

# Letters, Networks of Power, and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell 1523-1547

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## **STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis employs network visualisation and methods from quantitative network analysis to consider the career of Thomas Cromwell, his fall from power, and the repercussions for Tudor political structures. It sits at the intersection between historical and digital network analysis, using a combination of off-the-shelf network analysis and visualisation software and custom-written code to explore traditional historiographical debates and theories. In doing so, it explores wider questions related to power in both historical and sociological studies, using Cromwell as a case study through which the role of letters as a social and political tool and questions about influence surrounding Henry VIII can be explored. The research focuses on ways in which network analysis can formalise and measure qualitative assessments of influence at the Tudor court. Using network theories, it considers the network structure of the Tudor court between 1523 and 1547, and contextualises the role Cromwell held using different network measurements. In doing so, it establishes different ways in which power can be quantified, and what this means for the realities of Henry VIII's court. A particular focus is placed on the period leading up to Cromwell's fall from grace in 1540 and the remaining seven years of Henry's reign afterwards, using network analysis to investigate how administrative management and power structures changed after the execution of the chief minister. As such it reconsiders questions of influence surrounding the king, how authority was managed, and the lasting impact of Thomas Cromwell.

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## CONTENTS

Statement of Originality	2
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Contents	5
Figures and Images	6
Transcriptions and Abbreviations	9
Glossary	10
Introduction	13
SECTION I: THOMAS CROMWELL AND NETWORK ANALYSIS	33
I.    Thomas Cromwell and Letters	34
II.   1523-1540: A Network	55
III.  Power and Centrality: A Case Study	88
SECTION II: CROMWELL IN POWER, 1534-1540	106
IV.   King and Minister	107
V.    Cromwell and Network Functionality	124
VI.   The King's Gatekeeper	146
SECTION III: POWER POST-CROMWELL, 1540-1547	168
VII.  The Post-Cromwell Network	169
VIII. Cromwell's Legacy	196
Conclusion	228
Bibliography	239

## FIGURES AND IMAGES

Figure 1.	<i>Thomas Cromwell</i> by Hans Holbein, the Younger. c. 1532-1533. Oil on panel, 78.1 by 64.1 cm. Frick Collection, New York, Henry Clay Frick Bequest. Source of image: WikiCommons.	12
Figure 2.	A ‘toy’ diagram as a guide for network terms.	56
Figure 3.	A network diagram of the letter data from 1523-1540, created in the visualisation software Gephi.	58
Figure 4.	Top twenty-five ranked degree centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores.	60
Figure 5.	Top ten scoring degree centrality measurements across 1523 to 1540.	63
Figure 6.	A graph demonstrating the distribution of degree scores against the number of nodes holding this score.	67
Figure 7.	The Giant Component from the 1523-1540 network, with nodes coloured according to overlap between ego networks of the top five degree scorers.	69
Figure 8.	A breakdown of the 13.2% of the graph as a ‘Shared Contact’ into the different overlap combinations.	70
Figure 9.	The difference between paths and edges.	75
Figure 10.	Top twenty-five ranked betweenness centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores.	77
Figure 11.	Top ten betweenness centrality measurements across 1523-1540.	79
Figure 12.	Top twenty-five ranked eigenvector centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores.	82
Figure 13.	Top twenty-five scoring eigenvector centrality measurements across 1523 to 1540.	85
Figure 14.	A table depicting changes in Henry VIII’s network measurements 1535-1537.	89
Figure 15.	A bar graph illustrating the distribution of Henry VIII’s incoming and outgoing correspondence in 1536 across different assigned categories.	90
Figure 16.	Gephi Graph depicting the ‘Pilgrimage of Grace Cluster’.	94
Figure 17.	Table depicting the rankings of members of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster in each centrality measurement.	95
Figure 18.	Gephi Graph depicting the ‘Pilgrimage of Grace Cluster’ with shared letters.	99

Figure 19.	A table to outline the changes in the total and average number of references in each year 1534-1540.	112
Figure 20.	A graph depicting the changing eigenvector centrality score, where the variable is set as the number of references received by Cromwell, to display the different power shifts.	115
Figure 21.	Comparative measurements of the reduced Giant Component with and without Cromwell.	129
Figure 22.	Graphs depicting changes in Average Path Length, Network Diameter, Average Clustering Coefficient and Component as a fraction of Original Graph as the top scoring betweenness node is removed from each graph and the giant component is recalculated.	131
Figure 23.	Fig 23.a shows a dyad; Fig 23.b shows an unclosed triad; Fig 23.c shows a closed triad.	134
Figure 24.	A graphic representation of the five types of brokerage relations.	149
Figure 25.	Different forms of triadic closure in the network, January-July 1540.	151
Figure 26.	Network graph of closed and unclosed triads between Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, January-July 1540, colour-coded according to the triad types outlined in Fig. 25.	152
Figure 27.	A table outlining who represents ‘ $\chi$ ’ in the different closed triad triangle types.	158
Figure 28.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A Gephi visualisation of the epistolary network from January 1534 to July 1540.</li> <li>b. A Gephi visualisation of the epistolary network from August 1540 to February 1547.</li> </ul>	170
Figure 29.	A table depicting overall network graph measurements in 1534-1540 and 1540-1547 for comparison.	171
Figure 30.	A table depicting top ten ranking nodes for the three main centrality measurements in the 1540-1547 network.	173
Figure 31.	Raw score comparisons for Henry VIII across the two different networks.	175
Figure 32.	A bar chart showing the attendance of Privy Council members in meetings from August 1540 to December 1541 and May 1545 to December 1546.	180
Figure 33.	Total attendance of Privy Councillors from August 1540 to December 1541 and May 1545 to December 1546 plotted against degree centrality score in the network.	182

Figure 34.	The Field of Cloth of Gold, by Unknown artist. c.1545. Oil on canvas, 168.9 x 347.3 cm. Royal Collection Trust, Hampton Court Palace. Source of image: WikiCommons.	191
Figure 35.	A graph showing Cromwell HSPs and HTPs in 1534-1540, the predicted model and 1540-1547.	198
Figure 36.	A table comparing predicted top takeover nodes for Cromwell's HSPs and HTPs and actual takeover nodes in the 1540-1547 network.	200
Figure 37.	A table depicting the top 10 most used nodes on all HSPs and all HTPs in 1534-1540 and 1540-1547.	203
Figure 38.	Eigenvector and degree centrality scores for the top ten nodes plotted between 1540-1546, as in Chapter II.	213
Figure 39.	A graph depicting distribution of ambassadorial and regional Council reports to ministers at court.	215



## TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Author's Note*

All dates used in this thesis correspond with those given in *Letters and Papers* and *State Papers Online*, which follow the modern Gregorian calendar.

Where using my own transcriptions, I have retained the original spelling and punctuation, following the transcription guide below. Where I have used Merriman's instead, I have reproduced Merriman's own transcription choices.

### *Transcription Guide*

*Italicised* – extended contraction.

~~Strikethrough~~ – where the text in the original has been crossed out.

<sup>Superscript</sup> – where the text has been placed above the original line of text as an addition and/or correction.

[In brackets] – my insertions, often where manuscript is damaged.

### *Abbreviations*

BL – The British Library.

L&P – *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509-1547*.

ODNB – *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

OED – *Oxford English Dictionary*.

TNA – The National Archives.

## GLOSSARY

**Nodes:** The objects in a network; in this paper, the nodes are writers and recipients extracted from the State Paper Office archives.

**Edges:** The connections between the nodes in a network; here, they are letters, and one edge can consist of one or more letters.

**Path:** A connection of any length or number of edges between two nodes in a network.

**Directed Network:** A network built on edges that have a direction; with letters, these are built on the 'to' and 'from' categories.

**Ego network:** A network focused on a single node and their connections.

**Degree centrality:** The number of a node's edges. The degree is the in-degree and out-degree totalled together (see below)

**In-degree:** The total number of people who wrote to a given person.

**Out-degree:** The total number of people to whom a given person wrote.

**Weighted-degree:** the total number of letters sent and received by a given person.

**Weighted In-degree:** the total number of letters received by a given person.

**Weighted Out-degree:** the total number of letters sent by a given person.

**Betweenness centrality:** This measures the potential for a node to act as an intermediary in the network; this calculates the amount of times one person lies along the shortest path between any two nodes in the network, running this until all possible routes and outcomes have been created, and assigning a numerical score out of 1 to every node (where 1 means that this node lies on every path possible).

