A courtier in exile: the life of Sir George Radcliffe within the banished Caroline Stuart Court, c.1649-1658

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This article investigates how a particular courtier set about trying to maintain and raise his status and position within an exiled court, in this case, the banished court of the Stuart monarch Charles II. It also looks at the functions he carried out in such an institution and his general importance to it. Moreover, it examines those factors that caused him to lose the positions of authority he exercised at court. The courtier in question is Sir George Radcliffe, who started out as a councillor to James Stuart, Duke of York and later James II, in exile, only to lose his position after falling foul of both York’s mother, Queen Henrietta Maria (Charles I’s widow) and York’s brother, the exiled King Charles II. Radcliffe recovered his standing with the King later during the period of exile, but it ultimately availed him nothing.

A study of Radcliffe offers the opportunity to examine the role played by a lesser courtier, specifically, how he contributed to the politics and daily life of the court, an institution that was both a semi-private household and a political organisation. Radcliffe’s life and
actions on the European mainland help us to understand how an exiled political institution can use persons, such as the subject of this article, to survive banishment. This is important because, contrary to expectation, such institutions have a surprisingly good survival record in the early-modern period. Aside from that of Charles II, some other prominent exiled courts in the early-modern period (all of which had strong Stuart connections, incidentally) included that of the Winter Queen, Elizabeth of Bohemia, and that of James II. Charles II’s court managed to survive exile and return home in 1660. While Elizabeth of Bohemia never left exile after her husband’s defeat at the battle of White Mountain in the early stages of the Thirty Years’ War, her son returned to his traditional dynastic principality, the Palatine in the Holy Roman Empire. James II and his heirs, as we know, never recovered their traditional thrones. Yet they remained a threat to the Protestant rulers of Britain and Ireland well into the mid-eighteenth century, some sixty years after their original banishment, and their fortunes never went so low as to cause them to fall into complete ignominy. Indeed, the last of the line died a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church in the early nineteenth century. Exiled courts could survive, and could even recover their position. The question is: how did they survive? By examining Radcliffe’s life in exile, I hope to provide at least a partial answer.

The background to the Royalist exile
First, it is necessary to provide some background to the Stuart exile of the mid-seventeenth century. Charles I’s reign (1625-1649) in England, Scotland, and Ireland saw considerable political upheaval, especially during the 1630s and 1640s. During the former decade, this Stuart monarch adopted a more autocratic approach to the government of his kingdoms. This style of kingship was combined with extremely unpopular religious, financial, legal and land policies, all of which combined to bring about an intensely volatile political situation in both Britain and Ireland. In 1638, Scottish Presbyterians, angered at attempts to introduce a moderate form of Anglican Protes-
tantism into Scotland, rebelled against Charles I. This was followed in 1641 by a rebellion of the Gaelic Irish in Ulster. They were angered by heavy financial demands, suspect legal practices that weakened their hold on their estates, the style of administration of the King’s Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth, and an unstable political situation in England. This political turmoil in England was the result of a growing clash between Charles I and an English Parliament which, provoked by Charles I’s moderate Anglicanism, the Scottish rebellion, and unpopular governmental policies, was seeking to reduce the King’s power. The Ulster rebellion, however, only made an already unstable state of affairs in England worse, and by the end of 1642 the supporters of the English Parliament and Charles I’s English Royalists were fighting against each other in a civil war.

The civil war in England was a drawn out affair. Historians actually talk of two civil wars in England, the first lasting from 1642 to 1646, and the second being fought out in mid-1648. These wars were interrupted by an extended period of political negotiations, infighting and intrigue, during which Charles I tried to recover the ground he had lost in the first civil war. He attempted to do this by forming a military alliance with some of those Scottish Presbyterians who had spent the previous decade fighting against him (these Scottish Presbyterians had initially rebelled against the Crown’s religious policies in 1638, and later formed a military alliance with the English Parliament in 1643). The second civil war that followed this alliance ended in victory for the English Parliament once again, and led to the renowned execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649.

Convoluted as they were in themselves, these civil wars in England were also complicated by other factors. They were not the only military contests occurring in the Stuart kingdoms during the 1640s, and these various contentions unsurprisingly managed to become entangled with each other. As a result, historians increasingly, and justifiably, treat these as an inter-related series of conflicts, referring to them as the British and Irish civil wars. We have already seen that Scottish Presbyterians had rebelled against the Crown in 1638 (the so-called “Bishops’ war”), allied with the English Parliament in
1643, and afterwards with Charles I, during the 1640s. After the outbreak of the Bishops’ war, conflict had continued in Scotland with troops from the Highlands who were loyal to the King opposing the Presbyterian rebels. The Scottish troops in this conflict, be they fighting with or against the king, eventually became drawn into the English civil war over the course of the 1640s, culminating in the aforementioned alliances of 1643 and 1648. In mid-1650, Scottish Presbyterians (or Covenanters), reacting against the regicide, formed an alliance with Charles II, promising military aid for the new king in exchange for his promise to establish Presbyterianism in all his kingdoms. Charles II travelled from continental Europe to Scotland in the summer of 1650 and was crowned king there, but, despite this, the military alliance was a failure. The English parliamentarian army under Oliver Cromwell’s command defeated the Covenanters at the battles of Dunbar and Worcester in September 1650 and September 1651 respectively, and seized control of Scotland. Charles II was forced to flee back to continental Europe.²

In Ireland, meanwhile, the Ulster rebellion of 1641 had evolved into a more complicated concern. By mid-1642, Irish Catholic rebels had taken control of much of the country, and had formed themselves into a body popularly known as the Confederation of Kilkenny. This body had two major concerns during the 1640s. First, it had to deal with continued military opposition from the Protestant settler communities in the north-east and Munster. Second, it had to attempt to get redress for the grievances of Ireland’s Catholic community. This it tried to do by negotiating with various representatives of Charles I and by offering military aid to the King in return for political concessions. In early 1649, the Confederates and the King’s Lord Lieutenant, James Butler, Marquis of Ormonde, finally agreed on a pact that granted concessions to the Irish Catholics in return for aid to the Royalist cause. This agreement proved to be a stunning example of bad timing, as it neatly coincided with the regicide of Charles I. The English Parliament still saw a need to defeat the Confederation of Kilkenny, however, as Irish Catholics could still offer aid to the exiled Charles II, and there was a strong desire amongst the
English populace for revenge against Irish Catholics for reported massacres of Protestant settlers in 1641. Furthermore, English authorities had previously promised, in the Adventurers Act of 1641, Irish land to anyone willing to lend money to pay for the suppression of the Ulster rebellion and the subsequent nationwide rising. This land had to be secured.  \(^3\)

In August 1649, Oliver Cromwell invaded Ireland with the Parliament’s New Model Army. One contemporary commentator on Cromwell’s Irish campaign said that the English commander “like a lightning passed through the land.”  \(^4\) Cromwell and his army proved as devastating as this natural phenomenon, inflicting bloody defeats on the Confederate-Royalist alliance at the sieges of Drogheda and Wexford in autumn 1649, but they were nowhere near as fast. It took nearly three years for English forces to re-conquer Ireland. Cromwell was not even in the country for the bulk of the campaign, returning to Britain in 1650. The re-conquest of the country was effectively completed in spring 1652 with the capture of Galway city. It also ended the wars in all three Stuart kingdoms.

Defeat in the British and Irish civil wars forced many Royalists, including members of the Stuart dynasty itself, into exile. Indeed, many had chosen exile long before the conflicts in Britain and Ireland came to an end. Charles I’s wife, Henrietta Maria, had been in exile in France since mid-1644, for example. She was followed there by her eldest son, Charles, Prince of Wales (later Charles II) in mid-1646. The family of the Marquis of Ormonde resided in France for a time between 1648 and 1652. Ormonde himself, as we shall see, went into continental exile in early 1651, remaining there until 1660. Many other elite Royalists also took the same option. Exile, in these circumstances, was a short-to-middle term strategic move. When circumstances changed and became more favourable for Royalist political and military activity at home, as they did for Charles II in 1650 after the alliance with Scottish Covenanters, for instance, the exiles then returned home to renew the fight. Unfortunately for many of the Royalist exiles, it was a strategy that backfired. Defeat at Dunbar and Worcester left many English and Scottish Royalists who chose this
path stranded abroad. The defeat of Royalist-Confederate forces in Ireland in 1652 completed the process: it forced many of those Irish Royalists who had previously fled Ireland to stay abroad, and it obliged others to join them. George Radcliffe was one such Royalist who found himself stranded in continental Europe.

