# *Introduction*

> *To a perfect common wealth these two things be required, the pen and the swoorde, that is, councell and good letters in deliberating of affaires, and the sworde in the execution of the same.*[1]

There was a deep-seated tension present in early modern English political thought: the 'paradox of counsel'.[2] On the one hand, it was a long-standing requirement that monarchs receive counsel in order to legitimise their rule. On the other, this condition had the potential to undermine their authority if the monarch was required to act on the counsel given. In other words, if counsel is obligatory, it impinges upon sovereignty. If it is not, it then becomes irrelevant and futile. The working out of this essential problem defines much of the political thinking produced during the English 'monarchy of counsel', roughly from the end of the Wars of the Roses to the end of the English Civil War.[3] It is the purpose of this book to document attempts to grapple with this fundamental problem: the necessarily challenging relationship between counsel and command.

In working out this problem, political thinkers shifted the grounds of discussion from counsel to command and generated the modern political discourse that we associate with English thought from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. Due to developments in the discourse of counsel through traditional humanist, Machiavellian and reason of state iterations, as well as circumstantial factors, such as the age, gender and personalities of succeeding monarchs, the debate over counsel and command came to a head in the context of the English Civil War. There were two available options. First that counsel was obligatory, and especially ought to directly

[1] Claude Paradin, *The Heroicall Deuises* (London, 1591), 231.
[2] Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 39–40.
[3] J. G. A. Pocock, 'A Discourse of Sovereignty: Observations on the Work in Progress', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 395–6.

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guide the monarch in cases of emergency or incapacity (which could include 'seducement' by privately interested counsellors), in which case the best, most transparent and state-interested source of such counsel was parliament. In such a view, parliament becomes essentially sovereign: counsel mutates into command. Or, second, counsel was not obligatory, and must be shown to be absolutely subject to the monarch. This reduces counsel to its most basic and ineffectual functions. In either of these cases, counsel disappears into command, either becoming it or being subjugated to it, and sovereignty emerges as the primary concept of political thinking.

It is probably because of this conceptual disappearing act that counsel, as a political idea, has received less attention in the scholarship than sovereignty, though the significance of the counsellor in Renaissance thought has long been acknowledged. Arthur Ferguson's *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* attempts to document the way in which 'citizens of Tudor England' connected their communication of grievances to the defense of the 'commonwealth of the realm'.[4] J. G. A. Pocock's formative *Machiavellian Moment* also recognises the way in which English humanism 'developed its civic awareness by projecting the image of the humanist as counselor to his prince', noting the way in which this image was in tension with the ruler's *imperium*.[5] These analyses were given a greater sense of background and significance in Quentin Skinner's *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, in which he connects this figure of the 'citizen-counselor' to the study of rhetoric and the re-emergence of republican thought.[6]

This has developed, more recently, into a republican account of the role of counsel, at odds with the absolutist account of sovereignty associated with Hobbes. As Eric Nelson puts it, 'The Renaissance occupies a paradoxical place in the history of political thought. It is famous for having nurtured two diametrically opposed, although similarly extreme theoretical positions: republicanism and absolutism.'[7] Such tension erupts in the English Civil War, an event which is seen to toll the death knell for the discourse of counsel.[8]

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[4] Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965).

[5] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2009), 338–40.

[6] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume I: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 113–38, 219–42.

[7] Eric Nelson, 'The Problem of the Prince', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 319.

[8] Pocock, 'Discourse of Sovereignty', 395; John Guy, 'The Rhetoric of Counsel in Early Modern England', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 292–310.

