friends that Goodere seems to have avoided since spring.

Donne wrote another letter to Goodere on 15 November 1608, only five days before the start of Goodere's 1608–1609 quarter of service in the privy chamber. (Goodere, as far as we know, had not returned to London since the end of his last quarter of service in February.) In this letter, Donne relays more conversation he had heard at a Bedford house supper the preceding evening:

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<sup>83</sup> Donne to Goodere, 27 September 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 48–54).

I found all that company forepossest with a wonder why you came not last saturday. I perceive, that as your intermitting your Letters to me, gave me reason to hope for you, so some more direct addresse or conscience of your businesse here, had imprinted in them an assurance of your comming.

Goodere's letters from Polesworth, occasionally intermittent even prior to this point, have not been arriving as expected; Donne wonders if this means he is on his way to London. Meanwhile, Donne's attendance at Bedford house seems here to have become utterly routine; he has noticed there a disappointment at Goodere's continuing absence, as if he had failed to fulfill a promise. He goes on to report Lady Bedford's imminent departure from London to join her husband at his house in Buckinghamshire, though he adds for Goodere's information that she must return soon to the court to help prepare for a Christmas masque. And this letter includes one additional reference to the countess, where Donne mentions that she, along with Lord James Hay, has been active on his behalf, seeking to assist his rather odd offer made for the place of the late Sir Geoffrey Fenton, who had held the principal secretaryship of state in Ireland since the 1580s.<sup>84</sup>

A passage in this letter has generally been interpreted to express Donne's despondency about his own prospects at court, and this may in part be Donne's meaning:

Sir *Geffery Fenton* one of his Majesties Secretaries in *Ireland* is dead; and I have made some offer for the place, in preservation whereof, as I have had occasion to imploy all my friends, so I have not found in them all (except *Bedford*) more hast and words (for when those two are together, there is much comfort even in the least) then in the *L. Hay*. In good faith he promised so roundly, so abundantly, so profusely, as I suspected him, but performed what ever he undertook, (and my requests were the measures of his undertakings) so readily and truly, that his complements became obligations, and having spoke like a Courtier, did like a friend. This I tell you, because being farre under any ability of expressing my thankfulness to him by any proportionall service, I do, as much as I can, thank him by thanking of you, who begot, or

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<sup>84</sup>Donne to Goodere, 15 November 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 143–146).

nursed these good impressions of me in him. Sir, as my discretion would do, my fortune doth bring all my debts into one hand, for I owe you what ever Court friends do for me, yea, whatsoever I do for my self, because you almost importune me, to awake and stare the Court in the face. I know not yet what conjecture to make of the event. But I am content to go forward a little more in the madnesse of missing rather then not pretend; and rather wear out, then rust.<sup>85</sup>

However, in the context of Donne's letters since March 1608, this passage would seem also, perhaps mainly, to have been directed (despite Donne's seeming to refer only to himself) also to Goodere's situation as a courtier, implying that Goodere ought not to continue neglecting his fortune, in isolation at Polesworth.

Reviewing these letters of Donne's to Goodere and others up to the end of 1608, it seems clear that Goodere's active material service on behalf of Lady Bedford had decreased, if not been suspended or terminated; this fact, probably along with other causes, may have led to his absence from London and the court between late February and mid-November 1608. Nonetheless, he was obliged to begin his sixth quarter of privy chamber service on 20 November, which he evidently did at some point, since he is noted on 13 February 1609, in a letter from Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, to be residing in Salisbury Court (where his London quarters at the Bartletts' house were located).<sup>86</sup> No evidence can so far be cited of any contact between Goodere and the Countess of Bedford during these months.

After November 1608, no letter from Donne to Goodere is extant during a six-month interval, during which Goodere was serving in the privy chamber (until February 1609), so that the two would frequently and regularly be in the same neighborhood at their respective London chambers during the months after Goodere's return from Polesworth. Following completion of his privy chamber service, Goodere may have remained in London. He was likely there on a Thursday, either 15 or 22 June 1609, when Donne wrote to him a letter from Mitcham, implying that they had been together, probably in London, within the last week; and that they would probably soon meet there again. Donne concluded

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<sup>85</sup> Donne to Goodere, 15 November 1608 (*Letters*, pp. 145–146).