Sir George Radcliffe: early life and exile
Born in 1599 in Yorkshire, Radcliffe was educated at Oxford and afterwards practised as a barrister. By the mid-1620s, probably because of the kinship connections of his wife, Anne Trappes, he became closely associated with one of the decade’s most notable English politicians, Sir Thomas Wentworth, the future Earl of Strafford. Radcliffe soon became one of Wentworth’s most trusted advisors. Despite this, Radcliffe’s road to political prominence was not initially smooth. He was imprisoned in 1627 for declining to contribute to Charles I’s forced loan, a move which Wentworth copied, and for which he suffered the same fate. Yet opposing royal policy brought both Radcliffe and Wentworth to the Crown’s attention during that decade, and the King soon recruited them to his side. Soon after, Radcliffe served with Wentworth, after the latter was appointed President of the Council of the North in England in December 1628.

When Wentworth was made Ireland’s Lord Deputy in January 1633, Radcliffe, as one of his most trusted allies, became his secretary, and was appointed to the Irish Privy Council in October that year. This proved significant, as it brought him into contact with James Butler, then Earl of Ormonde, and John Bramhall, Anglican Bishop of Derry (who also came to Ireland with Wentworth). During the 1630s, all three had Wentworth as their political patron. Indeed, Radcliffe had a central role in bringing Ormonde and the Irish Lord Deputy together in this decade. Radcliffe benefitted greatly from his links to Wentworth. Charles I gave him £500 a year as compensation for abandoning his legal practice. He also received £2,000 a year in profits from investments in the Irish customs. Radcliffe also used his position to gain thousands of acres of land in Fermanagh, Dublin, and
Sligo during the 1630s. The Sligo land came to him through a suspect land purchase, and at the expense of the Catholic landowner, the O’Connor Sligo.

Radcliffe was not just a profiteer, however. He was also politically active, helping Wentworth to implement a number of controversial policies designed to increase Crown influence in Ireland. Radcliffe managed the Irish Customs farm, and also helped Wentworth to recover lands for the Crown and for the Church of Ireland. This latter policy alienated Protestants and Catholics alike, as they all faced the prospect of losing land under it. As part of this endeavour he successfully prosecuted Richard Boyle (1st Earl of Cork and Robert Boyle’s father) in 1636. Boyle had previously seized Church of Ireland property and had also encroached upon Church privileges. This case soon became a *cause célèbre* for the growing opposition to Wentworth’s Irish lord deputyship. On top of this, Radcliffe served as MP in the Irish Parliament for Armagh in 1633-4 and for Sligo in 1640-1. In the first Parliament he successfully managed the Irish House of Commons on his patron’s behalf. He attempted to reprise this role in 1640-1, though he had much less success. Radcliffe’s failure was partly due to the growing political crisis in Britain and Ireland at that time, a crisis which had been partly caused by Wentworth’s divisive deputyship of Ireland. Radcliffe, like Wentworth (by then Earl of Strafford), was subsequently impeached by the Long Parliament, and was imprisoned. The charges against Radcliffe came to nothing, unlike those brought against his patron, who was beheaded. With Wentworth’s death, Ormonde now became Radcliffe’s chief patron.6

After his release from prison in June 1642, Radcliffe was to spend the early part of the 1640s serving the Royalist cause in England. He joined Charles I’s Oxford Court, where he became an attendant to James, Duke of York, thus beginning his relationship with that Prince. This association with the Stuart Court in England was soon broken, however, with the capture of Oxford and the initial defeat of the Royalists in 1645. Like many others, he was compelled to abandon England, and by April 1647 he was living in Caen, France, a
destination popular for British political and religious exiles, as it al-
lowed for a quick return home if things improved for the Royalist
cause. Radcliffe’s journey there was not without its problems,
though. Pirates boarded the ship, and robbed him of over £500 worth
of money and jewels.\(^7\)

By the time he went abroad, then, George Radcliffe was not
only a long-standing servant of the Crown, but also a former courtier
and prominent Royalist agitator. He was also, it seems, quite well re-
spected amongst the wider community of exiled Royalists in France.
This was partly based on his previous association with Wentworth,
by that time considered a martyr of the Royalist cause. In his diary
entry for 5 October 1649, John Evelyn referred to Radcliffe as “that
great favourite of the Earl of Strafford.\(^8\)” It was not just Evelyn who
felt this way. Charles II’s Chancellor, Sir Edward Hyde, in his auto-
biography, put Radcliffe’s previous association with Strafford for-
ward as an explanation for the respect generally accorded Radcliffe
during the early 1650s.\(^9\) Radcliffe clearly took advantage of this re-
spect and popularity, and was able to acquire a position close to the
Duke of York in France, immediately before Charles II left that coun-
try for Scotland in 1650. Charles II had evidently recommended him
to his brother, and may have made a vague promise to Radcliffe of a
position in York’s household, although he was not actually appointed
to any specific position. It was enough, however, to bring Radcliffe
back into York’s circle, where he soon became a respected council-
lor.\(^10\)

This was not to last. Problems began for Radcliffe in mid-
1650, while Charles II was in Scotland. At this time a dispute broke
out, with the Duke of York and his councillors on one side and the
Queen Mother and her advisors on the other. The origin and nature of
this dispute is not clear, though a number of possibilities have been
advanced: York may have been dissatisfied with the way he was re-
ceived in the Louvre; he may have wished for greater independence,
or the opportunity to make a greater contribution to the Royalist
cause. A simple clash of personalities between York and his mother
might also have been the cause. In his analysis of the clash, N.A.C.
Reynolds correctly places great emphasis on the fact that control of James’s household would have been no mean prize for a courtier, since James was Heir Presumptive and the King was away in Scotland. Consequently, those who may have felt discontented with their position in the Louvre, as well as with the dominance there of Jermyn and other members of the so-called “Louvre Set,” might have been happy to encourage York’s discontent and to advise him to flee Paris, so as to allow them to carve out a potentially more influential position for themselves in his household.11

Whatever the reasons, it was resolved by some of the Duke’s councillors in late September that he should quit Paris and travel to his sister Mary’s court in the United Provinces (modern-day Netherlands), by way of Brussels. According to one of his contemporaries, Lord Hatton, Radcliffe was not one of those who favoured this course of action, but it was concluded that he, along with some others, should be obliged to join the Prince at Brussels. It would also seem that negotiations in the Spanish Netherlands (modern-day Belgium) between the Irish nobleman Viscount Taaffe and the Duke of Lorraine about the possibility of securing military assistance for Irish royalists from the latter was also a factor that led the fleeing Prince’s advisors to choose this city as a stopping-off point on their journey, as it offered the prospect of a more active involvement in Royalist activities to the young Prince.12 Radcliffe joined York in that city soon after, and by early November, Sir Edward Nicholas, the King’s secretary, was reporting to Sir Edward Hyde that Radcliffe was considered one of the Duke’s closest advisors.13

As it turned out, the move to Brussels was a failure, simply because the Duke and his entourage were not welcome there. Having housed some exiled members of the Bourbon dynasty in the 1630s, the government there had too many negative memories of dealing with fleeing royalties.14 There were also other, more pressing, reasons for refusing aid to the Duke. On 11 November 1650, Leopold-William, governor-general of the Spanish Netherlands, wrote to Spain with news that York had entered Brussels incognito. For his part, York had explained this by saying that he was awaiting permis-
sion to continue on to Holland. Not wanting to offend the English Parliament, however, the governor-general had no wish to offer the fleeing Prince hospitality. The fact that York’s mother lived in France, combined with the possibility of there being French spies in the Duke’s entourage, were further factors behind this decision. Leopold-William learned in a letter dated 5 December that the Spanish King, Philip IV, agreed with him and wanted his governor–general to persuade York to leave Brussels as soon as possible.¹⁵