While previous studies have acknowledged the conflict between coun-
sel and command, they have not highlighted the way in which seven-
teenth-century arguments about sovereignty were rooted in longstanding
claims about counsel. In political history, as John Watts has suggested,
'much more attention has been given to the growth of central govern-
ment, the functioning of clientage networks, the changing structures of
political society and the securing of compliance' than to counsel.[9] This
has been countered by the generation of what John Guy has called the
'new political history' of Tudor England. This 'new political history'
attempts to draw connections between the work of historians such as
A. F. Pollard and John Neal on the governmental, bureaucratic and
administrative aspects of Tudor politics, and that of historians such as
Quentin Skinner, who study political ideas.[10] This changed focus, in the
words of Stephen Alford,

> emphasises the importance of studying the interaction between people,
> institutions, and ideas; of combining archival research with a sensitivity to
> literary and iconographical sources; of recognizing political language, and in
> particular the vocabulary of counsel; of understanding the impact of classical
> writing on sixteenth-century notions of duty and service, and the effect this
> eventually had on concepts of the state; and on the wider reach of the
> polity.[11]

A number of studies in recent decades, emerging out of such an approach,
have taken the discourse of counsel as central. John Guy was the first to
attempt a categorisation of two 'vocabularies' of the 'rhetoric of counsel':
'feudal-baronial' and 'humanist-classical'.[12] Both A. N. McLaren and
Jacqueline Rose have suggested additions to Guy's vocabularies, highlight-
ing 'godly' or 'religious' counsel.[13] The edited volume produced by Rose,
*The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland*, traces the role of counsel
from the late thirteenth to early seventeenth centuries in England and
Scotland, and pushes scholarship forward, especially on the role of medie-
val political thought and practice, Elizabeth's relationship with counsel and

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[9] John Watts, 'Counsel and the King's Council in England, c.1340-c.1540', in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, ed. Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63.

[10] John Guy, *Tudor Monarchy* (London: Hodder Education Publishers, 1997), 1–8; Stephen Alford, 'Politics and Political History in the Tudor Century', *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 2 (1999): 535–48.

[11] Alford, 'Politics and Political History', 535.

[12] Guy, 'The Rhetoric of Counsel', 292–310. I will not be writing according to these two 'languages', though my analysis falls primarily into Guy's 'humanist-classical' vocabulary.

[13] A. N. McLaren, 'Delineating the Elizabethan Body Politic: Knox, Aylmer and the Definition of Counsel 1558-88', *History of Political Thought* 17, no. 2 (1996): 225; Jacqueline Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (2011): 47–71.

the continuing importance of counsel to seventeenth-century English thought.[14]

Despite such interest, there remains no comprehensive full-length study of early modern political counsel in England, which traces the working out of the paradox of counsel in the period Pocock identifies. This book attempts to provide such an account, by outlining the wider intellectual context in which these debates took place. In so doing, this study makes three contributions to the study of counsel in particular and early modern English intellectual history in general. First, as has been stated above, it provides an account of the move from the monarchy of counsel to modern notions of sovereignty, making the argument that the paradoxes inherent in the discourse of counsel prompt this transition. Second, it contributes to an understanding of the boundaries of this change, in particular the division between public and private that is essential to modern ideas of politics. Not only does this relate to the rejection of private counsellors in favour of public conciliar institutions, based on notions of the corruption of private interest, but also growing ideas regarding political amoralism, especially in the reason of state tradition. As the understanding of the figure of the counsellor and his essential skills develops, so does the generation of a set of ideas about what constitutes political knowledge and, indeed, 'the political'. Thus, third, this study contributes a new perspective on the development of modern 'political science', by tracing the moves from moral philosophising to historical knowledge to the observation of contemporary affairs in the writings about the counsellor.