**Eigenvector centrality:** This measures the extent to which one node influences other nodes that are themselves highly influential. As Stephen Borgatti has argued, "The idea is that even if a node influences just one other node, who subsequently influences many other nodes (who themselves influence still more others), then the first node in that chain is highly influential."<sup>1</sup>

**Centrality Redundancy:** The idea or theory that using more than one centrality is redundant for understanding power in a network, particularly where different centrality measurements return the same ranking order.

**Clustering Coefficient:** This measures how many of a node's neighbours are also connected to each other. It attaches a value to each node based on how closely linked their circle of contacts is. This is measured out of 1, where 1 here means that every possible edge between nodes in a cluster exists.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen P. Borgatti, 'Centrality and network flow,' *Social Networks*, 27 (2005): 61.

**Network component:** Components are the different disconnected elements that make up a full network. Different components will have no edges connecting them to each other, though multiple components can make up one graph.

**Giant or Main Component:** The largest connected network component in a graph.

**Hubs:** Nodes connected to a significantly higher than average number of people in the network.

**Clusters:** Strongly inter-connected groups within a larger component.

**Cut-point:** These are nodes that, when removed, would drastically alter the topology of the network graph, and result in many more disconnected network components.

**Diameter:** The length of the longest path in the network; the time taken to reach from one furthest point in the network to the other.

**Average Path Length:** The average length of all paths in a network.

**Dyad:** A relationship involving two nodes; this edge does not have to be mutual.

**Triad:** A relationship involving three nodes; an edge must not exist between all three nodes, nor do these edges need to be mutual.

**Preferential Attachment:** The distribution of new connections based on the number of connections each node already has; a 'rich-get-richer' approach.

**Fragmentation:** The process by which removing one or a series of nodes from a network causes a component to 'fragment' and break in to smaller pieces.

**Structurally Equivalent:** the extent to which a node provides similar access to another person in the network, and is unable to provide novel information or access to other nodes.



Figure 1. *Thomas Cromwell* by Hans Holbein, the Younger.  
c. 1532-1533. Oil on panel, 78.1 by 64.1 cm.  
Frick Collection, New York, Henry Clay Frick Bequest. Source of image: WikiCommons.

## Introduction

In the summer of 1532, the renowned artist Hans Holbein the Younger returned to England for his second visit, where he remained for the rest of his life as court portrait painter for Henry VIII, producing some of the most iconic images of the early Tudor reign. It was shortly after this return that the artist was commissioned to paint Henry's newest advisor and administrator, Thomas Cromwell. Clad in a plain black coat with a fur lining and black hat, Cromwell stares off the side of the canvas, offering the image of a man of business deep in thought. Cromwell's visible hand holds a letter as he leans on a table adorned with books, writing materials, and opened correspondence. The prominence of letters in Cromwell's portrait – and in his hands – reflects Seth Lerer's argument that Holbein characterised his sitters "in the hands" and makes a clear statement about contemporary views of the minister and how he himself wanted to be seen.<sup>2</sup> From this sitting to the end of Cromwell's time in power in 1540, the correspondence around him increased substantially. It was these letters, and Cromwell's use of them, that would be the paper foundation on which the chief minister built one of the greatest political careers of the early modern world.

Cromwell's role at the court of Henry VIII and involvement in events in England throughout the 1530s remains a well-contested topic of Tudor historiography. In these accounts, the minister's letters have regularly been used to contest his authority and autonomy, as well as offer insights into his personality. Yet as Michael Everett has stated, Cromwell's letters "reveal frustratingly little of what he was really like as a person."<sup>3</sup> Instead then, this thesis explores the role of correspondence as a social and political tool to investigate influence surrounding Henry, offering letters not as a 'window into the soul' of their author, but as fundamental connections in networks of power. This thesis uses contemporary correspondence alongside key theories and quantitative measures developed in the field of network science and social network analysis to reconstruct the local and international web of contacts that Cromwell maintained to propel his career and uphold his administrative supremacy. In demonstrating Cromwell's use of correspondence and contacts to bolster his position at court, this thesis establishes letters as an instrumental political medium which evidence both subtle and significant changes in power structures. In doing so, it will not merely use networks to re-create events at the Tudor court, but to emphasise Cromwell's power and administrative prowess, both in his time and beyond.

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<sup>2</sup> Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 98.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Everett, *The Rise of Thomas Cromwell: Power and Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII*, (London: Yale University Press, 2016), xiii.

*Thomas Cromwell: Scholarly Perspectives*

Born to a brewer in Putney, Thomas Cromwell rose from obscurity to become chief minister to Henry VIII and one of the most powerful and influential men of the Tudor reign. Having served under Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Cromwell became indispensable at court and in government, valued by the king as a trusted servant and advisor. Cromwell's enviable and powerful position at the right hand of the king was quickly recognised by contemporaries. Allegorised on stage as early as 1533 as Mery Report in John Heywood's *Play of the Wether*, Cromwell was presented as Henry's dominating servant, who spends the play managing and directing the rest of the cast and – whilst still acting in service to the king-on-stage, Jupiter – claims the largest portion of the lines in the play and presents himself as the lead role. This picture of a hard-working, if malcontent, advisor has been in equal measures affirmed and contested by biographers and commentators on sixteenth-century government in the five hundred years since Cromwell's death.

Cromwell arguably endures as one of the most inscrutable figures of the Tudor reign and, as such, literature on the minister not only continues to grow, but remains remarkably contentious. A recent resurgence in interest in Cromwell is reflected in the number of new biographies published in the last ten years. Yet whilst they claim to offer fresh perspectives or 'untold stories', these biographies remain entrenched in the same historiographical debates of the last century: Cromwell's religion; his power at court; his relationship with and influence over Henry; his role in the fall of Anne Boleyn; his management of the English Reformation; and his battles with the conservative and noble factions.<sup>4</sup> At the extremes of these debates, Cromwell has been described both as "no great original thinker" and as having put his stamp "on nearly everything done in [the 1530s], in the great issues of state and church as well as in the details of daily government."<sup>5</sup>

These debates converge when discussion turns to Cromwell's fall from power in 1540. The suggested reasons in these biographies for Cromwell's sudden twist in fate are plentiful, focusing to varying degrees on issues with Sacramentarians in Calais, foreign relations with France and Spain, and, perhaps most infamously, the minister's role in Henry's disastrous marriage to Anne of Cleves. Much like events throughout Cromwell's career, however, historians have sought to not only examine the events themselves but use them as part of wider arguments about faction and power at court. Though Diarmaid MacCulloch argues that Cromwell was ousted by "those

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<sup>4</sup> See Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*; Tracy Borman, *Thomas Cromwell: The untold story of Henry VIII's most faithful servant*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2014); J. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell: Henry VIII's Henchman*, (Amberley Publishing: Stroud, 2012); David Loades, *Thomas Cromwell: Servant to Henry VIII*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell: A Life*, (Milton Keynes: Penguin Random House UK, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> MacCulloch, "'Vain, Proud Foolish Boy': The Earl of Surrey and the Fall of the Howards," in *Rivals in Power: Lives and Letters of the Great Tudor Dynasties*, ed. David Starkey, (London: Macmillan London Limited, 1990), 95; G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 5.

determined to foil the spreading evangelical coup,” using accusations of “abhorrent and detestable heresies” in the Act of Attainder, John Schofield rejects suggestions that Cromwell’s fall was religiously motivated, arguing that “Cromwell had indeed advocated the Lutheran policy – but Henry had willingly accepted it.”<sup>6</sup> J. P. Coby and Loades argue instead that issues around status and nobility held a bigger role, with Tracy Borman suggesting “that Norfolk and his faction were instrumental in Cromwell’s arrest.”<sup>7</sup> Despite often using the same sources in their arguments, Cromwell’s fall remains the most contentious part of his career, with little to no agreement across these narratives.

There are several competing narratives around Cromwell’s demise, then, yet little space has actually been dedicated to his fall in recent biographies: MacCulloch’s latest discussion accounts to less than 25 pages in a 550-page tome. Even less attention has been paid to the aftermath of this fall. In many narratives, Cromwell’s ‘afterlife’ or ‘legacy’ is restricted to his long-term impact on the religious future of the country; the fate of his friends, family and even enemies in the immediate wake of his death; or the changing opinions on and attitudes towards him in the long historiographical tradition.<sup>8</sup> Despite this recently renewed attention paid to Cromwell, there still remains much to be done to explore and evaluate his life and legacy, and it is in this gap that this thesis seeks to contribute.

