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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

亨利七世的治理史 及其他作品选

*The History of
the Reign
of King Henry VII*

Bacon

培根

Edited by

BRIAN

VICKERS

中国政法大学出版社

弗朗西斯·培根

FRANCIS BACON

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*The History
of the Reign of
King Henry VII
and Selected Works*

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HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT



BACON

The History of the Reign of King Henry VII

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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

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Editor's note

The aim of this edition is to make Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* accessible to readers interested in the history of political thought who are not also expert in Jacobean English and Tudor history, economics, and politics. To give such readers as much help as possible I have written two sorts of footnote, one identifying the historical figures and political issues in Henry VII's reign, the other clarifying the meaning of Bacon's language. The linguistic difficulties that many modern readers experience with Bacon's English derive partly from the enormous changes that the language has undergone since his day, and partly from the technical vocabulary that he needed to use in describing Tudor social customs and legal practices. For the first, as I have shown in a recent anthology of his major English writings, his vocabulary remained to a surprising extent close to the original Latin sense of the anglicized words (*Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 493–4). A glance at the glossary below under the headings 'casualties', 'corners', 'fact', 'futile', and 'strengthen' will illustrate this tendency. For the second, I have attempted to explain legal technicalities in the notes as briefly as possible, usually without citing modern authorities. Given the foreignness of much of this material, it seemed advisable to include longer explanations in the footnotes (where they are cued with a superscript number), shorter and frequently recurring ones in the glossary (where they are cued with an asterisk the first two or three times they occur). Footnotes are numbered by section in *Henry VII*, otherwise by text.

In the Introduction I have tried to sketch in the historiographical context within which Bacon was working, and to which he made such an original contribution. My debts to previous scholars are acknowledged in the notes and in the Select bibliography, but I want to thank, in addition, the series editors, Quentin Skinner and Raymond Geuss, for their helpful criticisms of the typescript, which made me address more clearly the interests of the series as a whole. Two other friends, both experienced students of Bacon's political and historical work, Stuart Clark and Markku Peltonen, also read the Introduction and offered valuable suggestions for improving it. Only I am responsible for any errors that remain.

My greatest thanks are due to my assistant for many years, Margrit Soland, for her long and sustained help in editing the text and preparing the glossary. The expertise which she acquired with word-processors, scanners, and software programmes, together with her great philological experience, made the editor's monotonous task a lot lighter. Her successor, Katherine Hahn, completed the manuscript with commendable efficiency and despatch. I should also like to thank Jean Field for her skilled copy-editing, which much improved the book's accuracy, and Margrit Soland for invaluable help with the proofs and index.

It gives me much pleasure to dedicate this book to Patrick Collinson, with gratitude for his remarkably illuminating sequence of books on the Elizabethan church and state, and with admiration for his untiring enthusiasm in encouraging and sustaining younger scholars. He seems to me to have followed that advice given by Alcuin to a bishop of Lindisfarne at the end of the eighth century: 'Never give up the study of letters, but have such young men with you as are always learning and who rejoice more in learning than in being drunk.'

Introduction

For to carry the mind in writing back into the past, and bring it into sympathy with antiquity; diligently to examine, freely and faithfully to report, and by the light of words to place as it were before the eyes, the revolutions of times, the characters of persons, the fluctuations of counsels, the courses of actions, the bottoms of pretences, and the secrets of governments; is a task of great labour and judgement. . . .¹

Composition and sources

In 1621 a concerted anti-government movement within parliament, directed against the growing corruption within James I's administration, claimed its most distinguished victim. Abandoned by James and Buckingham (the real targets of the upheaval), Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor and head of the High Court of Chancery, was impeached on charges of having accepted gifts from suitors whose trials were still pending (a minor offence compared to the venality and corruption rife elsewhere in the Jacobean court). No evidence was ever produced that Bacon's judgements had been affected, indeed the charges against him were led by two suitors who were aggrieved that their gifts to the judge – a common practice in a society based on patron–client relations – had not produced verdicts

¹ *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, tr. Francis Headlam and James Spedding in J. S. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (eds.), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols. (London, 1857–74), iv.302. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text, in the form S, iv.302.

in their favour.² By contemporary standards it was careless of Bacon (or his servants) to have accepted these gifts, but if James and Buckingham had not made him their scapegoat he could doubtless have defended himself by pointing to the corruption around him. Without their support he had no choice but to plead guilty and to be dismissed from his post.