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[14] Jacqueline Rose, ed., *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, Proceedings of the British Academy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Several books have been written on the role of counsel in medieval literature – both political and personal; see Rosemarie Deist, *Gender and Power: Counsellors and Their Masters in Antiquity and Medieval Courtly Romance* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003); Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*. The relationship between counsel and the monarch in the Elizabethan context has also been the subject of a number of treatments, see A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Natalie Mears, 'Counsel, Public Debate, and Queenship: John Stubbs's "The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf", 1579', *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001): 629–50; Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I and Counsel', in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, ed. Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 151–61; Mary Thomas Crane, '"Video et Taceo": Elizabeth I and the Rhetoric of Counsel', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 28, no. 1 (1988): 1–15; Dale Hoak, 'A Tudor Deborah?: The Coronation of Elizabeth I, Parliament, and the Problem of Female Rule', in *John Foxe and His World*, ed. Christopher Highley and John N. King (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 73–89. Finally, the role of counsel in the breakdown of the relationship between monarch and parliament has also been touched on; for instance, David Colclough highlighted the role of the discourse of counsel in the development of parliamentary arguments regarding free speech in England, and particularly associating it with the concept of *parrhesia*; David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

This study is formed at the intersection of the history of political thought and political history, and takes as fundamental, as others such as Greg Walker have done, that texts regarding counsel and the counsellor were inherently political.[15] In the words of David Colclough, 'political discourse is not a prelude to or commentary on political action: it is political action'.[16] Along with Peter Lake, there is an attempt in this book to expand the category of 'political thought' to include 'attempts to "think about politics"', which includes much of the work on political counsel.[17] An intellectual or political history that concerns itself exclusively with ideas such as sovereignty or institutional bodies such as parliament misses this extra-institutional, extra-state form of political intervention, perhaps to the detriment of the perceived legitimacy of such modes of action. It is hoped that this historical study prompts new ways of considering our own political circumstances and ideas, reflecting on the role of political discourse and means of communicating public opinion.

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The scope of this book is the 'monarchy of counsel', from the turn of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth. There is, however, a relevant longer perspective to consider. The tension between counsel and command in Western political thought goes back as far as its earliest writings. Malcolm Schofield has drawn attention to the ways in which the *Iliad* is shot through with references to the importance of *euboulia* – usually translated as 'good counsel' – and the way in which it forms a necessary balance with military power.[18] Polydamas and Hector are born on the same night, but whereas Hector was superior 'with the spear', Polydamas is 'far superior in words'.[19] This is a divine balance set between martial and advisory ability, for 'God gives one man feats of war, but in the heart of another farseeing Zeus places a good understanding, and

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[15] Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 143.

[16] Colclough, *Freedom of Speech*, 124–5.

[17] Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?: Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.

[18] Malcolm Schofield, *Saving the City: Philosopher-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms* (London: Routledge, 1999), 11; Paul Woodruff, 'Euboulia as the Skill Protagoras Taught', in *Protagoras of Abdera: The Man, His Measure*, ed. J.M. van Ophuijsen, M van Raalte and P. Stork (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 182–8; Jeannine Quillet, 'Community, Counsel and Representation', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 545.

[19] Homer, *Iliad*, 18.251–2, quoted in Schofield, *Saving the City*, 15; see also the discussion of Nestor as counsellor-figure in Hanna M. Roisman, 'Nestor the Good Counsellor', *The Classical Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2005): 17–38.

from him many men get advantage and he saves many'.[20] This balance between sword and word provides the foundation for the mutually supportive relationship between counsel and command.

But they are also in conflict. In the medieval period, Marsilius of Padua builds on a theological distinction between *praeceptum* and *concilium* to mark out a clear distinction between religious and temporal authority.[21] Priests, Marsilius sets out, are forbidden from involvement in civil activities.[22] Their only role is (quoting from II Timothy 4.2) 'exhortation, submission, censure and reproof' for '[the priest] can never engage in compulsion'.[23] Marsilius reinforces this lesson with reference to II Corinthians 8:8–10: 'I do not speak like a commander [*non quasi imperans dico*] ... but I give counsel [*consilium*] in this matter'.[24] This sort of 'authority' is specifically not coercive but 'instructional or managerial', comparable to the role of the physician, who, despite being learned for the purpose of preserving health nevertheless 'cannot compel anyone to observe a suitable diet, nor avoid a harmful one, by imposing some punishment on the persons or property of patients', a comparison drawn from Aristotle.[25] Counsel cannot involve punishment, or else it mutates into law, and thus command.[26] Even when it is recommended that a monarch take counsel of priests or experts, he is emphatically not subject to them, and this does not constitute any diminution of his use of the sword of sovereignty.[27] To say, that 'the temporal sword must be drawn "by the will

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[20]  Homer, *Iliad*, 13.730–4, quoted in Schofield, *Saving the City*, 16.