No project that examines the life of Cromwell can proceed without first acknowledging the work done by Sir Geoffrey Elton. Elton’s work, spanning the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, forms an extensively researched and fundamental cornerstone to modern understanding of the Tudor court and sparked an on-going, longstanding debate on the nature of administrative reform under Cromwell. Though Elton infamously claimed that the minister was ‘unbiographable’, *Tudor Revolution in Government* remains the most detailed and comprehensive survey of Cromwell’s life and works. In this, Elton offered a chief minister who “had to prove himself by hard work and administrative efficiency,” and whose goal was to create a governmental system that allowed for delegated control and refined management, liable to scrutiny and carefully structured procedures.<sup>9</sup> Though, as Elton himself noted, Cromwell was wont to ignore these processes in favour of

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<sup>6</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 524; An Act for the Attainder of Thomas Lord Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, 1540, Parliamentary Archives, Private Act, 32 Henry VIII, c. 62 HL/PO/PB/1/1540/32H8n52; John Schofield, *The Rise & Fall of Thomas Cromwell: Henry VIII’s Most Faithful Servant*, (Stroud: The History Press Ltd., 2008; repr. 2012), 395.

<sup>7</sup> Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 355.

<sup>8</sup> Loades, ‘Historiography,’ in *Thomas Cromwell*, 267-288; Schofield, ‘Epilogue,’ in *Thomas Cromwell*, 414-420; Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 232-238; Borman, ‘Epilogue,’ in *Thomas Cromwell*, 389-400; MacCulloch, ‘Futures’, in *Thomas Cromwell*, 532-552.

<sup>9</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 97. Although Elton’s work also focused on the delineations beginning to occur between the court, the king’s household, and administrative departments, this thesis will continue to use the terms ‘court’, ‘governance’, and ‘administration’ as synonymous with one another in terms of Cromwell’s power.

personally overseeing every aspect of government himself, it was this control and deep understanding of administrative procedures and their possibilities that led Cromwell to become one of the most useful – and most powerful – men at court.

Whilst Elton remains a consistent feature of Tudor historiography, his theories are often problematically summarised, and historians commonly misconstrue the basis of his ideas, creating a ‘strawman’ Elton with which to contest. From this crossfire of mistaken arguments and reactions to Elton’s assertions emerges a caricature of Cromwell, a sinister Machiavellian minister who sought totalitarian dominance over the English court and its proceedings. It is this image of Cromwell that has pervaded into 21<sup>st</sup> century historiography and is only just beginning to be re-evaluated. As Christopher Coleman argued in his own response to Elton’s work, historiography needs to move beyond the stalemate of the 1960s *Past & Present* debate over Elton’s ‘administrative revolution’ where no-one shifted position and no progress was made in the debate or research.<sup>10</sup> In the last ten years, perceptions of the king’s minister have begun to change, and historians are returning to Elton’s work with fresh consideration, understanding his arguments outside of the framework of the immediate responses to his thesis. Studying Cromwell in what this thesis terms a ‘post-post-Elton’ context permits new approaches to and interpretations of the minister’s role; released from the confines of this polarised mid-20<sup>th</sup> century debate, historians can integrate Elton’s view into a more balanced and nuanced consideration of the period. This thesis is situated in this ‘post-post-Elton’ context, then, both critiquing and substantiating Elton’s claims and is formatted, as Elton would, as a series of chronological developments rather than a biography. Whilst the concept of power will be discussed in detail below, it is worth noting here that ideas of control will also be considered in an ‘Eltonian’ framework, focusing on power by and in administration instead of exclusively focusing on events – such as the fall of Anne Boleyn and the onset of the English Reformation – through which Cromwell’s influence has traditionally been measured.

Despite the apparently saturated market surrounding Cromwell and Tudor history, the recent return to Elton’s theses suggests that there remains much more to unpack surrounding Cromwell’s administrative processes. Acknowledging and exploring this prompts a reconsideration of Cromwell’s systems of power, in ways that have only just begun to be touched on by the likes of Everett. Secondly, as shown by discussing Cromwell’s fall, there is much more to do to assess not only his final months in power, but the years following as well. This thesis primarily addresses

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Coleman, ‘Introduction: Professor Elton’s ‘Revolution’’ in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, ed. Christopher Coleman and David Starkey, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 1-11. Coleman refers to *Past & Present* articles from 1963-1965, including Penry Williams (vol. 25, 3-8 and 39-58; vol. 31, 94-96), G. L. Harris (vol. 25, 8-39; vol. 31, 87-94; vol. 32, 103-109), J. P. Cooper (vol. 26, 110-112), and replies by Elton (vol. 29, 26-49; vol. 32, 103-109).



these two areas then: the conceptualisation and evaluation of Cromwell's power, and his fall from favour and its lasting impact on the Tudor court, and how the two are intricately linked. Most importantly, however, this thesis re-examines the *ways* these questions are addressed, focusing on methodologies as much as findings.

### *Network Analysis in the Humanities*

Until this point then, Cromwell's career and power have traditionally been considered using qualitative historical approaches. Adopting different frameworks using developing methodologies in digital humanities and network analysis offers a lens through which to examine Henry's reign and Cromwell's place in it. In doing so, this thesis more explicitly highlights how modes of analysis – the structures through which sources are explored or examined – are in themselves instrumental to the histories being written.

In his canonical 2002 book, *Linked*, Albert-László Barabási explored the history and prevalence of networks in the world, and how studying them opens new avenues of understanding, predicting that

Network thinking is poised to invade all domains of human activity and most fields of human inquiry. It is more than another helpful perspective or tool. Networks are by their very nature the fabric of most complex systems, and nodes and links deeply infuse all strategies aimed at approaching our interlocked universe.<sup>11</sup>

Barabási's extensive work moved beyond 'random' networks to develop theories and methodologies based on and suitable for real-world scenarios.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, Barabási became part of what Ruth Ahnert, Sebastian E. Ahnert, Catherine Nicole Coleman, and Scott B. Weingart term the 'network turn', a new focus and emphasis on the possibilities and value of network analysis in examining the human experience across disciplines.<sup>13</sup>

Network analysis has witnessed a surge in use not only in scientific fields, but in the arts and humanities too, offering a new 'framework' or 'lens' through which to explore traditionally humanist topics, as this thesis does. The term 'network' is not foreign to humanistic scholars, who have long used this term to metaphorise systems of communications throughout history.<sup>14</sup> As

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<sup>11</sup> Albert-László Barabási, *Linked: The New Science of Networks*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2002), 222.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 23; Barabási and Réka Albert, 'Emergence of Scaling in Random Networks,' *Science* 286, no. 5439 (1999): 509-512.

<sup>13</sup> Ruth Ahnert, Sebastian E. Ahnert, Catherine Nicole Coleman and Scott B. Weingart. *The Network Turn: Changing Perspectives in the Humanities*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, 7; 13-24; Lindsay O'Neill, *The Opened Letter: Networking in the Early Modern British World*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 4-6.

Lindsay O'Neill argues, the network metaphor may be the most useful way to relate to these historical structures: "early modern invocations of friendship do not stray far from modern definitions of networks [...] So, while anachronistic, the word network encapsulates the ways letter writers envisioned their social worlds."<sup>15</sup> Quantitative network analysis, then, is merely the 'materialisation' of qualitative concepts that have been regularly theorised and discussed.<sup>16</sup>

Quantitative methodologies enable a type of 'macroanalysis' or 'distant reading', in which a great number of sources can be viewed on a much larger scale, in ways that have not heretofore been possible (or practical) with 'manual' or 'analogue' means. As this thesis will demonstrate, the 'bird's eye view' approach to the sources allows researchers to not only reconceptualise individuals such as Cromwell, but entire structures of interactions, systems of communication, and societal roles. The move to quantitative also necessitates a shift to the numerical, and the introduction or, perhaps more accurately, greater use of measurable and quantifiable modes of analysis. Doing so does not fundamentally shift understandings of history and significant events or people, but offers an additional means to conceptualise and explore them. At its most fundamental quantitative analysis "makes it possible, with relative ease and speed, to measure the relationships between many entities in multiple ways, allowing a rich, multidimensional reading of complex systems never possible before."<sup>17</sup>

Switching mentalities and methodologies in such a way also requires an adjustment of the sources themselves, and the "quantification of humanistic study" has risen to meet the growing implementation of network analysis in the humanities in the last ten years.<sup>18</sup> This not only means the digitisation of material (making sources digitally available, as with Gale's *State Papers Online* used in this thesis), but the *digitalisation* of historical inquiry. An increasing number of options are now available to encourage a digital humanities approach and make this process more accessible to humanistic scholars.<sup>19</sup>

The increased use of digital methodologies has been a significant shift in humanities research, and it is perhaps unsurprising that the move to quantitative analysis has been met with some criticisms.<sup>20</sup> The assumption that quantitative methodologies can somehow 'solve' every unanswered humanistic debate is hugely problematic and means that when these methods are obviously unable to achieve this, they are denounced and discarded. Yet by employing these

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<sup>15</sup> O'Neill, *Opened Letter*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> For networks as 'thought experiments' see Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*; 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 7; 25.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 73; 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 6; e.g., *The Programming Historian*, *DHARPA*, *Networking Archives*.