<sup>86</sup> Carleton to Chamberlain, 13 February 1609 (TNA, SP14/43/73).

this letter with a brief postscript—“*Never leave the remembrance of my poor service unmentioned when you see the good Lady.*” This postscript suggests a renewal of Goodere’s role as go-between for Donne, although it contains nothing to help us clearly identify “the good Lady.”<sup>87</sup> Goodere may again have been attending on Lady Bedford; on the other hand, as will be evident below, he must by this time (also or instead) have begun to attend on Elizabeth (née Stanley) Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, who was also in London and at court during the winter and spring of 1609.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, it would seem unlikely that Donne (having developed during 1608 a relationship with Lady Bedford that included visits to her suppers, exchange of verses, and considerable familiarity) would speak to Goodere in this way of having his “poor service” recalled to the memory of the countess. Instead, Lady Huntingdon may have been “the good Lady” Donne mentions; she was married to Henry Hastings, fifth Earl of Huntingdon, a cousin of Lucy Russell.

In any case, another letter from Mitcham to Goodere in London, probably written while Donne was working on *Pseudo-Martyr* before the beginning of October 1609, specifically mentions to Goodere Donne’s understanding that “at about this time you purposed a journey to fetch, or meet the Lad. *Huntington*,” going on to moot whether Goodere may “justly doubt any long absence.”<sup>89</sup> These words may call to mind Goodere’s earlier, lengthy absence or absences from London, and may imply that he had already begun to attend mainly on the Countess of Huntingdon, even traveling north of Polesworth to her estate at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire. Donne’s speaking of Goodere’s mission to “fetch” the countess to London certainly implies an already established level of trust between them and may also acknowledge that his attendance on her has become routine.

Some additional light on the matter may be shed by a letter Donne had written from Mitcham to George Garrard with the court on progress, during the late summer of 1609. This letter, thought to have been Donne’s earliest extant letter to Garrard, acknowledges receipt of

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<sup>87</sup> Donne to Goodere, 15 or 22 June 1609 (*Letters*, p. 164).

<sup>88</sup> Huntington Library, Hastings MS, “Accounts: Disbursements since October 1608,” fol. 5r; this reference kindly supplied by Mary Robertson in an email exchange on 26 January 2011.

<sup>89</sup> Donne to Goodere, October 1609 (*Letters*, pp. 225–226).



Garrard's suggestion that he write an elegy on the death of Cecilia Bulstrode, lady-in-waiting for the Countess of Bedford, on 4 August:

I have done nothing of that kinde as your Letter intimates, in the memory of that good Gentlewoman; if I had, I should not finde any better use of it, then to put it into your hands. You teach me what I owe her memory; and if I pay that debt so, you have a part and interest in it, by doing me the honour of remembring it: and therefore it must come quickly to you.<sup>90</sup>

Plainly Garrard, not Goodere, was to be Donne's go-between with Lady Bedford on this occasion.

Moreover there are grounds to think that Garrard had for some time been occupying a place more central in Donne's Bedford-related affairs than Goodere's. There is a Donne letter, hitherto thought to be addressed to Goodere but headed only "*A. V. Merced.*" (Spanish for "To your honor") in the 1651 Letters, that mentions "M<sup>rs</sup> Herbert" (Magdalen Herbert surrendered that title on her remarriage on 3 March 1609) and other topical references that date the letter in early 1609. Its primary business may have been to convey to Garrard, who was perhaps at Dorney, the Garrard's home in Buckinghamshire, among several letters, one from Jane Meautys, a lady-in-waiting for Lady Bedford. Donne's forwarding this letter from Jane Meautys may be glossed by a remark by John Chamberlain in a letter to Dudley Carleton:

Deering the Lord Treasurers gentleman usher fell mad for the love of Mistris Mewtas that waites on the Lady of Bedford, and hath bestowed herself, they say, on younge Garret your Ladies kinsman.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Donne to Garrard, late summer 1609 (*Letters*, pp. 38–39).

<sup>91</sup>Chamberlain to Carleton, 21 February 1609 (*The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman E. McClure, 2 vols. [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939], 1:285). Carleton was married to George Garrard's cousin Anne. Chamberlain's information that Jane Meautys loved Garrard may be true, but in the spring of 1609 she would marry someone else (Joanna Moody, "Bacon, Jane, Lady Bacon [*née* Jane Meautys; *other married name* Jane Cornwallis, Lady Cornwallis] [1580/81–1659]," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).