[21]  See Quillet, 'Community, Counsel and Representation', 546.

[22]  Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Minor and De Translatione Imperii*, ed. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6.

[23]  Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Minor*, 6.      [24]  Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Minor*, 9.

[25]  Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Minor*, 10, 51; Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944), 6.13.1145a6-9.

[26]  On counsellors themselves, Marsilius associates them with prudence, and sees their role as guiding a ruler on 'what is expedient for the polity'; Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of Peace: The Defensor Pacis*, ed. Alan Gewirth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 77. Nevertheless, on the question of the relative importance of the moral quality of each, Marsilius is clear: the moral character of the ruler is of prime importance, that of counsellors secondary. Drawing once again on Aristotle, he also notes the value of a multitude of voices gathered in a council, for 'each one listening to the others, their minds are reciprocally stimulated to the consideration of truth at which not one of them would arrive if he existed apart or separately from the others', Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, 42. As Cary J. Nederman, *Community and Consent: The Secular Political Theory of Marsiglio of Padua's Defensor Pacis* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 111 points out, for Marsilius, an elected monarchy would also solve the problem of evil counsellors.

[27]  Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, 400. Notably, the prince's authority is limited by the law and legislator, see Serena Ferente, 'Popolo and Law: Late Medieval Sovereignty in Marsilius and the Jurists', in *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective*, ed. Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 112–13. It is this authority, and not counsel, which ensures that the prince does not enslave his subjects.

of the priest and at the command of the emperor"' means that it ought to be drawn by the counsel of the priest, which is distinct from 'command or coercive authority'.[28] If this were confused, for instance in the case of excommunication, 'on the one hand, all the civil kings of the leading men and people would be useless; on the other hand, priests could make individuals and communities subject to them temporally and civilly.'[29] As he sets out in *Defensor Pacis*, the polity would be threatened by a 'multiplicity of governments'.[30] The separation of counsel and command is thus essential to an early understanding of sovereignty.

Marsilius' view of this necessary distinction is in contrast to many of the authors in the medieval *speculum principis* genre, who set out a powerful, even governing, role for counsel. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* sets out clearly the importance of counsel 'from men of letters' to the king, especially if he is illiterate.[31] For John of Salisbury, the king occupies the place of the head, and 'is regulated solely by the judgement of his own mind'.[32] That being said, counsel and admonishment are essential to a prince who has gone astray, and should be embraced before any consideration of resistance.[33] Others, such as Christine de Pisan, go further, suggesting that 'the good prince shall be governed by the wise', just as 'the ancients governed themselves by philosophy'.[34] Pisan advances a vision of wise counsel as the true authority governing a successful (virtuous) state, placing the counsellor at the head of the political community. That is not to say that it is not a help if the king is also wise and learned, but it is more important to place one's hope for the good of the realm in the counsellors of a prince, rather than the prince's own wisdom.[35] Perhaps no other text was clearer or more influential on this point than the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*.[36] Underscoring the idea that many minds produce more prudent governance, the figure of Aristotle reminds Alexander that 'prudent counsayll make thy chefe pryncesse' for he 'arte but one

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[28] Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, 401.    [29] Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Minor*, 33.

[30] Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, 163. Nederman, *Community and Consent*, 128 here draws a comparison with Hobbes.

[31] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xv, 44.

[32] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 69.    [33] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 70.

[34] Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the Body Politic*, ed. Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43.