Even before the letter from Philip IV reached Leopold-William, things had become increasingly difficult for York’s court in Brussels. William of Orange’s death in early November cost the Stuarts an ally, weakened the position of James’s older sister Mary in the United Provinces, and left the pro-Republican, anti-Orangist element dominant there. This, of course, made it harder for James Stuart to consider moving into the United Provinces, though he did not stop trying to get an invitation. Increasingly desperate, he had to write to his mother and prevail on her to secure an invitation into that state for him.¹⁶ Lack of money was another problem, and one which may have pre-occupied Radcliffe greatly; Hyde later stated that Radcliffe was responsible for funds during the Duke’s time away from Paris. The dearth of money was so grave, it was reported that York was reduced to having only two dishes with each meal. Hatton wrote to Nicholas from Paris in mid-November stating that the Louvre Set believed that York would be compelled to return to France sooner rather than later, and that when he did they would take the first opportunity to cashier his councillors. This was clearly ominous for Radcliffe.¹⁷

Further problems were created by the way that the Duke’s court entertained itself in Brussels. Radcliffe, the Duke, and others of his retinue frequently attended mass there, ostensibly to hear the music, and on one occasion to watch the investiture of three knights into the order of the Golden Fleece. In their defence, such attendance at a Catholic service by Protestants for entertainment purposes was not unusual over the course of the Royalist exile. Nonetheless, for the Heir Presumptive to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland to attend such services was to invite controversy. When one also con-
siders that Charles II was in Scotland at this time, where he was engaged in a military alliance with the extremely anti-Catholic Kirk party, one can appreciate how insensitive such actions were.¹⁸

Making matters worse for York’s fugitive court, in December 1650, Charles II made his displeasure with York’s flight from France known. On 20 December the King, from Scotland, sent instructions to his brother: York was required to return to Paris, along with Lord Byron, who had previously been made governor to the Duke, and some of the King’s Privy Council were to attend him there. Among these new councillors to York was the Marquis of Ormonde.¹⁹ It must be said that the King’s actions in appointing new persons to attend York were extensively supported by many in the wider exiled court. Sir Edward Nicholas, the King’s secretary and no friend of the Louvre Set, felt that there was a need to purge the Duke’s advisors, and also stated in a letter to Hatton in early 1651 that he had “heard of some jealousies that some honest men have had of George Radcliffe; how justly I cannot tell.” Yet, while this indicates that Radcliffe and those others attending York were in a difficult situation, Nicholas’ despatch to Hatton at least indicates that Radcliffe was still a key man in that household in those days. In the same letter, Nicholas also mentioned that he believed that the Louvre Set were going to make some proposals to those councillors near the Duke, and that they had high hopes of gaining Radcliffe for their faction. True or not, this shows Radcliffe’s continuing centrality to life within the heir’s court in early 1651.²⁰

Despite the disapproval of their actions and the royal commands, which, in any case, probably did not arrive in time, York’s court travelled on to the United Provinces in December. Mercurius Politicus, one of the Commonwealth’s newspapers, took joy in reporting that York, Radcliffe, and some others, had moved to Guilderland in the United Provinces and that they had not received any financial help from either Spain or the Duke of Lorraine.²¹ By January 1651, the Duke’s court was in The Hague, though this did nothing to improve their situation. Other problems were developing for the Stuart interests in Holland. Simply put, James’s sister, Mary, had her
own troubles to deal with, and those of her brother had to wait. The death of her husband in early November 1650 meant that a struggle was developing between Mary and her mother-in-law, the dowager princess of Orange, for the role of guardian to William’s heir. Aside from this, debts had eaten into the House of Orange’s revenues, and Mary was in no position to provide hospitality to her brother. Some of the states in the United Provinces, moreover, were arguing that the Commonwealth should be granted official recognition, something that would have made it difficult for James to stay there. York’s court was therefore in a difficult position and increasingly desperate for assistance.

In these circumstances Radcliffe took the opportunity to write to his old patron, Ormonde, in early 1651. Aside from being the newly-appointed councillor to the Duke of York, Ormonde was one of the most influential Royalists. Ormonde had recently arrived in France from Ireland, and Radcliffe sought to recruit the Marquis to assist him and York in their stand-off with the Louvre. This was only natural. Even though the calamities of the 1640s separated the two for long periods, they had maintained contact with each other. Radcliffe even helped care for Ormonde’s family on the Continent in 1648. The next year, on hearing accusations that Ormonde intended to abandon the King’s service for that of France, Radcliffe moved to defend his patron’s reputation on the Continent.23 Now, in his letter of early 1651, Radcliffe welcomed the safe arrival of his patron because “the preservation of your person for better times and the great assistance which the Duke of York may expect from your company with him, do in some sort recompense what is amiss in Ireland.”24

Yet Radcliffe’s hope that his former patron would support him and the Duke of York in their stance was to be disappointed. This is unsurprising, when one remembers Ormonde’s recent appointment by the King, as well as the official condemnation of both the flight from Paris and of Radcliffe himself from that quarter. The fact that the behaviour of the Duke and his companions was unpopular with the Queen Mother and those around her in the Louvre—and these people were, in the absence of the King, the dominant group at the
time amongst the Royalists on the Continent—would also have disinclined Ormonde to aid his old client. The Marquis instead chose to remain in France, dividing his time between his family’s residence in Caen and the Louvre. He did involve himself, indirectly, in the Duke’s dilemma, by sending one of his fellow exiles, Lord Inchiquin, to meet the Stuart heir. Ormonde also used the Irish nobleman Viscount Taaffe as a means to contact York, and to keep track of him. Indeed, York had become central to Taaffe’s negotiations with Lorraine for military aid, as these now involved a proposal of marriage between him and Lorraine’s daughter. Consequently, Taaffe and Ormonde frequently mentioned the young Prince in their correspondence during these months. It is clear that, rather than using Radcliffe, Ormonde chose instead to use other members of his Irish circle as intermediaries in his dealings with York. They, after all, were not implicated in the Duke’s flight from Paris and were not subject to the wrath of other members of the Royal family. Radcliffe, by turn, was becoming politically marginalised.

The situation did not look good for George Radcliffe, or for the rest of York’s entourage. The only positive news for James’s courtiers was that the Duke, by becoming concerned in the negotiations with Lorraine, had managed to involve himself in one of the major pieces of Stuart diplomacy of the time. Everything else, though, got worse. In early March 1651, it was being reported that the United Provinces had sent an embassy to the new Republican regime in England; York could not long reside in a state that was about to officially acknowledge the Commonwealth’s legitimacy. Talk of an imminent return to France began to grow. On 30 March, Ormonde wrote to Edward Nicholas with the news that Henrietta Maria was endeavouring to get an invitation to France for James Stuart from the French Crown. By this stage, it had also become public knowledge that Charles II had appointed Ormonde as a councillor to James, and ordered that Radcliffe, along with some others, withdraw from the Duke’s Court. Reports about this appeared in Mercurius Politicus in mid-February 1651, along with the news that this was done to appease the Queen Mother’s discontent with Radcliffe and
other assorted fugitive councillors.27 Clearly, and very publicly, Radcliffe’s days of influence within one, if not all, of the exiled Royal households were coming to an end.