The *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* was the first positive outcome of his public disgrace. Deprived of office, expelled from London, Bacon retired to his house in Gorhambury and produced the work between the end of June and the beginning of October 1621, a total of fourteen weeks' work at the most. Presenting the manuscript to James I on 8 October 1621, he compared his situation to that of London merchants who, on retiring from trade, 'lay out their money upon land. So being freed from civil business, I lay forth my poor talent upon those things which may be perpetual' (S, xiv.303). James had apparently asked to see the book, and had read it by 7 January 1622, returning it to Bacon via Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke), 'commending it much to him'. The King called for some minor alterations, querying a few unusual 'words, as *epidemic*, and *mild* instead of *debonnaire*' (his servant Thomas Meautys reported), and marking for omission a short and possibly controversial passage concerning Members of parliament who had been impeached. James concluded his comments with the 'compliment that care should be taken by all means for good ink and paper to print it in; for that the book deserved it' (S, xiv.325-6). The book was published in March 1622, and dedicated to Prince Charles (p. 3 below).

That Bacon was able to write his *History* in so short a time is partly due to the fact that Henry VII's character and reign had occupied his thoughts for many years. He had described his project for writing a history of the Tudors in a letter to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere in 1605 (S, iii.249-52), and had written, perhaps at this time, a draft outline called 'The History of the Reign of K. Henry the Eighth, K. Edward, Q. Mary, and Part of the Reign of Q. Elizabeth' (pp. 209-14 below). Bacon loaned this piece to the historian John Speed, who quoted from it in his massive *Historie of*

² See Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon, The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp. 91-225, and Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996; the Oxford Authors Series), pp. 695-702. Future references to this edition will be incorporated into the text, in the form *V*, 695-702.

Great Britaine (1611), usually respectfully but sometimes differing in judgement. But Bacon's despatch in composing a *History* running to some 75,000 words in under four months was also due to the fact that he largely used printed sources. For earlier historians, such as Wilhelm Busch, this fact deprived Bacon's work of all originality. Today we can dismiss such judgements as anachronistic. As Stuart Clark has pointed out, the new analytical school of Renaissance historiography was concerned less with establishing new 'facts' about the past, based on first-hand research in archives, than with interpreting more cogently the facts already established.³ Any innovation in method, we might say, can only go so far. It was a great break with the medieval chronicling mentality for Renaissance historians to lay such an emphasis on analysis, on relating cause and effect, on showing the interplay between personal disposition and public policy. The further realization that historiography depends on the accurate use of contemporary documents as the basis of interpretation was the discovery of a later age.

Yet, despite his critics' complaints, Bacon did use unpublished manuscript materials. In reconstructing the proclamation issued by Perkin Warbeck (pretender to the throne) on entering Northumberland in November 1495, Bacon noted in the margin of his text: 'The original of this proclamation remaineth with Sir Robert Cotton, a worthy preserver and treasurer of rare antiquities: from whose manuscripts I have had much light for the furnishing of this work' (p. 128 below, note 1). Sir Robert Cotton (1586–1631) was a distinguished collector of manuscripts (many of which came on the market after Henry VIII's Dissolution of the monasteries), whose library was already famous. In his notebook of 1608, the *Comentarius Solutus*, Bacon reminded himself: 'For precedents and antiquities to acquaint myself and take collections from Sir Robert Cotton' (S, XI.49). At some point between 1615 and 1623 Cotton loaned Bacon the MS of William Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* to read and criticize. Bacon returned it with a number of corrections and annotations, retrieved and reproduced by Spedding from the Cottonian MSS (S, VI.351–64). In 1621, when writing the *History*, Bacon was forbidden access to London, and some scholars have

³ See the essay by Stuart Clark, 'Bacon's *Henry VII*: a case-study in the science of man', *History and Theory* 13 (1974), 97–118.

seized on this fact to argue that he could not have used manuscript sources. However, a recently discovered letter to Bacon from John Selden, dated 20 August 1621,⁴ proves that he was able to obtain copies through two intermediaries, both of whom became distinguished scholars. The first was John Borough, then one of Bacon's own secretaries, who rose from keeper of the Tower records to Garter King of Arms, and finally to principal herald under Charles I. The other was Selden himself, an outstanding figure in English jurisprudence, history, and scholarship, who records that he has 'transcribed faithfully' for Bacon several documents concerning Henry VII from records in the Tower and in the Crown office. (See another letter from Selden discussing further documents relating to the King: *S*, XIV.333-4.) Selden knew what he was talking about in 1622 when he wrote that, for the value of documentary evidence, only two works of British history, 'lately set forth by learned men of most excelling abilities', William Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* and Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, gave any idea 'either of the *Truth* or *Plenty* that may be gained from the Records of this kingdome'.