[35] For Pisan, such advisers are not equated with the nobles, who 'responsible for guarding the republic' and who ought to 'love the wise and to govern by their advice', rather than being such wise advisers themselves; Pisan, *The Book of the Body Politic*, 58, 59.

[36] See Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 24–5.

man'.[37] Notably, the insistence on good counsel to augment the limitations of the singular ruler means that counsel is given a place of near equality with the authority of the king.[38] As Judith Ferster makes clear, the *Secretum* is based on the fundamental assumption that, in order to cultivate virtue, the king must be ruled and – no matter how frustrating – must accept that rule: 'Alexander conquered the world because he was conquered by Aristotle.'[39] Good counsel is not only necessary to good command, but must have the force of command if the end is good rulership. To interpret good counsel as anything other than a dictate for virtuous action is to risk giving into vice. After all, the Lydgate translation, produced in 1511 for the young Henry VIII, takes as its title the paradoxical 'pun': *The Gouernaunce of Kynges and Prynces*.[40]

In England, this discourse became especially important with the over-throw of Richard II in 1399, which prompted reflection on the proper role of counsel. Critics of Richard were clear that his perceived failure to take counsel from the correct sources ought not to be repeated by his successor, Henry IV.[41] John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, originally written in the 1380s and dedicated to Richard II, but revised and re-dedicated to Henry IV upon Richard's overthrow, reiterates the centrality of counsel to good governance.[42] Works such as Gower's, the anonymous *Mum and the Sothsegger* and Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes* all seek to more fully define the counsellor-figure, moving from an otherworldly distant philosopher, to a man of the court. Importantly, this counsellor constrains the monarch; as Hoccleve writes, 'Counceil may wele be likenede to a bridelle, Which that an hors kepethe up from fallyng.'[43] These debates and tensions take centre-stage in the Tudor and early Stuart period as we shall see.

[37] John Lydgate, *Gouernaunce of Kynges and Prynces* (London, 1511), sig. B, ii\[v]; F, iv\[r].
[38] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 48–9.       [39] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 44, 45, 49.
[40] See DeWitt T. Starnes, 'Introduction', in *The Gouernaunce of Kynges and Prynces, the Pynson Edition of 1511; a Translation in Verse* (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1957), xii.
[41] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, 69; See Janet Coleman, 'A Culture of Political Counsel: The Case of Fourteenth-Century England's "Virtuous" Monarchy vs Royal Absolutism and Seventeenth-Century Reinterpretations', in *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess (London: Routledge, 2012), 19–29. As Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 2–3 points out, the medieval period saw weaknesses in kingship that led to the power of the council, and thus would have prompted reflections on the relationships between kings and councillors.
[42] John Gower, *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), VII.4150–56; See Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 108–36.
[43] Thomas Hoccleve, *Thomas Hoccleve: The Regiment of Princes*, ed. C. Blyth (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), ln. 4929–30; quoted in Lester Kruger Born, 'The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Ideals', *Speculum* 3, no. 4 (1928): 501.

This book also suggests that the 'discourse of counsel' diminishes significantly in importance past the middle of the seventeenth century. Rose has made persuasive arguments for the extension of the study of counsel beyond the usual cut off of the English Civil War or Wars of the Three Kingdoms,[44] though others such as Linda Levy Peck have suggested this moment 'put an end to the political culture of court and counsel'.[45] Certainly counsel remained a part of political discourse up until the Act of Union (if not beyond), but in a much more limited – and as Rose herself notes – 'liminal' fashion. Counsel was an outdated vocabulary which sat uneasily with new political languages and realities. As she suggests, 'parliamentary authority was also the source of the decline of both councils and counsel' and counsel did not fit well with the 'driving force of interest': 'Interest might lobby; it did not have to (pretend to) counsel.'[46] In other words, the continued use of vocabularies of counsel in the decades following 1651 were vestiges of what had come before, a period in which counsel was a central and dynamic element of political thinking.