<sup>20</sup> Tom Brughmans, Anna Collar and Fiona Coward, 'Network Perspectives on the Past: Tackling the Challenges,' in *The Connected Past: Challenges to Network Studies in Archaeology and History*, edited by Tom Brughmans, Anna Collar and Fiona Coward, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.

methods as new ‘frameworks’ of understanding rather than new types of *evidence*, this thesis seeks to adjust expectations of what quantitative methodologies will achieve, and therefore how ‘useful’ they are.

Much criticism of these approaches stems from a fundamental misunderstanding of the methods. In part this comes from an oversimplified conception of the *process* of network analysis, that it begins with the network itself rather than the method of ‘abstraction’ by which historical sources are transformed into quantitative networks, as Ahnert et al argue.<sup>21</sup> This process, whereby researchers unpack the different layers of information in qualitative sources, “requires a *prior mental* manoeuvre of translating cultural artefacts into an abstracted form to see whether they are compatible with the input requirements of the available tools.”<sup>22</sup> Though networks may be everywhere, as Barabási suggests, this does not necessarily mean that network analysis is always the appropriate framework through which to explore history. By actively acknowledging and engaging with this process of ‘abstraction’, we can more critically consider the ways sources are adapted for network analysis and how network analysis fits a particular set of sources. Ahnert et al acknowledge that this process is a “deliberate reduction of the amount of available information [...] on which critics of quantitative approaches have often focused in the humanities.”<sup>23</sup> Again, however, this criticism operates on the misconception that once elements of information are ‘abstracted’, the rest is abandoned. Rather, not only is this ‘abstraction’ a continuum (in which differing levels of ‘qualitative’ information can be included or eliminated), but even at the strictest level of ‘abstraction’, the dropped information is not ignored indefinitely, but is merely not in use at this point in time, much like qualitative selection and analysis of sources.<sup>24</sup> Paying more critical attention to this process and what it means for networks counters any wholesale rejections of network analysis and suggestions that it does not suit humanities disciplines.

The use of quantitative methodologies also requires a radical adjustment of the tendency to perceive numerical data as ‘facts’. Whilst this will be explored in more detail in Chapter IV and V, understanding the process of ‘abstraction’ makes clear that the data being utilised are actively selected. It is important to emphasise that quantitative results can be interrogated, challenged, and unpacked with the same scrutiny with which scholars have approached literary and history sources for hundreds of years.<sup>25</sup> This not only applies to raw numbers or statistics, but the graphs and

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<sup>21</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 13; 75.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 75.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 51.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, 34.

network visualisations created from them as well. Katherine Bode in fact argues that graphics can hinder historical analysis, and

a focus on visualization impedes scholars' understanding of the evidence available to construct and interpret network models and creates perhaps insurmountable barriers to recognizing and accommodating the evidence that is absent.<sup>26</sup>

This 'hinderance' stems from viewing these visualised networks as facts, however, without accounting for what may be missing or how types of sources and source collection impact the results, as will be discussed shortly. This has often been compounded with a tendency to use off-the-shelf visualisation tools without paying due attention to the ways pre-established settings or algorithms determine elements of the graphics.<sup>27</sup> Yet even with appropriate attention to what the network contains, network graphs are still often studied as exact replicas of the historical period itself. Rather this thesis adopts Charles van den Heuvel's approach, in which he uses "the term virtual since it refers both to the sometimes imaginary character of these networks [...] as to the potential to recreate them with digital means."<sup>28</sup> Just as a metaphor *represents* rather than *replicates* that which it describes, so too is there an ontological gap between the visual representation of history and history itself.<sup>29</sup> As Ahnert et al have argued, "visualisation is not better than narrative argument or mathematical equations for communicating ideas. Instead, it provides an additional means of producing, exploring, and analysing information that has proven value in both the liberal arts and the sciences."<sup>30</sup> This thesis creates network visualisations using the software Gephi, but consistently acknowledges what they can and cannot convey, using the graphs not as evidence, but as one of a number of means by which to explore and explain phenomenon in the data.

Criticism of these approaches also stems from a misunderstanding not only of networks themselves but the theories and methodologies around them, in large part because qualitative and quantitative approaches have been set up in a binary opposition to one another: "numbers as opposed to words, graphs as opposed to text [...] close versus distant reading, interpretative versus

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<sup>26</sup> Katherine Bode, *A World of Fiction: Digital Collections and the Future of Literary History*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 125.

<sup>27</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 67; Brughmans et al, 'Network Perspectives', 11.

<sup>28</sup> Charles van den Heuvel, 'Mapping Knowledge Exchange in Early Modern Europe Intellectual and Technological Geographies and Network Representations,' *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 9, no. 1 (2015), 103.

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, *Opened Letter*, 4-6; Adrianna Ciula, Øyvind Eide, Cristina Marras and Patrick Sahle, introduction to *Historical Social Research: Supplement 31* (2018): 48; Claas Lattmann, 'Iconizing the Digital Humanities: Models and Modeling from a Semiotic Perspective,' *Historical Social Research: Supplement 31* (2018): 128-129, 139-140; Brughmans et al, 'Network Perspectives,' 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 70.

descriptive work.”<sup>31</sup> Not only does this promote a sense of discord between the two disciplines, it belies how analytical skills developed in one field can easily and fruitfully be applied to the other.<sup>32</sup> The two disciplines can often be used *together*, rather than the quantitative replacing the qualitative, as often feared.<sup>33</sup> Combining these two approaches allows for a more nuanced and well-rounded understanding of the topic, in which elements of both disciplines can be used simultaneously, close *and* distant reading, interpretative *and* descriptive work. This promotes the fundamental elements of cross-discipline research, using these methodologies in an iterative process, utilising one to further explore and better understand points of interest in the other, but also to improve both sets of approaches and research styles. In doing so, digital humanists can look to create systems that cross these binaries, “something greater than the sum of its parts, rather than something lesser, such as an interdisciplinary silo in which we are only speaking to other displaced scholars.”<sup>34</sup> The aim of this thesis, then, is not merely to apply methodologies and theories from the sciences to humanistic inquiries but to create new modes of analysis that can transcend one specific topic and reconcile the two disciplines: not just adopting but *adapting* quantitative methods to suit humanistic investigations. As a result, most experiments in this thesis rely on my own custom-code using Python and the code library NetworkX, written specifically to suit the historical queries at the heart of this research.<sup>35</sup> In all this, it is important to acknowledge that this is an inherently epistemological process which prompts critical thinking about the research process itself. Rather than dramatically re-writing history, network analysis provides a fresh means to consider traditional material and an alternate framework to assess historical narratives.

### *Archives as Networks*

Letters have become one of the most commonly and perhaps instinctive sources for both qualitative and quantitative analysis in historical research, and it is worth briefly recounting how they have been utilised thus far, especially in relation to Cromwell. As Everett critiqued, biographers have often used Cromwell’s letters as a window into his character, but in doing so they sometimes problematically rely heavily or even exclusively on Roger Merriman’s transcriptions of the minister’s letters.<sup>36</sup> Merriman’s 1902 work has become almost indispensable, in part because of his extensive efforts to co-ordinate different sources for Cromwell’s remaining letters. His work

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, 74.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Bode, *World of Fiction*, 125.

<sup>34</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 88.