Despite the endeavours to obtain an official invitation from the French Crown and the appointment of new councillors to York, it still took some time to resolve York’s circumstances and to remove Radcliffe from his presence. The required invitation from France was not immediately forthcoming, keeping York away from the Louvre and in the company of those who had fled with him in the first place. In fact, the efforts to secure the invitation dragged on throughout the spring, without much success. Meanwhile, the need to obtain it grew, as the United Provinces formally received ambassadors from England in early April.28 This still did not speed along the process and, in a letter of 8 June 1651, Ormonde complained to Nicholas about the ill consequences for the young Prince if he was forced to enter France without being formally invited.29

Another factor hindering the Prince’s return was the factional rivalries amongst the Royalists. Prince Rupert of the Rhine had involved himself with the Duke of York and was actively encouraging him to have nothing to do with either the Louvre Set or Ormonde, particularly as there were growing rumours that Ormonde had allied himself with this dominant faction in Paris.30 Meanwhile, while the efforts to resolve his situation remained stalled, the young Prince stayed in the United Provinces and continued to involve himself in the discussions between Taaffe and Lorraine. In fact, Taaffe, who was more than willing to involve James in his negotiations, continued to talk positively about the proposed union of James with Lorraine’s daughter until the end of May 1651. The importance of the young Prince to these negotiations encouraged him to remain in the United Provinces, conveniently close to where the talks were taking place.31 Radcliffe’s day of reckoning was thus postponed.

The lack of the invitation from the French Crown and the negotiations with Lorraine aside, there was also another question to resolve before York returned to Paris. This was the issue of how he would support himself. Prior to his flight, James Stuart had not been
in receipt of a French pension (as his mother was) and was accordingly dependant on Henrietta Maria for funds.\textsuperscript{32} For the heir to the Stuart thrones, this lack of financial independence was unacceptable, and removing this source of discontent now became a key issue in the efforts to get him to return to Paris. Efforts to resolve this problem were made throughout the spring and early summer of 1651 by Ormonde and others. On 4 May 1651, Ormonde informed Nicholas that the decision to allow 4,000 pistoles a year to York had been made. At first glance, this was a respectable sum, a sum that equalled half of what the Queen Mother received annually.\textsuperscript{33} There was one difficulty, which was the ability of the French Crown to pay that sum. Both Ormonde and Hatton had their doubts about the certainty of payment of this pension, but nothing could be done to resolve this, and by the end of May Ormonde informed Nicholas that it had still not been settled.\textsuperscript{34} This question, therefore, remained a significant stumbling block to the Heir’s return to Paris. It was also an issue that Radcliffe could involve himself in, as, aside from his role as the Prince’s financial controller, he was the perfect person to act as an intermediary between Ormonde and York. By late May 1651, Wentworth’s former associates were back in contact with each other over the question of the provision to be made for York. As before, however, Ormonde could not give any firm news about what was to be done for the Prince. Nonetheless, the Marquis re-iterated to Radcliffe that remaining in the United Provinces, considering the dominance of the Republican faction there, was not an option for York. Ormonde further reminded Radcliffe of the King’s disapproval of James’s flight, and let him know that letters had just arrived from Scotland borne by Sir Richard Fanshawe, one of Ormonde’s associates whom Radcliffe was urged to consult.\textsuperscript{35}

This was to be essentially Radcliffe’s final act as a member of York’s peripatetic Court at this time, as the Duke and his entourage soon set out for Paris. They were back there by late June, as is evidenced by a meeting between Radcliffe and John Evelyn in the latter days of that month. Quite simply, in June 1651 York received orders from his mother to return to Paris, orders which he could no longer
It was also becoming increasingly evident, despite York’s involvement, that the negotiations between Taaffe and Lorraine were going to come to nothing and these could not be used as a reason to stay away from France. It also seems that some financial provision had finally been made in Paris for the Stuart Heir. Certainly, by mid-July York was dispensing financial largesse in the manner of a royal prince. He granted a yearly pension to Ormonde of 5,000 guilders out of tenths that were to be due to him from Royalist privateering profits in the ports of Dunkirk, Picardy and Normandy, for instance. A source of income more certain than privateering profits was found for the Duke in the French army. Thanks to his mother’s endeavours, York was given command of a troop within France’s military establishment, an employment that was in keeping with royal dignity and which also offered the advantage of taking him out of Henrietta Maria’s sphere of influence from time to time. True, these measures did little to relieve York’s shortage of funds in the short-term. There were continuing problems with confirming the military commission to the Duke throughout the summer and there were also delays in securing privateering funds. York did not join the French army until late April or early May 1652. Nonetheless, it still represented a significant improvement in York’s position, and it must have pleased him.

The return of York to France, though, ended Radcliffe’s days as a major player within the Duke’s household, for the time being at least. There was now no way of avoiding the King’s order of the previous December, which required York’s then-councillors to withdraw in favour of new appointees. The Court, moreover, did not offer Radcliffe any alternative employment, because he had lost favour with many of those who made up the Louvre Set, including the Queen Mother, and they still were the dominant group amongst the Royalists in Paris. This faction’s leaders still believed that Radcliffe had exercised too much control over York in late 1650, and they still accused him of having a role in the Prince’s removal from Paris. In fact, some courtiers even made formal charges against Radcliffe, accusing him of being an evil councillor and of misleading the Duke.
Other factors also contributed to his fall from grace. Despite some powerful allies and patrons around the exiled Royal Court—not least Ormonde and some of the Old Royalist faction—Radcliffe found his friends reluctant to help him, and he had enemies amongst the exiles in Paris. This courtier was personally disliked by some in the Court, including persons within the Old Royalist faction. He was, for instance, disliked by Hatton, who, in a letter to Nicholas, complained about Radcliffe’s “extravagant” talk, and advised his correspondent “to be wary in any free communication” with him. Sadly for Radcliffe, all these complaints had the desired effect and by mid-1652 Nicholas finally admitted that he was “apt to believe” Hatton. All this can only have served to marginalise Radcliffe further.40

Some of his allies also had “other fish to fry” at that time. Specifically, during those months the Old Royalists were trying to make themselves the dominant group within the King’s Council in exile. To this end, during his time in Scotland Richard Fanshawe was instructed by some in the Old Royalist faction to persuade Charles II to agree to measures designed to bring this about. Specifically, Fanshawe proposed that the Duke of York should head the King’s Council in exile, and that he be surrounded by the likes of Ormonde, Inchiquin, Nicholas, Hyde, and others associated with the Old Royalist faction. Charles II was reluctant to grant this, as he had no desire to alienate members of the Louvre Set by completely excluding them from his circle of advisors. Unfortunately, some of Radcliffe’s associates also asked Fanshawe to seek a pardon for Radcliffe from the King. It soon became evident to Fanshawe, however, that Charles II was not inclined to forgive Radcliffe. The King viewed Radcliffe as an interloper who had gained his position within York’s Household irregularly, as well as someone who had removed the Duke from those whose charge he was in. Sensing Charles II’s strong feelings on the subject and not wishing to upset the King while pressing him on other business, Fanshawe decided to let Radcliffe’s case drop.41

In a sense then, Radcliffe’s associates let him down. Those he relied on within the Court ultimately sacrificed him to their own ends. In fairness, sacrificing Radcliffe was rational. Within any court
environment the most important persons to have on your side were members of the Royal family. Conversely, to alienate a royal was disastrous. All courtiers knew this, and Radcliffe lost his position in Court because of it.

Yet Radcliffe was not completely abandoned by his allies. Ormonde eventually responded to Radcliffe’s appeals for assistance, intervening on his behalf with the Queen Mother in the wake of York’s return to Paris. In an effort to restore his client to favour, Ormonde arranged a private interview between Henrietta Maria and Radcliffe. Finally, in early 1652, Radcliffe was formally forgiven by the King. In the end, however, notwithstanding Ormonde’s efforts, and despite Radcliffe being declared innocent of those charges brought against him by some of the Louvre Set, all efforts to protect him from royal disfavour failed. He lost favour with both the Queen Mother and Charles II, and quickly lost whatever formal position he had held within York’s Household as well.

Making matters worse, Radcliffe’s fall from grace coincided with the lowest ebb in the fortunes of the Royalists-in-exile. In early September 1651, after being forced to flee southwards from Scotland by Cromwell, Charles II’s army were soundly beaten by Parliamentary forces at Worcester. Charles II, after a perilous flight across England, returned to Paris with his tail between his legs. Royalism now seemed to be a defeated political cause. The situation was equally bad for Radcliffe, who now had no apparent prospect of employment within the exiled Stuarts’ households.