One of the more tentative theories of this book is that there is something unique about the English articulation of the discourse of counsel: that the English were more concerned about the problems and paradoxes of counsel than their continental counterparts. Consistently in the analysis of what follows we see that when non-English texts – classical or continental – are translated into English, greater emphasis is put on counsel and the counsellor. This attention to counsel is most likely due to the coming together of a combination of factors, including the role of counsel in justifying the overthrow of Richard II, the impression that England was, as John Fortescue famously put it, a 'dominium politicum et regale', the role of parliament in the Royal Supremacy, the succession of 'weak' monarchs (detailed in Chapter 5) and the fact that, according to the Royal Supremacy, the head (or governor) of the Church of England was a member of the laity, thus requiring counsel from the more godly. The comparative work required, however, to isolate the distinctive variables in the English case is not possible within the scope of this book.

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[44] Jacqueline Rose, 'Sir Edward Hyde and the Problem of Counsel in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Royalist Thought', in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, ed. Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 249–69; Jacqueline Rose, 'Councils, Counsel and the Seventeenth-Century Composite State', in *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286–1707*, ed. Jacqueline Rose (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 271–94.

[45] Linda Levy Peck, 'Kingship, Counsel and Law in Early Stuart Britain', in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. Gordon J. Schochet, J. G. A. Pocock and Lois Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115.

[46] Rose, 'Councils, Counsel and the Seventeenth-Century Composite State', 293.

This study is limited to English texts – both texts published in England and texts written in or translated into the English language – and I am attentive to the particular choices made by English translators of classical or continental texts. It is also impossible to consider English thought in this period as being formed in isolation from continental ideas. For this reason, many of the chapters of this book deal exclusively or almost exclusively with texts written and published outside of England by non-English authors (such as those of Erasmus, Castiglione, Machiavelli, Botero, Bodin and others), some of which were only later translated into English.

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The counsellor is central to Renaissance humanists in England as in Europe, as the figure who mitigates the tyranny of hereditary monarchy and introduces republican themes of active citizenship into non-republican political contexts. This view is outlined in Chapter 1, by considering the work of three leading humanists who dealt with issues of counsel-giving: Erasmus, Thomas More and Baldassare Castiglione. In particular, these writers dealt with the issue of the efficacy of counsel, the 'problem of counsel', often thinking through it in terms provided by Seneca's letters. Regardless of their views on this question, it was clear for each of these writers that counsel should have profound influence over the ruler, one that often placed the humanist counsellor in a position of authority over his prince.

In the context of Henry VIII's Break with Rome and his perceived unwillingness to listen to the 'right' counsel, English humanist writers interrogated even more deeply the questions raised by Erasmus, More and Castiglione. Chapter 2 examines, in particular, the work of Thomas Starkey and Thomas Elyot, and the way in which they focus especially on the theme of 'right-timing' in counsel. Both suggest that their prede-cessors had got it wrong; timeliness does not mean waiting for the ideal moment, but seizing any available moment, even if this means speaking one's censorious counsel publicly. Both Starkey and Elyot also go further in enforcing the leadership of the counsellor over the prince; commonwealth, prince and counsellor are all unfree if good counsel does not rule.

This 'orthodox humanist' model of counsel – in which the counsellor leads or guides the prince to virtue – is challenged by the rise of a reversed vision of the relationship between counsellor and ruler, set out in the work of Machiavelli and explored through the course of Part II. In *The Prince* Machiavelli presents an inversion of the model treated in Part I by placing the counsellor very clearly under the control of the monarch.

As set out in Chapter 3, the monarch's prudence guides his counsellors, not the other way around, thanks in large part to Machiavelli's more pessimistic account of counsellors' self-interest. Counsellors, in this tradition, are required to guide the prince in navigating the demands of *kairos* (the opportune moment) and *paradiastole* (rhetorical description) using and dismissing virtue as circumstances dictate. Scholars have often overlooked the importance of *kairos* to Machiavelli's and Machiavellian thought, but it becomes clear that it forms the foundation of the moral flexibility for which Machiavelli becomes famous.