Chamberlain's remark might be explain Donne's words about the packet he forwarded with the letter to "*A. V. Merced*." It may have contained a sealed letter that Donne had received as an enclosure in a letter from Jane Meautys, which she had asked Donne to forward:

M<sup>rs</sup> Meau[tys] intreated me by her Letter to hasten hers; as I think, for by my troth I cannot read it. My Lady was dispatching in so much haste for *Twicknam*, as she gave no word to a Letter which I sent with yours. . . .<sup>92</sup>

Donne may have addressed his cover letter to Garrard with the same address Meautys used for the enclosure. In any case, if the letter's heading in the 1651 edition of *Letters* is not an editorial fabrication, then this coy "To your honor" in Spanish reinforces the sense of Donne's being now an agent in very private transactions in and out of Russell House. Garrard, even apart from his reported relationship with Jane Meautys, was by early 1609 already more significantly involved with Lady Bedford and her circle than Goodere seems to have been.

Goodere was instead increasingly more concerned with matters related to Lady Huntingdon, as will be seen again in letters of 1610. But in addition, before mid-August 1609, he once again sought Salisbury's favor having been appointed to serve on an errand of state with the ambassador to the Hague, Sir Ralph Winwood. Winwood in the Netherlands had negotiated what would be a twelve-year truce between the Dutch and the Spanish, guaranteed by the English and the French;<sup>93</sup> after this success he had embarked for England by mid-June 1609, hoping for preferment at home. Disappointed, he had been sent back to the Netherlands in August, evidently accompanied by Goodere. They stayed briefly in Delft from 19 August, having landed on that day at the Brill. Winwood visited the Hague on 23 August, and presumably Goodere accompanied him until at least 24 August. On that day Goodere tried to return to England but was impeded by bad weather. Winwood wrote in a letter from the Hague to Salisbury on 9 September: "By my letters of the 24th of the last which S<sup>r</sup> Henry Goodere did

<sup>92</sup>Donne to Garrard, Jan-Feb 1609 (*Letters*, pp. 137-139).

<sup>93</sup>M. Greengrass, "Winwood, Sir Ralph (1562/3-1617)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

undertake with speed to deliver, and so would have done if Wind & Weather would have permitted, I advertised of my arrival in these parts . . . .”<sup>94</sup> It is not clear when or how Goodere had arrived back in London, or whether his work was much appreciated by Salisbury. But it does appear that early in 1610 Goodere renewed his failed quest for revenue at Salisbury’s hands.

During the first seven years of the reign of James I, Goodere’s career at court seems to have been a series of unmitigated defeats, his favor with Salisbury and even with the Countess of Bedford having remained of (or dwindled to) small regard. Nevertheless, from the start of 1610 he persevered in efforts to gain the sorts of emoluments evidently on offer to others. In another pair of letters to Salisbury, sent in February and March, we glimpse yet further failed attempts by Goodere to do what his colleagues in the privy chamber and in the royal bedchamber routinely did: to obtain the escheats or forfeitures of the properties of accused felons likely to be convicted. The first of these letters registers Goodere’s understanding that again his suit has been warranted with the king’s conditional acceptance; further, he recounts the recent history of his disastrous financial position:

that w<sup>th</sup> in two yeares I have had two Escheats graunted mee, out of w<sup>ch</sup> I reaped no fruite but paynes and chardge, and that before them I had only the like successe in a graunt of some recusants, and that my chargeable service to his Ma<sup>ty</sup> (being by that meanes 5000<sup>l</sup> worse then I was) hath brought my poore estate so low as almost nothing can adde to my misery now, but to bee neglected by yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>: charitable favour.<sup>95</sup>

This was an old story to Salisbury, heard many times from many places; nor was it likely to lead him towards befriending a suitor.

But at least he did not again simply ignore Goodere. About a month later, Goodere wrote to him another letter, cheered by having had his suit granted and particularly, in this matter, by the “favour & furtherance your Lo<sup>pp</sup>: pleased to promise mee.” Slightly diluting this favor was the incorporation in the grant of a Scot, Mr. John Gibbe, another groom of his Majesty’s bedchamber. But Goodere seems unconcerned about this

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<sup>94</sup>Winwood, 3:63.