The gravity of the situation was not lost on Radcliffe. Indeed, he had begun re-evaluating his relationship with the Stuarts as early as May 1651. Finding himself subject to vilification for his actions, he informed Ormonde that month that he was reluctant to seek further employment in the Court. In a sense, in saying this Radcliffe was only preparing himself for his inevitable loss of position. If no post could be expected from the Court, Radcliffe was faced with the task of finding another way of providing for himself. On 14 October 1651, the out-of-favour courtier wrote to Nicholas outlining the options before him. Serving the Stuarts had, Radcliffe claimed, caused
him to neglect his own estate and had exposed him to ruin. He now needed a way to support himself. At that moment one option seemed especially tempting.

After all my service and my sufferings; upon the private whisper of a malicious groundless lie, cast off, disgraced and yet unheard, so as I conceive it myself [sic] discharged in point of honour and conscience from offering my service any further, but necessitated to provided [sic] for my poor ruined family: the destruction of which is all the thanks I have gotten... I will take the best course I can for myself, justly and fairly. And to that purpose I have sent for an honest man to meet me at Calais... and there will advise and direct the best course I can to get something out of mine [sic] old estate: whereby to get bread for my wife and son.45

Now that the Court could not, or would not, employ him anymore, and feeling mistreated by many within it, Radcliffe concluded that he could justifiably seek personal terms with the Commonwealth. Evidently, there were some limits to Radcliffe’s loyalty to the Royalist cause. His sense of honour compromised, he felt himself to be a free agent, entitled to compromise his loyalty to the Stuarts and come to terms with the usurping regime at home.

This, however, should not be read as an abandonment of Royalism. For one, the letter to Nicholas is dotted with expressions of good will towards Charles II and the Stuarts. Radcliffe was merely contemplating the possibility of obtaining a more sure income for himself and his family by coming to terms with the English Republican government and regaining half his estate. He grounded his hopes on the notion that this regime might seek to gain support by allowing former enemies to compound for their lands, that is, to pay a fine in order to recover them. Indeed, Radcliffe’s wife had already regained possession of one fifth of her husband’s estates in Yorkshire, having recovered them by order of the English Parliament in early 1648. Yet this previous compromise had clearly not stopped him from continuing his Royalist activities afterwards. The same may even be true of his wife, who was imprisoned for a period in 1650 by the Common-
wealth. It also should be said that Radcliffe was not the only exile to do this. Elizabeth Butler, Ormonde’s wife, went home to recover part of the Butler estate in 1652, for instance. Radcliffe’s proposal to compound with the English Republic was thus not a radical departure, and Radcliffe was in step with many leading exiled Royalists in considering such a move. This option was effectively denied him by an act of parliament of July 1651, however, which confiscated the remainder of his estate, and ordered it to be sold.

Radcliffe’s return to favour with the King

By early 1652, George Radcliffe was almost a “persona non grata” among certain important persons in the exiled Stuart Court. Nevertheless, Radcliffe, despite his contemplation of the possibility of coming to terms with the English Parliament and, later, his consideration of withdrawing to provincial France, chose not only to remain in exile, but to stay near the various Stuart households in Paris. This was probably because his situation was still not completely hopeless there. For one, Radcliffe, though he no longer held any formal position within any of the Stuart households, still had access to the Duke of York, and he certainly talked to York on privateering matters from time to time. It is hardly surprising that he should still have had some access to that Prince. York’s flight from Paris in mid-1650, despite its catastrophic nature, had led to a renegotiation of his relationship with his mother and had improved the Prince’s position within the Stuart Court. Since York continued to maintain close contacts with many who had played a role in his flight from the Louvre, despite his mother’s disapproval, it is unsurprising that Radcliffe should have continued to find some favour with him. Yet it is clear from Radcliffe’s correspondence that his standing with York fluctuated greatly over the next few years. In early 1656, Radcliffe stated in a dispatch to his wife in London that York had been very civil to him recently, something that had not happened in some time. His corre-
spondence with Ormonde at this time also highlighted the fluctuating nature of his relationship with York.51

It was also true that, in the immediate wake of Radcliffe’s tumble from grace, and at a time when other courtiers were unwilling to help him, some former allies were prepared to maintain a relationship with him. Among these was Bishop John Bramhall, defender of Anglicanism, and scourge of Presbyterianism, Roman Catholicism and Thomas Hobbes. Radcliffe aided the Bishop in his intellectual endeavours, in 1654 acceding to Bramhall’s request to have five editions of the Bishop’s works bound in The Hague and presented to prominent members of the Stuart Court, including the Duke of York. Ormonde was another case in point. The Marquis’s links to Radcliffe endured well after 1651,52 and Radcliffe acted as an intermediary between Ormonde and English-based Royalists during this period. In mid-1654, for instance, he delivered a letter to Ormonde from Lady Isabella Thynne, in which she asked the Marquis to redeem a golden cross that she had pawned. Radcliffe evidently continued to fill this role on Ormonde’s behalf well into 1656.53

Indeed, Radcliffe still remained useful to Ormonde in a number of ways. In late 1653, for example, at a time when some members of the Louvre Set were attempting to remove Hyde from Charles II’s Privy Council by accusing him of treason, Ormonde, who was gathering evidence on the case, used Radcliffe to contact Bramhall. The Bishop had earlier been named as one of those who had evidence against Hyde.54 When Charles II and his closest advisors withdrew to the Holy Roman Empire in 1654 Radcliffe proved to be of further use to the Marquis, keeping him informed of the behaviour of the other members of the Royal family, who all stayed behind in France. On one occasion he wrote about the difficulties that the Duke of Gloucester’s tutor was having with his young charge. Radcliffe also kept in touch with other Irish Royalist exiles, especially those with whom he had been associated prior to the wars, informing them of the Royal family’s movements. Bramhall continued to be among his contacts.55 Royalists such as Sir Gervase Holles received Court news from Radcliffe. Though Radcliffe was no longer an officeholder, he
still acted as a patronage broker within the Court on behalf of others.56

One person who found Radcliffe particularly valuable was Sir Richard Browne, the official Royalist ambassador to France. The lack of personnel serving the Stuart Court meant that the King’s servants often had to fill a number of posts. Between 1650 and 1656, Browne was employed both as ambassador to France and as the King’s privateering agent for the ports of western France and Brittany.57 Since this latter post required him to be frequently away from Paris, Radcliffe cared for Browne’s official residence while he was gone. This proved invaluable for Radcliffe, giving him a role in maintaining the exiled Court’s claim to be a legitimate government, and also providing him with a means of support. These were, nevertheless, lean years for Radcliffe. In 1656 he wrote to his wife in London, saying “I am now labouring to get credit for a suit of clothes, which is more than I have made these five years; and now my old frippery grows thin, so that if so much cloth comes, as will make me a suit and cloak, I shall be overstored [sic].”58

Radcliffe’s assistance to Browne gave him a roof over his head, as the ambassador insisted that Radcliffe should live in the official residence. This was no bad thing, as Browne employed a servant and had an account with a Parisian butcher and brewer. Browne, moreover, paid the bills with some of the income from his privateering ventures. The evidence suggests that this income was occasionally supplemented by funds from England.59 What is more, from mid-1654 to 1656, following the departure of Charles II for Cologne, maintaining this embassy provided the opportunity to support both the Church of England and the policies of the Old Royalist faction against those of the Louvre Set; ambassadorial status allowed the residence to be one of the few places in Paris where Anglican service could be held. The Anglican service was continued there from 1654 at Charles II’s insistence; this was important, as both Henrietta Maria and the French Royal family sought to prevent Protestant services from being heard in the Louvre during these years.60
Clearly then, Radcliffe was still useful. As it turned out, his loss of the King’s favour was not to be permanent, and his position began to recover somewhat from the mid-1650s. Charles II’s withdrawal to Cologne created a new dynamic between the different royal households within the Stuart Court, which worked to Radcliffe’s advantage. Each household had different policy objectives, leading to tension and conflict between the Stuarts, a situation that made Radcliffe especially valuable. Personal connections to the various households were vital: anyone who could provide information to Cologne on occurrences in the other Stuart households, or who could act as an agent to those around the other dynasty members, was prized. Radcliffe had already been filling this role for persons like Ormonde almost immediately after the King’s move to Cologne. Most strikingly, Ormonde made use of Radcliffe in one of the largest factional and “inter-household” disputes of the Stuart exile: the clash over the Duke of Gloucester’s religious education in late 1654.