<sup>35</sup> All custom-written code for the experiments in this thesis can be found at [https://gitfront.io/r/user-8399541/n4i24HEJKbN2/Thomas\\_Cromwell\\_Networks\\_of\\_Power/](https://gitfront.io/r/user-8399541/n4i24HEJKbN2/Thomas_Cromwell_Networks_of_Power/)

<sup>36</sup> Roger Bigelow Merriman, ed. *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, 2 vols. (First published 1902; repr lithographically Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

prompts questions however about authorship and what counts as a letter, and includes both Cromwell's injunctions to the clergy in 1536 and 1538 and letters written by secretaries referring to Cromwell in the third person.<sup>37</sup> Though the question of authorship will be considered in more detail in Chapter IV, the use of pre-transcribed or pre-collected material can distort understandings or arguments about historical characters.<sup>38</sup>

The use of Cromwell's letters to produce the 'real' man is complicated, not least because his correspondence primarily served an administrative rather than personal function throughout his career, as explored in Chapter I. The distinction between private or personal and public letters in the early modern period is itself problematic; as Alan Stewart has questioned, "when does a familiar letter become a state paper? And when can a personally addressed 'state' paper remain a private missive?"<sup>39</sup> Acknowledging the blur between personal and professional in correspondence in the State Papers places some limitations on the ways letters can be read for 'real' identities. Yet, as Fay Bound has demonstrated, even letters explicitly conceived as 'personal' cannot accurately represent 'emotional expression.'<sup>40</sup> The sixteenth century witnessed a rise in 'ego-documents', and with it, a closer reflection on the construction and presentation of the self. Michel de Montaigne's sixteenth-century essays emulated this growing fixation on identity, conceiving this as the 'ego' and the 'self': the ego is the 'true' unchangeable identity and the 'self' the constructed version.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, Montaigne suggested that the 'ego' cannot be truly known; a 'self' is constructed, therefore, whether consciously or unconsciously, to be "studied and observed" in its place.<sup>42</sup> He not only implied that identity as an outwardly displayed entity *can* be a construct, but rather it can *only* be a construct. Unlike a 'true' identity or ego, Montaigne recognised that this construct constantly changed: "I give my self this face or that, depending upon which side I lay it down on."<sup>43</sup>

Montaigne used his somewhat autobiographical essays to explore the self and its construction but Bound argues that letters offer similar opportunities for self-creation, and as

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid* vol. 2, 25-29; 151-155; 167-174; 174-175.

<sup>38</sup> This can also be seen with the 'Summaries', passages summarising several letters between Cromwell and Wolsey between 1529 and 1530; included in *Letters and Papers*, Merriman notes in his collection that the passages were transcribed by a seventeenth-century scholar 'Thomas Masters, Coll. Nov.'<sup>38</sup> Without the originals of these letters, inferring emotions from these summaries in historiography becomes problematic. *L&P*, Vol. 4, Pt. III, no. 2714; Merriman, vol. 2, 326-328 n.1.

<sup>39</sup> Alan Stewart, 'Familiar Letters and State Papers: The Afterlives of Early Modern Correspondence,' in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*, ed. James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 239.

<sup>40</sup> Fay Bound, 'Writing the Self? Love and the Letter in England, c. 1660–c. 1760.' *Literature & History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 5.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick Rider, *The Dialectic of Selfhood in Montaigne*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Marie-Clarté Lagrée, 'Montaigne on Self,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, ed. Phillippe Desan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 463; Rider, *Dialectic of Selfhood*, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. and ed. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1991; repr. 2003) 377.

“modes of self-expression, they must participate in a similar process of literary construction.”<sup>44</sup> The ‘I’ in letters mined by historians for personality and character insights is not merely a construct, but one that was being consciously acknowledged as such in this era. As this mode of communication became more popular, so too grew the number of letter-writing manuals, building on both formal and socially accepted epistolary practices and cultures. Where letters were used as a key mode for self-exploration and self-construction, the existence of manuals to control language in correspondence suggests there were limitations on the ways early modern people could construct their ‘selves’. Letter-writing and conduct manuals not only enforced norms by outlining the rhetoric in which this construction could be articulated, but in doing so they restricted the possible outcomes. Letters not only reflect a constructed ‘self’, but a ‘self’ in some ways shared by others adhering to the same social norms. In letters then, “we find not merely the textual instances of the construction of the self, but an acute sensitivity to the cultures and practices of letters writing and a self-conscious creativity in the manipulation of these epistolary tools.”<sup>45</sup>

The use of letters to re-create a personality is therefore frustrated not only by historical distance but by social and epistolary norms designed to deliberately construct an artificial ‘self’. As such, recent literature from scholars including James Daybell, Gary Schneider, and Jonathan Goldberg have interrogated these customs and constructs, considering how they influenced not only the contents of letters but how correspondence was maintained.<sup>46</sup> As Schneider argues, “letters were *the* material medium, *tout court*, of early modern sociocultural exchange and, along with face-to-face conversation, a critical means of pragmatic communication.”<sup>47</sup> With few other means of interacting, early modern letters also became fundamental indicators of relationships and displays of power. Letter rhetoric was based around the status of the writer in relation to the recipient, creating a key way by which social and political positions were negotiated and reinforced. As customs arose to negate anxieties created by the delay and distance implicit in letter-writing and language sought to reconstruct and ratify connections, writers developed a specified set of skills Paul Trolander has termed ‘letteracy’.<sup>48</sup> Like identity, early modern writers would have been

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<sup>44</sup> Bound, ‘Writing the Self?’, 5.

<sup>45</sup> James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, ‘Introduction: The Early Modern Letter Opener,’ in *Cultures of Correspondence*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

See also: Gabriella del Lungo Camiciotti, ‘Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern Culture: An Introduction,’ *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 3 (2014), 17-35; Alan Stewart and Heather Wolfe, *Letterwriting in Renaissance England*, (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2004); Paul Trolander, *Literary Sociability in Early Modern England: The Epistolary Record*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Trolander, *Sociability*, 80.

familiar with the deliberate construction and management of relationships and social navigation in correspondence, acknowledging the role of letters as “a species of social fiction.”<sup>49</sup> Correspondents would therefore have both actively used ‘letteracy’ in their own writing, and recognised it in others’. As will be seen in Chapter I, Cromwell not only acknowledged and actively used these methods in terms of epistolary customs, but as a means of constructing and construing power as well.

Recent studies in epistolary culture have also looked to the materiality of letters, considering handwriting, signatures, spaces on the page and the folding of the paper, and the ways all these physical elements contribute to the message of the letter. This thesis builds on this understanding of ‘materiality’, considering letters not only as physical administrative documents, but also as tangible evidence of connections, emphasising the ways contemporaries viewed this as a primary function of correspondence.<sup>50</sup> In focusing on Cromwell’s use of letters as a political tool, this thesis offers not only a new interpretation of Cromwell’s modes of management, but also a new way of approaching letters as a historical source. Understanding the significance of letters as social markers emphasises the usefulness of correspondence when engaging in network analysis. Inherently containing ‘to’ and ‘from’ categories as part of the correspondence process, letters can be ‘abstracted’ into data for directed networks, in which relationships can be measured and explored in mutual and reciprocal terms.

If letters can be conceived as ‘abstracted’ data for network analysis then, archives are a collated dataset. Framing letters and archives in terms of sociological theory, it is important to consider not only what archives mean for a network, but also what model of data collection an archival set represents, and how this compares to more ‘traditional’ modes of information gathering. Letters constitute a form of self-reporting, in which the actors self-identify their interactions, without requiring interviewing from an external source and making the actors conscious of their own relationships. As such, using letters to recreate interactions is to a great extent safe from implications of an intrusive – or at least present – interviewer. Though letter-writers may have been anxious about letters being intercepted, it is unlikely that they envisaged their missives becoming the basis for intense historical scrutiny and network analysis.

Though free from these considerations, archives often form incomplete datasets, complicating network analysis in different ways. As will be explored in more depth in Chapter II, different survival rates of authors and recipients can potentially distort the network. Letters of this time were occasionally victim to deliberate destruction; in the case of Thomas More, little of his correspondence survives, as his household destroyed much of it to protect him from further

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<sup>49</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 102.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, 27.



accusations during his extended stay in the Tower. In many ways, both deliberate and accidental absences in material create ‘silences’ in the archives, moments in which actors are perhaps unexpectedly missing. Often the ‘silence’ of a particular writer can suggest a change in circumstances or location, and this absence can be just as significant as the presence of a correspondent. As will be seen, network analysis offers an alternative means of using these ‘silences’ to trace changes in influence. In some cases, survival rates reflect contemporary acknowledgement of power and importance: much more of Cromwell’s correspondence survives from later years in power than his early career.<sup>51</sup> Though this may reflect a higher volume being written, it also speaks to a tendency – both in Cromwell’s time and our own – to preserve the works of the powerful and politically important. As such, it is imperative to remain aware of any archival prejudice that places more emphasis on conserving that which is known (or presumed) to be important.