<sup>95</sup>Goodere to Salisbury, February 1610 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 195/99).

development, compared to what he sees as a greater obstacle: that the three men accused of having slain a man at Stepney have powerful friends as well as grounds to acquit themselves of murder. What is worse, the case has been removed from the jurisdiction of the ordinary criminal courts and is to be tried instead by one of the powerful friends of the accused, “before my Lo: Admirall at y<sup>e</sup> Verge,” i.e., in the Court of the Verge, as an internal procedure of the royal court, subject to the jurisdiction of the king’s Lord High Steward, Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham. Goodere confides to Salisbury that he has no wish to antagonize the increasingly mighty Howards: “I love not to follow a cause of this nature w<sup>th</sup> such eagernes as might cause those Lordes to conceive mee to bee their opposite.” Nor would he do anything that might “make the world to conceive my estate to bee desperate (w<sup>ch</sup> to confesse a truth to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>: (from whose only favour I can hope of some repayre) is little better).” Supine before misfortune and Salisbury, Goodere pleads for advice whether at this juncture he should “bee ready to mitigate, or prosecute, or altogether to quitte the busines; as to yo<sup>r</sup> Honor shall seeme fittest.”<sup>96</sup> The sequel shows that Salisbury counselled Goodere to drop the matter, but here the plot thickened.

Somehow, in pre-trial maneuvering, Goodere seems to have let slip that he had had the Lord Treasurer’s support in his suit for the escheat. To be linked with Goodere in a cause opposed by the Howards drew forth Salisbury’s wrath, a development with which Goodere could not cope unaided. On this occasion he frantically sought Donne’s assistance, requesting in a letter hastily sent to Mitcham on a Thursday evening that Donne quickly draft a clutch of letters to be copied and dispatched by Goodere on the following day, including some letters to be sent from persons who would support Goodere or might have some influence in his business. Goodere’s urgent letter to Donne is not extant, but we have both Donne’s cover-letter in response and the one letter he did draft and enclose, designed to be copied or revised, signed, and sent by Goodere to Salisbury, the only such commissioned draft by Donne published amongst *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* (1651), perhaps the only one of Donne’s letters ever written to Robert Cecil.<sup>97</sup> We have also the revised version of Donne’s draft letter to Salisbury that Goodere actually

<sup>96</sup>Goodere to Salisbury, 15 March 1610 (TNA, SP14/53/18).

<sup>97</sup>Goodere (i.e., Donne) to Salisbury, April 1610 (*Letters*, pp. 267–269).

sent, with its couple of dozen changes, mainly omissions simplifying Donne's diction.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the most important sentence in Donne's draft—

That your lordships name was at all used therein, or that any words of mine occasioned such an errour in my servant, I am so sorry as nothing but a conscience of a true guiltinesse of having performed an injury to your Lordship (which can never fall upon me) could affect me more

—was revised by Goodere in his actual letter to Salisbury so as to eliminate blame of an intermediary:

That your Lo<sup>pps</sup>: name was at all vsed therein, or that any words of myne occasioned that error in others I am so sorry as nothing but a conscience of guiltines of having purposed an injury to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>: (w<sup>ch</sup> can never fall vpon mee) could affect mee more.

Goodere's revision seems more frank and less self-exculpatory, but he must have had reason to make these changes.

Donne's cover letter expresses some amused irritation at the flurry of activity called for by Goodere. He politely refuses to write two of the letters requested, on the ground that letters on the subject at hand from these intended supporters would seem incongruous and far-fetched to their intended audience. From whom the other requested letters were to be sent is not clear, but Donne mentions that one of the persons Goodere intended was the "good Countesse," possibly Lady Bedford, who (Goodere vainly supposed) might have influence and to whom Donne had already spoken about news of Salisbury's irritation with Goodere; possibly Goodere had also or instead named Lady Huntingdon as someone from whom a letter of support might be drafted and sent. Donne declined to write such a letter because, he cautioned, the "good Countesse" was "not a proper Mediatrix to those persons, but I counsail in the dark."

Noting that he had come to London early Friday morning on the instruction of Goodere's messenger the night before, Donne seems to

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<sup>98</sup>Goodere to Salisbury, April 1610 (Hatfield, Salisbury MS 195/101).

have expected to see Goodere at his London lodgings; however, Goodere was not there. Donne evidently dashed off the cover letter at Goodere's vacant chambers, before returning home:

I came this morning to say thus much, and because the Porter which came to *Micham* summoned me for this hour to *London*: from whence I am this minute returning to end a little course of Physick.

*Yours very truly*

J. Donne.

Friday 8 in the morning.<sup>99</sup>

Nothing more succinctly than this letter with enclosure expresses the difference in courtly expertise between Donne and Goodere, who revised Donne's draft and sent it to Salisbury, but without notable success. Goodere's career at court must have seemed at an end.

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*North Carolina State University* (Hester)

*Colgate University* (Maurer)

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<sup>99</sup>Donne to Goodere, April 1610 (*Letters*, pp. 192–194).