The dispute started when Henrietta Maria, who had been granted the care of her son Henry, Duke of Gloucester, while Charles II was in Cologne, attempted to pressure her charge into changing his religion from Anglicanism to Catholicism. To this end, she had Gloucester moved to a Jesuit seminary. When Gloucester refused to co-operate with her she publicly slighted the young Prince in the French Royal family’s presence.⁶¹ News of the attack on Gloucester’s religion caused immense concern to the King and his courtiers in Cologne, not least because, if successful, it could do considerable damage to the royal image at home. Consequently, they decided to send Ormonde to deal with the situation and, if possible, to remove Gloucester from his mother’s care. It is worth mentioning that Radcliffe had been the one who relayed the news of this attempt to proselytise Gloucester to Ormonde at the end of October 1654. Indeed, he chose to write to Ormonde before informing the Duke of York, although Hatton, who was also in Paris, told him to do the opposite.⁶²

Ormonde responded by using Radcliffe to put pressure on Gloucester. To this end, Radcliffe told the young Duke that he would forfeit his inheritance if he changed religion and that he would be a
traitor to his eldest brother.\textsuperscript{63} He also passed on a letter to Gloucester from Charles II, which Ormonde had forwarded to him for this express purpose. Radcliffe took advantage of others within Ormonde’s circle of contacts to further his mission, in particular William O’Brien, son of the Earl of Inchiquin, who was a friend of Gloucester. Radcliffe used O’Brien to bolster Gloucester’s resistance to Henrietta Maria, instructing him to pass on advice to the young Prince for the purposes of stiffening his opposition to the proselytisation attempts. Radcliffe was not slow to publicise his new role, and kept Bramhall, for one, informed about events.\textsuperscript{64}

Radcliffe’s role in this affair did not end with Ormonde’s arrival in Paris. If the young Prince was to be removed to Cologne, funds had to be raised to ensure a dignified journey. Radcliffe and Hatton acted as sureties for a loan from a member of the English merchant community in France, a William Scott of Rouen. In mid-December, Radcliffe was entrusted with the task of informing Cologne that Ormonde and Gloucester had set out from Paris on their trip. Radcliffe duly wrote to Nicholas of the move, employing the not very clever pseudonym of “De Colton” (Radcliffe was originally from Colton, in Yorkshire).\textsuperscript{65} Undoubtedly, Radcliffe greatly assisted in Gloucester’s removal from Paris. Even Hatton had to admit grudgingly that Radcliffe’s part in the events was no small one. In a letter to Nicholas, he criticised Radcliffe for carrying out his actions through intermediaries, such as servants, for being unduly vain, and for his fear of incurring the wrath of the Queen Mother, but also acknowledged that Radcliffe had played his part in the affair well.\textsuperscript{66}

These events effectively marked the beginning of Radcliffe’s rehabilitation in Charles II’s eyes. True, his actions did not endear him to the Queen Mother, as Radcliffe found out. During a visit to the Louvre in mid-January 1655, Lord Jermyn, Henrietta Maria’s favourite, would not talk to him “in civil language.” The Queen Mother also publicly complained about his behaviour.\textsuperscript{67} These same deeds, nonetheless, proved his worth to those at Charles II’s Court in Cologne and made him a person of influence within the wider Stuart Court again. Even those in Paris realised this, including Jermyn. De-
spite the reported incident of a lack of civility, Jermyn, along with some others, had actually approached Radcliffe in early January, seeking his influence on the Duke of Gloucester. They hoped he would convince the young Prince to write a letter to Cologne on their behalf, explaining that they had no part in the attempt to effect his religious conversion. Gloucester had earlier insisted that he would not write such a letter, but, with Radcliffe’s influence, the epistle was duly written. Others were also quick to recognise Radcliffe’s new standing. In mid-1655 Richard Browne asked Radcliffe to explain to Cologne that a delay in sending some two thousand livres, which George Carteret had previously promised the King, was not the ambassador’s fault. Radcliffe was now in a position to intervene in the Court on behalf of persons on whom he had previously depended.

Having thus re-established himself in the King’s favour, Radcliffe was quick to seek reward for his efforts. In mid-January, he wrote a letter to Nicholas, describing the uncivil conversation with Jermyn, and giving an account of the Queen Mother’s public criticisms of him and her claims that he had once promised to aid her in changing Gloucester’s religion. He denied this, claiming not to have met with her for a month prior to the crisis. He concluded the report with a request that his patron, Ormonde, be informed “by which my friends may see what favour I expect from this Court.” Radcliffe expressed worry for the Duke of York in Paris, explaining his fears that he had fallen under the influence of bad councillors there. While the gossip on York was typical of the type of information that he had previously provided to Ormonde, the letter seems to have been written with another goal in mind, namely the acquisition of a post in Cologne. Radcliffe seems to have been quite hopeful that this would be granted to him, as he told Hatton on a number of occasions that he expected to be called there presently.

Radcliffe did receive signs of the Monarch’s favour in the immediate aftermath of Gloucester’s withdrawal from Paris, but it did not come in the desired form. In early February 1655, both he and Hatton came under pressure from William Scott over the repayment of the loan that they had secured on Gloucester’s behalf. The mer-
chant wanted some extra guarantees that it would be repaid, and, to this end, wanted a letter from Charles II acknowledging the debt. 72 Radcliffe and Hatton both sought such a letter, but it was Radcliffe who received the desired note from Charles II in mid-February, which apparently promised that the sums owed would be paid to William Scott’s brother, Everard, in Holland. The missive had immediate effect, with Scott putting off the payment of the first part of the debt, which had been due that month, until Easter. The debt itself was eventually repaid in mid-May 1655. This all irked Hatton greatly, as Radcliffe’s receipt of the required letter showed that he was more favoured by the King. 73 It is no great surprise, however, that this should be the case, as Radcliffe appears to have been a more important participant in the Gloucester affair. It is also interesting that Ormonde preferred to use his long-established connections with Radcliffe to deal with the “Gloucester predicament,” rather than taking advantage of Hatton’s presence at the Louvre; the historiography generally portrays Hatton as more central to, and more closely interwoven into, the Old Royalist faction as a whole. 74 Clearly, Ormonde saw the long-established patron-client relationship as more useful. Despite Radcliffe’s relative alienation within the Court, his unpopularity with important members of the Stuart dynasty and with other courtiers, he was still the first person that Ormonde turned to when the crisis broke. Ormonde obviously believed that he could rely on Radcliffe to carry out all that he was entrusted with. In using his client in this manner, Ormonde went outside normal channels of influence and action in Court politics. Instead of calling on more central figures in his Court faction to help him, or threatening miscreants with the loss of the King’s favour, he used a relatively minor figure on the periphery of the Louvre to prepare the ground for his arrival and to facilitate Gloucester’s removal from his mother’s influence.

These old ties also held advantages for Radcliffe. He could use long-established personal contacts with leading members of the Court, most notably Ormonde and the O’Briens of Inchiquin, to exercise influence on events, even if it was as a proxy for someone else. Despite his loss of favour with some in the Court, he could have an
impact upon Court life, and demonstrate his usefulness and loyalty to the Monarch’s interests. His relatively rapid receipt of the requested letter concerning the repayment of the debt owed to William Scott also shows how effective these personal networks could be in both securing and distributing favours.