Bacon made use of this archival material for specifically documentary purposes, in order to verify details concerning statutes and parliamentary proceedings. For the main narrative of Henry's reign he relied on the major printed sources, beginning with Polydore Vergil's history – originally commissioned by Henry VII himself – the *Anglicae Historiae Libri XXVI*, first published in 1534 and reissued with an additional book (covering the period up to 1538) in 1555. Bacon sometimes used Vergil's text directly, sometimes as reworked by Edward Hall in *The Union of the Famous and Illustre Families of Lancastre and York* (1548), or by Speed. He also drew on less extensive sources, such as Robert Fabyan's *Chronicles* (1516), Sir Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* (1543), and two compilations on the life and reign of Henry VII by Bernard André. Bacon's debt to these sources is clearly visible; indeed, in some cases he accepted what we now know to have been errors, as with Vergil's

⁴ See the essay by D. R. Woolf, 'John Seldon [*sic*], John Borough and Francis Bacon's *History of Henry VII*, 1621', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47 (1984), 47-53. On the gradual use of archival material by English historians see F. S. Fussner, *The Historical Revolution. English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London, 1962).

account of the quarrels between England, Brittany, and France. Yet Bacon's handling of his sources is original and independent, amplifying some elements, playing down others. Stuart Clark concludes that hardly a passage in the *History* 'does not show Bacon's re-fashioning of Hall's narrative with the intention of displaying more adequately the circumstances, plans, and motives responsible for policies and action'; Judith Anderson judges that Bacon handles his sources with 'unintrusive art', synthesizing their often inchoate material into a coherent sequence, and bringing to bear on it 'the perceptions of an experienced lawyer and politician, and a shrewd observer of "human conduct"'.⁵

Bacon's conception of history

Unlike those Renaissance historians who subscribed to the traditional, providential concept of history, where events on earth reveal the justice of God's judgements, Bacon adopted the newer historiography of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, together with a classical model increasingly admired in the Renaissance, Tacitus. The Italian historians had broken with providential history, concerning themselves explicitly with the realm of second causes, that is, human affairs, and concentrating on political events.⁶ Bacon, like them, believed that history was an important source of information and instruction but that its role should be descriptive, not prescriptive. In the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), discussing ethics, he emphasized that a knowledge of 'fraudulent and evil arts' was 'one of the best fortifications for honesty and virtue . . . So that we are much beholden to Machiavel and others, that write what men do and not what they ought to do. For it is not possible to join serpentine wisdom with the columbine innocency' – alluding to Christ's words, 'be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves'

⁵ See Clark, 'Case-study', p. 102; Judith H. Anderson, *Biographical Truth. The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 171, 195–6. For further comment on Bacon's masterly reshaping of his incoherent sources to form a thematically structured and fluent narrative see Jonathan Marwil, *The Trials of Counsel. Francis Bacon in 1621* (Detroit, Mich., 1976), pp. 165–72, and Fussner, *Historical Revolution*, pp. 264–5, 273–4.

⁶ See, in the bibliography (§3), the studies by Fueter, Gilbert, Levy, and Wilcox.

(Matt. 10: 16) – ‘except men know exactly all the conditions of the serpent’ (*V*, 217; *S*, III.430–1).⁷

The concern of the new historiography with human events and human causes had a distinguished predecessor in Tacitus, who, in the Proemium to his *History*, had announced that he intended to concern himself ‘not only with the vicissitudes and the issues of events, which are often matters of chance, but also with their relations and their causes’. In the *Annals* Tacitus also expressed his interest in motivation, apologizing that where other histories were able to present a variety of matter, in his chosen subject ‘I have to present in succession the merciless biddings of a tyrant, incessant prosecutions, the ruin of innocence, the same causes issuing in the same results.’⁸ In the great vogue for Tacitus which arose in the sixteenth century,⁹ he became celebrated for his emphasis on hidden causes and secret motives. In his essay *How to Read History*, Caelio Curio (1503–69), a Piedmontese Protestant who became professor at Basle, wrote that Tacitus ‘was most diligent in explaining motives (*in consiliis explicandis*) and most penetrating in enquiring into causes; no one has seen more acutely or described more faithfully the arts of princes and of those around them’. Lipsius and Naudé described Tacitus as ‘skilled in revealing causes’, while Girolamo Canini (d.1626) praised Tacitus because ‘he represented to the life . . . not only outward actions . . . but also the most secret of thoughts’. In England, Henry Savile, translating the *History* and *Agricola* in 1591, similarly praised him for his knowledge of ‘counsailes and causes’; Robert Johnson, three years later, also welcomed his giving ‘explanations discovering not only sequels but causes’.¹⁰

Bacon’s familiarity with these new emphases can be seen in his earliest works. In his *Advice to Fulke Greville on his Studies* (1599)

⁷ For Bacon’s earlier discussion of this biblical text see the *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), no. 3: ‘De Columbina Innocentia et Serpentina Prudentia’, *V*, 90–1; *S*, VII.234–5, 244–5.

⁸ *History*, I.4, *Annals*, IV.33; tr. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb in *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, ed. Moses Hadas (New York, 1942), pp. 421, 163.