Essential, as well, to the Machiavellian tradition is the redefinition of prudence, explored in Chapter 4, in the works of writers such as Innocent Gentillet and Justus Lipsius. Rather than being a virtue, prudence becomes the means by which opportunities and the necessity of deception are known. Even those writing against Machiavellianism accept some of its basic tenets, including this redefined notion of prudence, which becomes associated with the political, as opposed to private, sphere. In the work of the essayists, such as Michel de Montaigne and William Cornwallis, this division between public and private is rearticulated according to the individuals involved; private individuals must obey the principles of traditional morality, but those in the public sphere must occasionally deviate from these norms, even at the peril of their souls. This is written into an understanding of counsel, situated within this morally flexible public political arena.

These fundamental conceptual shifts coincide with other changes in the political discourse brought about by the political realities of 'weakened' monarchs (a minor, Edward VI, and two women, Mary I and Elizabeth I). Chapter 5 notes the implications of Machiavellianism in a changed political context, in which the monarch is not considered strong or prudent enough to be a powerful guiding force to self-interested counsellors. According to the humanist model, such monarchical insufficiencies necessitate the rule of wise counsellors. Contrastingly, the Machiavellian approach to counsel raises concerns regarding the ways in which self-interested counsellors may seek to control these monarchs for their own ends. This tension is often resolved by the requirement that counsel comes not from private counsellors, but more trustworthy sources, such as histories (the 'counsel of the dead') or, increasingly, from parliament.

Part III treats the language of reason of state and its implications for early Stuart politics. Chapter 6 introduces this vocabulary, largely through the work of Giovanni Botero and those who follow him. Reason of state sets out the bounds of what might be considered necessary to secure the

well-being of the state. Fundamental to the reason of state tradition is the language of 'interest' which allows for the expression of a clear dichotomy between the private interests of the counsellor and the interests of the state, now fully articulated. This leads many writers, such as Fray Juan de Santa Maria and Philippe de Béthune, to articulate an even clearer boundary between counsel and command. Distrustful of rhetoric and even history, writers in this tradition mark 'observation' of contemporary affairs as the essential content of counsel, gleaned primarily from travel writings. From an educated moral guide to the prince, seen in Part I, the counsellor becomes a straightforward transmitter of factual information.

If the tension between counsel and command is rooted in the assertion that obligatory (including rhetorically influential) counsel becomes command (i.e. infringes upon sovereignty), then the seventeenth century presents three potential answers to that problem. The first, the Stuart royalist account, is to continue, nevertheless, to try to subdue counsel. It neglects to take into account the necessary 'paradox of counsel' at its heart, and therefore fails. The second is to accept this transformation of counsel into command, and to fit it into other justifications of the legitimate sources of sovereignty. This parliamentarian account is far more successful than the royalist and accepts that counsel and therefore command are placed in the institution of parliament, resolving a century-old debate by accepting what had been seen as an unacceptable outcome: counsel becoming command. Finally, and this is the Hobbesian move, one could reject that counsel should be 'influential' in the way previously conceived, instead firmly subjugating it to sovereignty. This Hobbesian sovereignty revives a firm distinction between counsel and command by refuting the importance of many of the concepts central to the discourse, especially the role of prudence and rhetoric, thereby going far beyond the royalist attempt to simply reassert counsel's inferiority. Thus, the two most successful answers to the paradox of counsel simply accept the consequences of the problem, either allowing counsel to become command or to become essentially trivial.

Understanding sovereignty's roots in the 'monarchy of counsel' raises questions about the continued relevance of counsel to political thought and action (and indeed the blurred line between them), and possibilities for political theorising which moves beyond sovereignty. At the very least, it presents a picture of early modern political thought that allows us to see past modern preoccupations with a politics defined by sovereignty.