Although Radcliffe expected to be called away from Paris as a reward for his actions, he was not granted a new position of trust in the King’s presence for some time. The Court at Cologne was too impoverished and small for that. He continued to live in Paris, where he found it difficult to provide for himself in an adequate fashion. His poverty did not stop him from playing the part of the courtier, however. In early February 1656, he went to meet the Princess Royal Mary Stuart, widow of William of Orange, when she made a trip to Paris, borrowing some horses to do so. It also did not prevent him from being useful to the Crown, and he continued to be a valuable source of information on events in France for those in the Holy Roman Empire. In February 1655, he was among those who informed Cologne of the peace talks between the Commonwealth and Louis XIV’s chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin of France, and he was quick to advise them that this would put the Duke of York, employed as he was in the French military service, in a difficult position. He later passed on York’s own opinion on the matter to Cologne, in which York expressed a preference for going to serve the House of Savoy. Radcliffe disapproved of this, however, as it would mean that York was still employed by the French.75 What is more, the Cologne Court also employed Radcliffe as their emissary to York in these years, relying on him to convey their opinion to the Prince and to exercise influence over him. As Radcliffe himself realised, this probably made him too useful to call away from Paris. Yet he was not as directly useful to the King in such a role as he might have wished. By mid-1656, York had given his ear to other counsellors, and though Radcliffe could get a hearing, he was not always well received, and he certainly was not listened to.76 This still did not exhaust Radcliffe’s usefulness to Cologne, as he also played a role in transmitting funds to Charles II via Paris. Between 1654 and 1656 he and Richard
Browne co-operated in forwarding funds to the King, which included the profits of the Royalists’ French-based privateering activities.77

Radcliffe also became involved in religious questions in 1655 and 1656, attempting to create a rapprochement between Anglicans and Jansenists,78 and he frequently consulted with Bramhall about these efforts. Sometime after February 1655, Radcliffe asked the Bishop of Derry to acquire a book in French on his behalf, entitled *Apologie pour la monarchie et l’église Anglicane*, which was reputed to have been written by a former minister of a French Church in London. He also asked Bramhall to give his opinion on a passage of another theological work which dealt with the specific question of how Protestants could consult with Papists on the external acts of religion without causing scandal.79 In July 1656, he was even more forward in seeking the Bishop’s opinion on the question of consultations with heretics. In this letter, Radcliffe described meetings he had had with “sundry learned men” who, though supposedly Papists, nonetheless agreed with the Anglican Church’s teachings on many religious points, most notably on the Pope’s jurisdiction and the sacrament of communion. Radcliffe even advanced the opinion that “the schism is only that which is now the block between us [sic].”80 All this religious activity affected his political opinions during this period, as he increasingly became entwined in schemes involving Catholics of one shade or another. In mid-1655, Hatton complained of Radcliffe’s activities in this regard, notably about his attempts to strike a deal with Rome on the Stuarts’ behalf through the intercession of a French bishop. Hatton naturally disapproved, claiming that it was “a subject wherein bussy [sic] bodies may do much hurt.”81

Radcliffe kept himself active throughout 1655 and early 1656, despite his failure to secure a post in Cologne. As things turned out, he was not to remain in Paris after mid-1656. With the conclusion of an alliance between the Stuarts and Spain, Charles II’s Court moved to the Spanish Netherlands, and the Duke of York’s household soon rejoined that of his brother there. Partly as a result of Radcliffe’s lobbying, Charles II re-appointed him as councillor to York, and Radcliffe moved to the Spanish Netherlands in mid-September 1656.82
There was one major drawback with his new appointment, however. York did not approve.

Radcliffe’s last days

There were two factors that complicated Radcliffe’s re-appointment to the Duke’s council. The first of these was his own peripheral status within York’s household by 1656. While he continued to have some involvement with York’s circle throughout the mid-1650s, it is fair to say that others had become James’s major advisors. Among these was Sir John Berkeley, a figure of whom Radcliffe disapproved. (Berkeley was one of the councillors about whom Radcliffe had complained of in 1655.) Nonetheless, Berkeley was very much in James’s favour from the mid-1650s onwards, and Radcliffe seems to have become increasingly pessimistic about regaining his former hold on York while this continued. Yet the Court at Cologne did not approve of Berkeley, and consequently the King did not appoint him to the Duke of York’s Council at the time of the move to the Spanish Netherlands.83 The grounds for a clash between the Heir Presumptive and the King over who should be the former’s councillors were in place.

The second factor complicating Radcliffe’s re-appointment to the Duke’s council was the nature of the relationship between Charles II and his younger brother. As part of the Stuart-Spanish alliance of 1656, Charles II promised to bring British and Irish mercenary troops from the service of the French into that of the Habsburgs. These troops were commanded by James, Duke of York. This fact, in some ways at least, gave York the upper hand in the relationship with his brother. He was already a respected military commander whom Irish and British soldiers in French service would follow and, therefore, without his co-operation in transferring troops from one side to another the Stuart cause would suffer.84 Though he did eventually join his brother in the Spanish Netherlands, the Duke of York was initially somewhat reluctant to abandon France. For one, he felt that
he owed a debt of honour to the French as his employers. Furthermore, he also believed that remaining in Louis XIV’s service would keep the possibility of future French assistance to the Stuart cause alive. Also, York felt a strong attachment to Marshal Turenne, the French military commander, and sometimes even discussed Stuart concerns with him.  

When Charles II took the liberty of appointing councillors for his brother, the aggrieved Prince felt that enough was enough. Believing that Radcliffe was nothing more than an “absolute creature” of those around the King, James objected to Berkeley’s removal, and even withdrew into the United Provinces in protest in late 1656. Charles II was placed in a serious quandary, and the only way he could get himself out of it was to concede to his brother’s demands to have Berkeley re-instated. This he duly did in early 1657. Tellingly, it was Ormonde who went to York with the news that Charles II had capitulated; he had again left his client to his fate. This development, good news for Berkeley, meant that Radcliffe’s chief competitor for a position of influence in the Duke’s household would not now be removed from the Heir’s presence. He faced the continuing prospect of being a courtier of only secondary importance.

Radcliffe’s predicament was further worsened when he suffered a stroke. While it did not apparently damage his spirits, it did hamper him physically. An aging man suffering from the effects of a stroke was not in a position to be a valuable councillor to a Prince who was also a military commander in the field. Consequently, Radcliffe once more left the centre stage of Court life. He died a short time later in early June 1657. Sir George Radcliffe was buried in Flushing on the fourth day of that month, having never returned home from exile and having never fully recovered the position of influence with the Stuarts to which the mourners at his funeral declared him worthy.
Conclusions

So ended Radcliffe’s career as a courtier. Having acquired a position of trust in the initial years of Charles II’s reign, the old statesman soon lost it to a number of factors. These included his rivalry with some of the most powerful persons within the exiled Royalist community, his loss of favour with members of the Royal family, and the failure of political allies to support him at key junctures. All this led to his alienation and peripheral status within the Stuart Court between late 1651 and 1656, and even led him to consider abandoning exile and withdrawing from the presence of the Royal family. He evidently felt that the Court did not provide for him in the expected manner, something that clearly points to the reciprocal nature of the relationship between courtiers and royalty.

Yet Radcliffe did not withdraw, and instead remained near members of the Royal family in Paris, continuing to interact with other courtiers there. His alienation there was alleviated by the fact that some, notably former members of his Irish circle, continued to deal with him and find him useful. This culminated in his help to Ormonde in resolving the crisis over the Duke of Gloucester’s religious education. Consequently, Radcliffe was rehabilitated with the King, and was eventually appointed to the Duke of York’s Council in 1656. Yet, despite this, Radcliffe did not recover his former influence in the Court. Ironically, his renewed favour with the King was accompanied by a decline in his estimation by the Duke of York, the Prince over whom he had once exercised the most influence. Once again, the loss of favour with a key royal in 1656 and the failure of his patrons’ support at key moments deprived him of a position of influence. For Radcliffe then, the Court was never really ready to reciprocate the support he showed it throughout the exile.