Archives therefore present new challenges to consider when using network analysis in comparison to more traditional modes of data collection for social studies. Brea Perry, Bernice Pescosolido and Stephen Borgatti’s *Egocentric Network Analysis* provides a critical interrogation of the process involved in network analysis, including how initial data collection methods can shape the network. Perry et al outline networks as having boundaries – i.e. inclusion in the network – defined either ‘emically’ (by the participants) or ‘etically’ (by the researcher). Etical research can be more arbitrary, as definitions of relationships and their importance are set by the researcher, who is external to the subjects of the study; emical research, however, is much more reliant on the willingness of participants to disclose information truthfully and accurately to an interviewer.<sup>52</sup> Perry et al also point to the difference between ‘sociocentric’ and ‘egocentric’ models. Sociocentric research creates networks by collecting information from many, often connected, participants, to produce a de-centralised view of interactions. In contrast, an egocentric model focuses on one person, and allows them and their interactions to define the focus and scope of the gathered data. Whilst archives can create either socio- or egocentric networks depending on the material they contain, they often blur the line between etical and emical models. Though researchers can term the definition and extent of ‘relationships’ (here letter interactions) without relying on participants remembering all their correspondents, the archives are emically defined by deliberate preservation

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<sup>51</sup> Unlike More, who predicted his arrest with time to destroy much of his work, Cromwell was taken by surprise with his arrest and as such, most of his papers remained to be confiscated. Whilst a large volume of Cromwell’s incoming correspondence survives in the archives, much of his outgoing material is missing however. The volume of incoming correspondence indicates how much of Cromwell’s business was conducted through letters and implies that the number of outgoing missives was probably relative to his inbox, even if exactly what is missing cannot be quantified.

<sup>52</sup> Brea L. Perry, Bernice A. Pescosolido and Stephen P. Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

or destruction by the original writers and recipients. Yet as this thesis shows, using archives for network analysis also offers exclusive and useful ways of approaching history, creating as Perry et al have highlighted “opportunities to address unique empirical questions that cannot be examined any other way.”<sup>53</sup>

With this consideration of archives in mind, it is important to specifically consider the State Papers archives, and how they work in terms of quantitative network analysis. In many ways, the State Papers form a sociometric network within this etical-emical framework, offering a means to consider relationships primarily related to the governing and administration of early modern England. As a state archive, the State Papers represent a curated collection of documents related to the governance of the country, developed out of individual collections, both confiscated and consciously preserved, from the start of the sixteenth century. In the 1830s the State Paper Commission first sought to consolidate the papers of the Tudor reign as the *Calendar of State Papers*, bringing together the records of the State Paper Office and the confiscated papers kept in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. When the State Paper Office was subsumed by the larger Public Record Office in 1852, a more comprehensive collection of the papers of Henry VIII began, completed in 1920 as the first edition of *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509-1547*.<sup>54</sup> In this long history, the contents of the State Papers archives have been shaped by both contemporary and more modern archival processes: as Arnold Hunt phrased it, “the early modern archives that have come down to us are very often the product of a deliberate but largely invisible process of selection.”<sup>55</sup> Whilst this certainly applies to contemporary processes for document survival, J. S. Brewer explicitly outlined the selection of material for *Letters and Papers*, a process more concerned with the inclusion of available material than exclusion. Brewer followed a different editorial process to that used by the rest of the Calendars; where these focus on one office or state department, *Letters and Papers*

embraces an abstract of all Letters and Miscellaneous Papers, illustrative of the reign of Henry VIII, foreign or domestic, printed or in manuscript, preserved either in the different departments of the Great National Depository, or in the British Museum, the Bodleian and the Lambeth libraries, or the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge [... and includes] a complete index and summary of the French, the Scotch, the Patent and the Parliament Rolls, the Signed Bills and Privy Seals, the army, navy, ordnance, and wardrobe accounts of the same period, not omitting the transcripts made by the late Record Commission from

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, 58.

<sup>54</sup> Amanda Bevan ‘State Papers of Henry VIII: the Archives and Documents.’ State Papers Online 1509-1714, Cengage Learning EMEA Ltd., 2007; J. S. Brewer, ‘Preface to the First Edition’, *L&P*, Vol. I.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold Hunt, “‘Burn This Letter’: Preservation and Destruction in the Early Modern Archive,” in *Cultures of Correspondence*, 191.

foreign archives [... which] have now for the first time been brought together and arranged chronologically.<sup>56</sup>

*Letters and Papers* includes, therefore, a broader range of material than other periods included in the State Papers archives, subject as it is to Brewer's different choices in archival selection.

What does this mean in quantitative terms then? Whilst this thesis uses all available letters as data for the networks, it is once more worth stating that the archives cannot include everything ever written, and the analysis is to some extent working within 'pre-defined conditions', set both by contemporaries and archivists. The archival process is therefore key to quantitative analysis throughout this thesis, and it is important to remain aware of the impact of decisions already made about archival inclusions or exclusions, just like Merriman's transcriptions. The networks in this thesis are built from letter data taken from *Letters and Papers* on Gale's digitised *State Papers Online*. As part of their AHRC project, *Tudor Networks of Power, 1509-1603*, Ruth and Sebastian Ahnert collected the available 'metadata' of over 130,000 letters (including sender, recipient, date, and place of writing), before extensively cleaning them in a laborious eighteen-month process, disambiguating and deduplicating letters, places, and names.<sup>57</sup> This thesis, focusing on 1523-1547, uses a subset of this considerable and large-scale work, containing 33,408 letters and 5,247 writers or recipients.

### *The Power of the Individual*

Whilst the State Papers offer a means to view society as a whole in this period of history, this research is also interested in the 'power of the individual'. Just as data collection models can be socio- or egocentric, so too can the networks they create. Egocentric networks look solely at one individual node, and their connections in the network. This approach is useful for assessing a singular node or actor, and their role in their personal community, but can attribute some undue weight and importance to a particular individual when the network is only seen from their point of view. On the other hand, sociometric networks offer a view of the entire network at once, though the boundaries of these networks may be arbitrary or artificially enforced, as with etical data collection models. The networks used in this thesis are, arguably, a combination of both these approaches. The archives, built as they are from multiple individual letter collections, create a set of overlapping ego networks that, when put together, offer a sociometric network defined by the boundaries of these ego networks. The individual node can then be investigated within a sociometric graph, and the focus on the individual should not be set up in opposition to an

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<sup>56</sup> Brewer, 'Preface to the First Edition' *L&P*, Vol. I.

<sup>57</sup> Project AH/M004171/1; Ruth Ahnert and Sebastian E. Ahnert, *Tudor Networks of Power* (under contract with Oxford University Press).

understanding of the network as a whole. One cannot understand the wider picture without the details nor contextualise the individual without the whole network. They are mutually beneficial, and this thesis explores the two perspectives alongside each other to provide more nuanced insights into the role of an individual and the wider network.

This interplay between socio- and ego-approaches is enmeshed in both qualitative and quantitative studies, and it is within this framework that the question of power can be explored. In grounding network analysis in theories about power from both the humanities and social sciences, this thesis seeks to address what Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin have described as the “unfortunate lack of interest in situating network analysis within the broader traditions of sociological theory.”<sup>58</sup> Though power will be explored and defined in greater detail throughout this thesis, it is important to initially consider the ways power and its synonyms – control, dominance, and influence – are consistently used with prepositions such as on, of or over.<sup>59</sup> In framing power in such a way, it is conceived in relational terms: power does not exist within a vacuum, but rather relies on a series of interactions. Relationship structures such as epistolary networks are therefore primed to explore and ‘measure’ or ‘quantify’ power.