⁹ See, in the bibliography (§2), the studies by Burke, Salmon, Benjamin, and Schellhase.

¹⁰ Quotations from Peter Burke, ‘A survey of the popularity of ancient historians, 1450–1700’, *History and Theory* 5 (1966), 150–1, and Edwin B. Benjamin, ‘Bacon and Tacitus’, *Classical Philology* 60 (1965), 105, 103.

Bacon wrote: 'Of all histories I think Tacitus simply the best' (*V*, 105; *S*, ix.25). In his *Letter of Advice to the Earl of Rutland on his Travels* (1596), Bacon defined three ways in which his addressee could excel in the *vita activa*, acquiring 'that civil knowledge, which will make you do well by yourself, and do good unto others . . . : by study, by conference, and by observation'. Under the first head Bacon advised, 'Above all other books be conversant in the Histories, for they will best instruct you in matter moral, military, and politic, by which and in which you must ripen and settle your judgement.'¹¹ Under the third he wrote, 'The use of observation is in noting the coherence of causes and effects, counsels and successes, and the proportion and likeness between nature and nature, force and force, action and action, state and state, time past and time present.' Bacon not only takes over the Tacitean concern with causes but reveals its philosophical underpinning by his immediately following reference to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: 'The philosopher did think that all knowledge doth much depend on the knowledge of causes; as he said, "id demum scimus cuius causam scimus".'¹² Bacon's mature theory of history reiterated his concern to discover causes. In the *Advancement of Learning* (1605) he distinguishes three main historical genres, of which the first is 'Memorials', that is, 'the first or rough draughts of history', consisting of 'Registers', or 'collections of public acts, as decrees of council, judicial proceedings', and so on, which lack 'a perfect continuance or contexture of the thread of narration', and 'Commentaries', which 'set down a continuance of the naked events and actions, without the motives or designs, the counsels, the speeches, the pretexts, the occasions, and other passages of action' which belong to a 'Just and Perfect History' – 'perfect' meaning 'complete' (*V*, 178–9; *S*, iii.333–4). In the *De augmentis scientiarum* (1623), the expanded Latin translation of the *Advancement of Learning*, in a passage probably written after he had finished *Henry VII*, and which may be taken as describing both his ideal and his own practice, he

¹¹ *V*, 73; *S*, ix.12–13. On Bacon's authorship of this letter see Vickers, *V*, 539–41, and 'The authenticity of Bacon's earliest writings', *Studies in Philology* 93 (1996): 248–96.

¹² *V*, 74–5; *S*, ix.14. The passage from Aristotle (*Anal. Post.*, i.2.71b off) was rendered in the early Latin translations as 'tum scimus cum causam cognoscimus'.

emphasized that 'above all things (for this is the ornament and life of Civil History), I wish events to be coupled with their causes' (S, IV.300-1).

Bacon also drew on Tacitus as the acknowledged authority on the arts of simulation and dissimulation, so brilliantly displayed by the emperor Tiberius. For Renaissance political theorists in the increasingly popular 'reason-of-state' tradition, the overriding political virtue was prudence, which they connected with an interest in *arcana imperii* ('state secrets') ascribed to Tacitus. The most striking link between Tacitism and the literature of dissimulation is found in the work of Tacitus' greatest editor and commentator, Justus Lipsius, whose *Politicorum libri sex* (1589) distinguished 'various kinds of dissimulation or deceit, "small", "medium", and "large" – advocating the first, tolerating the second, and condemning only the third'.¹³ Bacon expresses a similar distinction in his Essay 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation' (below, pp. 226-7), which is also notable for several references to Tacitus. In that section of the *Advancement of Learning* dealing with 'the architect of fortune, or the conduct of life' (V, 272ff; S, III.154ff), quotations from Tacitus are used to illustrate 'politic' behaviour, while Bacon's concluding assessment of Henry VII – his 'Commemoration' or obituary notice – includes some unmistakably Tacitean emphases on the King's 'closeness' and 'secrecy' (below, pp. 199-200).

In his theory and practice of historiography Bacon was well aware of classical and Renaissance models, both for the form of history-writing and its substance. The form of *Henry VII* is annalistic, treating the King's reign year by year, the method adopted by Livy, the most influential classical historian for the early Renaissance. Livy was followed by the first of the great Florentine humanist historians, Leonardo Bruni, while his successor Poggio preferred to imitate Sallust, who subordinated chronology to the discussion of broader themes. Guicciardini, in his *Storia d'Italia*, reverted to the annalistic form, which acts as a stabilizing element in his extremely complex narrative, with its bewilderingly frequent changes of place.¹⁴

¹³ Peter Burke, 'Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state', pp. 482, 485.

¹⁴ See, in the bibliography (§3), the studies by Wilcox, Phillips, Luciani, and Cochrane.