On the whole, Radcliffe’s life exemplifies the old adage that all political lives end in failure. Yet despite his secondary status and his inability to hold onto the position of influence within the Stuart Court that he desired, particularly in the household of the Duke of York, Radcliffe’s deeds were still of some import within this institu-
tion. Grandees within the court, most notably Ormonde in this case, depended on the co-operation of individuals like Radcliffe to operate. Radcliffe was his cat’s paw. Without such a client and supporter, the Marquis’s influence in the Court would have been considerably reduced. Radcliffe’s co-operation helped him to wield influence across the entire spectrum of the Court, and to operate in a number of households at once. Beyond this, the supply of information Radcliffe provided to his patron proved invaluable. In the middle part of the decade, having a contact like Radcliffe in Paris meant that Ormonde, despite residing in Cologne, could monitor the Parisian branch of the Stuart Court and react promptly, if required. Radcliffe, in short, illustrates how individuals in Ormonde’s personal network of contacts helped the Royalist Lord Lieutenant maintain and exercise his power.

Aside from his usefulness to Ormonde, the Court as a whole depended upon functionaries like Radcliffe to survive. During his career in exile, Radcliffe secured funds for the Court, helped maintain the Royalist embassy in Paris—and by extension the Church of England—aider in the supervision of Royalist privateers, assisted in protecting the King’s influence over his family, and acted as a conduit for money, information, and commands. All these activities helped maintain the exiled Court’s claim to be a true and rightful centre of government. Radcliffe also attended upon royal persons in public ceremonies when required, helping boost the prestige of the Stuart Royal Court in the process. Courtiers such as Radcliffe were entrusted with carrying out the day-to-day tasks of the royal households, and, ultimately, by helping maintain the Royal dynasty’s standing, they helped to keep the Royalist cause alive.

Yet the picture changes if we examine what the Court and the other courtiers in it did for Radcliffe. At crucial moments, the institution and the persons in it failed him and did not provide the support he needed. Ormonde distanced himself from Radcliffe after York’s flight from the Louvre in 1650, when it became clear that Radcliffe was out of favour with the Stuart dynasty. The same was true for others in the old Royalist faction. The pattern repeated itself in 1656, when Ormonde acquiesced in allowing Radcliffe’s chief competitor
for York’s favour, John Berkeley, to be re-appointed as one of the Heir’s advisors. Radcliffe, in turn, had never failed his patron so deliberately during the exile. The fact was that Radcliffe needed to do the bidding of grandees like Ormonde, or royals like the King or the Duke of York, as his position at Court depended so completely on them. Without their favour he was lost. On the other hand, while they all found him useful, Radcliffe was never so important as to be above sacrifice, particularly after he lost his grip on the Duke of York’s household in the early part of the decade. After that, he only wielded power within the Court as someone else’s proxy. He had no other source of power or influence to use when re-negotiating his relationship within the Court. Consequently, when he found himself in the middle of a dispute between competing factions within that institution, he was nothing more than a pawn, a foot soldier of faction, and ultimately could be discarded if circumstances required.
Notes


4 Nicholas French, *The Unkinde Desertoer of Loyall Men and True Frinds* ([Paris], 1676), reprinted in S.H. Bindon (ed.), *The Historical Works of ... now for the first time collected*, (Dublin, 1846), 13.


12 Hatton to Nicholas, 23 September 1653, *The Nicholas Papers*, 1:195; Karl Taaffe, *Memoirs of the Family of Taaffe*, (Vienna: M. Auer, 1856), 10-13. In his autobiography Hyde stated that Radcliffe was one of two persons, the other being Sir Edward Herbert, most involved in getting York to leave Paris. Yet Hyde was not in France at the time, and he wrote his account many years afterwards. Also, there is no outside corroboration for some of his claims. This tends to undermine the credibility of his account somewhat. Moreover, Radcliffe, in his own defence, was to claim that he had no part in the Duke’s decision to leave Paris. These problems have not prevented others from accepting Hyde’s account. Hyde, *The life of Edward Earl of Clarendon*, 1:238; Fanshawe to Nicholas, 14 June 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534:92-6; R.A. Beddard, “Six unpublished letters of Queen Henrietta Maria,” *British Library Journal* 25 (2), 134; John Miller, *James II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 13-14.


ed., Thomas Birch, 7 vols (London, 1742), 4:677-8 (hereafter cited as *Thurloe State Papers*).


20 Nicholas to Hatton, 10 January 1651, *The Nicholas papers*, 1:213.

21 *Mercurius Politicus*, 19-26 December 1650 (O.S.), no. 29.


26 Ormonde to Radcliffe, 2 March 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534, 53.

27 Ibid, Ormonde to Nicholas, 30 March 1651, 2534:58; *Mercurius Politicus*, 6-13 February 1651 (O.S.), no. 36.

28 Bramhall to Ormonde, 7 April 1651, *HMC, Ormonde Mss*, N.S., 1:167.

29 Ormonde to Nicholas, 8 June 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534:90.


32 Reynolds, *The Stuart Court and courtiers in exile 1644-1654*, 140.

33 Inchiquin to Nicholas, 11 May 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534:71.


35 Ormonde to Radcliffe, 8 June 1651, *HMC, Ormonde Mss*, N.S., 1:170; Ibid.


37 Ormone to Inchiquin, 15 August 1651, *HMC, Ormonde Mss*, N.S., 1:184.


Fanshawe to Nicholas, 14 June 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534:92-6.


Radcliffe to Ormonde, 24 May 1651, Carte Mss. 29:474.

Radcliffe to Nicholas, 14 October 1651, BL Eg. Mss 2534:112-3.


Ibid, 28 February 1652, 2:100.

Reynolds, *The Stuart Court and courtiers in exile 1644-1654*, 162.


Radcliffe to Ormonde, 4 September 1654, *HMC, Ormonde Mss, N.S.*, 1:306; Radcliffe to Bramhall, undated, *The Rawdon Papers*, 98-100. I date this letter to post-February 1655 because of an internal reference to negotiations between France and the Commonwealth.


Hatton to Nicholas, 6 November 1654, BL Eg. Mss 2534:254-7.


Hatton to Nicholas, 6 November 1654, BL Eg. Mss 2534:254-7.


Radcliffe to Nicholas, 18 December 1654, BL Eg. Mss 2534:295; Radcliffe to Nicholas, 5 February 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:46; Ibid, Hatton to Nicholas, 19 February 1655, 2535:56; Committee for the Militia of the County of York, 15 November 1650 (O.S.), *The life and original correspondence of Sir George Radcliffe*, 257-8.

Hatton to Nicholas, 27 November 1654, BL Eg. Mss 2534:269-71; Radcliffe to Nicholas, 15 January 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:17.

Radcliffe to Ormonde, 15 January 1655, *HMC, Ormonde Mss, N.S.*, 1:313-4; Hatton to Nicholas, 1 January 1655; BL Eg. Mss 2535:2; Radcliffe to Nicholas, 15 January 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:17.

Hatton to Nicholas, 1 January 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:1.

Browne to Radcliffe, 10 June 1655, BL add. Ms 34702:124.

Radcliffe to Nicholas, 15 January 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:17.


Hatton to Nicholas, 19 February 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2535:56.


Hatton to Nicholas, 6 November 1654, BL Eg. Mss 2534:254-7.

Ibid, Radcliffe to Mrs Traps, 2 February 1656, 4:443; Radcliffe to Nicholas, 5 February 1655, BL Eg. Mss 2534:46; Ibid, Radcliffe to Nicholas, 26 February 1655, 2534:63.

77 Browne to Radcliffe, 7 March 1653, BL add. Ms 34702:63-4; Ibid, Browne to Radcliffe, 8 October 1655, 34702:134.

78 Whitaker, *The life and original correspondence of Sir George Radcliffe* (London: J. Nichols and son, 1810), 287. This work states that Radcliffe had initially co-operated with Richard Steward, a former chaplain to Charles I, in such efforts. If true, then it is reasonable to suggest that coming to an accord with Jansenists was a long-held goal of Radcliffe’s, as Steward died in late 1651. Radcliffe also had links to Matthew Kelly, an Irish Catholic cleric with Jansenist leanings, in Paris during this decade. Ruth Clark, *Strangers and Sojourners at Port Royal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 54.


80 Ibid, 101-3.


87 Whitaker, *The life and original correspondence of Sir George Radcliffe*, 289.