Networks offer not only a means to explore power, but also the role of individuality, and the ways these two elements relate to one each other. The importance or power of the individual is two-fold in this thesis, and it considers not only the importance of Cromwell as an individual, but also the wider role of individuals in a network structure. The choice to focus on Cromwell in this thesis not only reflects the significance he holds in qualitative historical narratives, but also the value of building epistolary networks to investigate his career specifically. As will be demonstrated in Chapter I, Cromwell consistently relied on letters and epistolary customs as the foundation of his power base, using them continually throughout his career. Power in the epistolary network is therefore measured in Cromwell’s own terms and offers a new means of approaching and assessing Cromwell’s influence. It is vital to understand this to demonstrate that Cromwell’s authority or power in the network is not coincidental or passive but rather the outcome of his deliberate application of this chosen mode of control.

It is important to also couch the role of any individual – specifically personal attributes or individuality – in the context of traditional sociological and network theory debates, which have sought to define the source of and constraints on power in a network. The individualistic school of thought argues for the prevalence of human actions and human characteristics in shaping decisions, promotions, and the ability to gain and hold power in a network. In this approach, interactions and

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<sup>58</sup> Mustafa Emirbayer, and Jeff Goodwin, ‘Network Analysis, Culture and the Problem of Agency,’ *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994), 1412.

<sup>59</sup> ‘power, *n.* 1, 2.a.’ *OED Online*. October 2021, Oxford University Press.

relationships are shaped by the individual. In contrast, the holistic or structural approach argues that the network itself defines and constrains the influence that any individual may have. This is the school of thought to which Ronald Burt's Player-Structure Duality theory in *Structural Holes* belongs, wherein Burt argues that success or power is not linked to personal attributes but relies solely on the passive or spontaneous structure in which a person exists. Though Burt attempts to create a "single explanation that transcends levels of analysis," a concept that entirely ignores personal merit is problematic in real-world applications, as this thesis demonstrates.<sup>60</sup>

Alain Degenne and Michael Forse suggest a middle ground between these two approaches, in which structure creates limits to individual power, but the structure itself is formed by individualistic and human-led actions and decisions. Though Degenne and Forse argue that their 'structural individualism', "does not attempt an impossible synthesis between holism and individualism [...] it acknowledges weak determinism, thus setting up a bridge between the two schools of sociological analysis while avoiding, because of this very fact, the drawbacks of each."<sup>61</sup> This synthesis, as they suggest, is perhaps impossible and overly idealistic, but it is important to continue to strive for a middle ground that acknowledges the impact and constraints of a network structure, whilst still recognising the inevitable influence of human individuality.

This debate between individuality and structure is specifically relevant to historical network studies, and as Emirbayer and Goodwin argue,

network analysis all too often denies in practice the crucial notion that social structure, culture, and human agency presuppose one another; it either neglects or inadequately conceptualizes the crucial dimension of subjective meaning and motivation [...] and thereby fails to show exactly how it is that intentional, creative human action serves in part to constitute those very social networks that so powerfully constrain actors in turn.<sup>62</sup>

Here, Emirbayer and Goodwin critique even Degenne and Forse's approach, arguing that individuality in a network structure needs to be emphasised further. It is not enough to say that a structure or actor emerged because of individualistic actions, but to explore this initial human action and its motivations in more depth, arguing as Stephen Borgatti and Daniel Halgin do that "any theory of social networks must take into account actors' agency in creating those networks."<sup>63</sup> This may, perhaps seem obvious to a humanities scholar. It would seem antithetical to a historian to

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<sup>60</sup> Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 193.

<sup>61</sup> Alain Degenne and Michel Forse, *Introducing Social Networks*, trans. Arthur Borges, (Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994; London: Sage Publications, 1999), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Emirbayer and Goodwin, 'Network Analysis,' 1413.

<sup>63</sup> Borgatti and Daniel S. Halgin, 'On Network Theory,' *Organization Science*, 22, no. 5 (September-October 2011), 1178.

explore the network structure without considering the individuals and their intentions: these are real-life networks with human identities that cannot be unproblematically reduced to structure alone, as in Burt's theory. Whilst network experiments often use random graphs, explicitly designed to explore a holistic approach, these graphs are unable to fully mimic real-life results as they cannot accurately recreate the impossibly unpredictable variable that is individual human action. What Emirbayer and Goodwin seek, then, is a methodology and theory that – even more selectively than Degenne and Forse – pick the most pertinent elements of holism and individualism to explain and explore human action and structure in a historical context.

This thesis adopts a model that balances holistic and individualistic approaches, considering this dichotomy throughout, and uses a historical case study to frame sociological concepts as practice in a real-world context, rather than just as theory. Rather than opposing each other, structure and the individual cannot exist without one another: Cromwell was defined by his relationships and cannot be conceived outside of his place in the structure; and yet at the same time, the structure in its form cannot be conceived without him. By considering Cromwell in the network in such a way, the role of an individual can be considered: not only an individual meaning one sole, independent person, but an individual meaning a *unique, distinctive* identity. This thesis asks, then, not only how *one* man can impact the structure, but how *this* man can impact the structure. By considering this approach and differing means of conceptualising individuality and influence in both quantitative and qualitative studies, this thesis considers the 'power of the individual' in a way that offers something to both disciplines, as demonstrative of the wider cross-disciplinary aims and impact of the project.

#### *Letters, Networks of Power, and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell, 1523-1547*

This thesis aims, then, to consider Cromwell's power as an individual in an epistolary network built on letter archives, combining computational and quantitative analysis with traditional qualitative approaches. Again, it is important to emphasise that this is not a biography of the chief minister, but a series of chronologically focused experiments. In doing so, renewed focus is placed instead on the use and understanding of key sources. In eschewing an events-based analysis, this thesis does not necessarily focus on some of the 'key points' in Cromwell's time in power often contested in historiography, such as the king's divorce, the falls of Thomas More and Anne Boleyn, or the onset and progression of the English Reformation. Nor will it necessarily look to more general building blocks or positions of Cromwell's career, such as his time in Parliament or his reform of the household finance departments. In part this is simply because there is not the appropriate space here to do these debates and investigations apt attention. More importantly however, these omissions reflect the methodological approach this thesis seeks to take, which

focuses primarily on what the network can show and allows this to lead the process rather than using events or pre-existing qualitative knowledge about Cromwell to drive investigations.

*Letters, Networks of Power, and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell, 1523-1547* comes in three key sections. Section I ‘Thomas Cromwell and Network Analysis’ introduces both the time period and the network, with a deeper overview of Cromwell as a letter-writer and core network concepts. Chapter I acts as a traditional, qualitative outline of Cromwell’s rise to power and his use of letters as an administrative business tool for control and influence, with close reading of literary and social epistolary customs. It not only demonstrates the ways epistolary network analysis suits Cromwell’s modes of power, but sets up qualitative concepts necessary for a historical understanding of the quantitative network. Chapter II in turn introduces the network itself, establishing core methods and measures used throughout the thesis and illustrating the opportunities of a distant reading approach to 1523-1540. Finally, Chapter III demonstrates how network analysis can be used in a case study on power, allowing network metrics to highlight periods of interest in the archives and explore these, employing quantitative and qualitative approaches in tandem and performing the epistemological manoeuvres required for the rest of the thesis.

Section II, ‘Cromwell in Power, 1534-1540,’ applies the methodologies introduced in Section I alongside unique measures and experiments designed specifically for this thesis to explore the relationship between Cromwell and Henry, quantifying Cromwell’s place and influence at court and contextualising it within his connections to the king. This section employs a variety of experiments to evaluate the ‘king versus minister’ relationship both qualitatively and quantitatively, including alternate means of evidencing Cromwell and Henry’s relationships using mentions of the king’s name in the minister’s letters (Chapter IV); removing Cromwell from the dataset to consider his impact on connecting the network (Chapter V); and assessing Cromwell’s role as a ‘gatekeeper’ to the king and his ability to manage relations and influence (Chapter VI). In doing so, it not only frames the relationship between king and minister as core to Cromwell’s power at court, but uses these experiments to view the structuring and functioning of the rest of the network.

Finally, Section III, ‘Power Post-Cromwell, 1540-1547,’ looks at epistolary networks after Cromwell’s fall, considering not only new actors in power, but how the structures themselves changed in response to the minister’s death, as in Chapter VII. Chapter VIII lastly considers to what extent Cromwell was unique in Henry’s reign, re-using experiments from Section II to compare actors and positions of influence in this period. This final chapter conceives the last seven years of Henry’s reign not merely as post-Cromwell, but an embodiment of the fallen minister’s administrative plans, explicitly framing the changes in political structures as Cromwell’s lasting

legacy. In doing so, this thesis reframes what it means to consider Cromwell's power, his fall, and his 'afterlife'.

Cromwell's letters play a vital role in understanding the minister, both in their contents and the ways they demonstrated and defined key relationships throughout his life. Though they may never act as a window into the soul of their writer, this work offers letters as the paper structure on which one of the greatest minds of the Tudor dynasty built his administrative empire.



## **SECTION I**

### **Thomas Cromwell and Network Analysis**

Nearly five hundred years since his death, Cromwell remains one of the most enigmatic members of Henry VIII's court, and adjusting the framework through which he is studied offers the most fruitful opportunities for fresh interpretation of his life and power. To do this, it is important to understand the different approaches required for this methodological switch, acknowledging that this thesis carefully layers several modes of analysis on top of one another. This first section therefore introduces these elements one by one to offer an overview both of Cromwell's career through his letters and the initial network through which power and influence at the Tudor court can be tracked. In doing so, it outlines the core qualitative and quantitative methodologies and theories that provide the fundamental framework for analysis throughout the thesis, which are built on in later chapters. In emphasising the role of epistolary customs in early modern communications, and in particular Cromwell's use of them, this section demonstrates how network analysis of Tudor letters is an appropriate and novel means of assessing power and influence. Whilst the qualitative (Chapter I) and the quantitative (Chapter II) are initially split to clearly define and explore the methods used and their importance, this section closes with a case study demonstrating how the two approaches can be blended to produce a fresh interpretation of this period (Chapter III). In this way, this section lays the theoretical and methodological groundwork for the rest of the thesis.

## I. Thomas Cromwell and Letters

One of the most influential advisors of the Tudor reign, Cromwell's career was defined not merely by the changes he instigated in governance and administration, but the ways in which he activated them. Before embarking on a quantitative analysis of the minister and the wider Tudor court, it is worth focusing solely on a more traditional assessment of the ways Cromwell used letters throughout his career, outlining how he actively and with great awareness employed letters as an administrative tool and a means to manage both his own power and that of others. In understanding Cromwell's use of contemporary epistolary customs and the material advantages of letters to actively amalgamate, regulate, and convey power, Cromwell's correspondence and contacts can be seen as an excellent case study for historical network analysis. This chapter not only looks to the importance of epistolary customs in early modern correspondence but the manifold ways Cromwell actively employed these customs in using letters as administrative documents, signallers of social significance (both his own and that of others), and initiators, maintainers, and evidence of connections. In understanding Cromwell's use of letters and networks of correspondents as a conscious choice, this chapter sets up the ways quantitative network analysis is useful for measuring Cromwell's power in his own terms. Whilst this chapter offers a purely qualitative narrative of Cromwell's career, it also seeks to highlight where network analysis offers opportunities to bolster and reinvigorate traditional discussions.

### *Early Years*

As outlined in the introduction, Cromwell's correspondence has often been mined for insights into his character; but these letters can also be used to trace modes of management and changes in influence throughout his career. Though it is tempting for those considering Cromwell to skip straight to his work for Henry, it is pivotal to first understand his early career and the role letters played in this. By 1520, Cromwell was a firm member of English legal circles and many of his letters reflect this early work, often used as an informal means to advise and instruct his clients.<sup>64</sup> Part of this practice involved the management of land, and Cromwell regularly used his correspondence as warrants for legal action, recognising the value of the letter as a tangible document that could be used both to communicate and for administrative, record-keeping purposes. Cromwell employed this in 1524, writing to request the "landes as the sayd John Flemyng hath [... ] be put in execucion" and promising his recipient that they could "bynde<sup>me</sup> by this my *lettere*

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<sup>64</sup> Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*, 19-22; Howard Leithhead, 'Cromwell, Thomas,' *ODNB*, rev. 21st May 2009, accessed 25th May 2020.

to Satisfye and Ferther to recompence *your* paynyes.”<sup>65</sup> Cromwell relied not only on the materiality of the letter, but its role as a substitute for face-to-face interactions and as a representation of the writer. As Goldberg and Schneider have shown, the handwriting and, in particular, the signature of a letter was a recreation of the writer, validating both the sender and the contents of the letters through “the system of the re-making of the writer.”<sup>66</sup> In utilising his letters as warrants, Cromwell acknowledged the value of the signature as authenticating not only himself as author, but his instructions as well.

Beyond their physical attributes, Cromwell was also “using his commercial contacts to build his legal business,” relying not just on the contents of the letters but also on the important connections that correspondence created.<sup>67</sup> To a great extent, letters offered a means to display skills and services, and seek opportunities for patronage relationships. Patronage was a prime mode of promotion in early modern England and Cromwell used letters to advertise his skills and business in the hope of advancement through a social superior at court. As Frank Whigham establishes in his study of courtly letter customs, the patronage relationship worked because it was not one-sided: the patron relied on the receiver “for public evidence of his superior status. When they offered to attest to his rank, they offer a coin he cannot do without, a true and potent remuneration, not merely a formal one.”<sup>68</sup> It was this mutual benefit that made patronage such a popular avenue of advancement in early modern England. Both Cromwell and his recipients were aware that where “the ambitious seriously needed contacts at court; the letter bore the burden of fostering such relationships.”<sup>69</sup> In 1527, Anne Shelton, sister to Thomas Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, wrote to Cromwell to ask for advice for her husband, Sir Robert Clere, in a legal dispute in Chancery courts.<sup>70</sup> Writing directly to Thomas Boleyn, Cromwell asked “that no wryttes of liberata goo owt of the chauncerye [...] And *your* lordshype thus doing shall do the thing in my poore opynnyon which shall *with* reason and good conscyens as knowyth the holye Trynyte.”<sup>71</sup> Though Cromwell recognised the limitations of his own abilities and used Boleyn’s connection to the case to ask for his help, in doing so Cromwell also extended his web of correspondents to progress his career and used his legal business to pursue patronage opportunities. Though it is too far to state that Cromwell intended Boleyn’s sister’s case as one step in an extended plan to enter the king’s service, he takes this opportunity to expand his correspondents to potentially elevate his station. Where Whigham suggests that letters held the responsibility of furthering connections, they rely on what Schneider

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<sup>65</sup> TNA, SP 1/32 f.234.

<sup>66</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 121; Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 236.

<sup>67</sup> Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 19.

<sup>68</sup> Frank Whigham, ‘The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitors’ Letters,’ *PMLA* 96, no. 5 (October 1981): 873.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, 867.

<sup>70</sup> Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*, 21.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, SP 1/46 f.33.

argues was “generally considered a social contract,” in that “the reciprocity inherent in letter exchange was generally stable, in that even social superiors were expected to respond to social inferiors.”<sup>72</sup> Cromwell relied on these cultural norms of reciprocity in letter writing to help establish networks of correspondents that he could use to develop patronage relationships and improve his social standing.

Cromwell would most explicitly use these ‘networks of correspondents’ in his entry to parliament in 1529. Though Cromwell was first elected to a seat in 1523, the parliament of 1529 is frequently credited as “the turning-point in his career.”<sup>73</sup> A letter from Ralph Sadler to Cromwell in November 1529 highlights the process by which Cromwell was elected:

I spoke with Mr. Gage at the court, and, as you commanded, moved him to speak to the duke of Norfolk for the burgess’s room of the Parliament on your behalf, which he did. The Duke said he had spoken with the King, who was well contented that you should be a burgess, if you would follow the Duke’s instructions. The Duke wishes to speak with you tomorrow, and has sent you as a token, by Mr. Gage, your ring with a turquoise, which I now send by the bearer. Will speak with Mr. Russhe tonight, and know whether you shall be burgess of Oxford, or not. If you are not elected there, I will desire Mr. Paulet to name you as burgess for one of my Lord’s (Wolsey’s) towns of his bishopric of Winchester.<sup>74</sup>

Though Cromwell used Sadler to promote his case in person, Sadler could do this by building on Cromwell’s pre-existing connections at court created through correspondence. Cromwell had corresponded with Thomas Rush and William Paulet as a lawyer before 1529; but more importantly Cromwell’s connections with Thomas Boleyn from 1527 linked him to the Duke of Norfolk, Boleyn’s brother-in-law. Already, Cromwell was utilising the contacts he had made through his legal profession for further promotion: by establishing continued connections with both equals and those above him, Cromwell could remain a prominent presence in their lives and build a reputation as someone to be advocated for parliament. There is not one letter – or indeed one moment – to credit with Cromwell’s entry to parliament (or any other advancement in his career) but rather his continued use of letters to promote himself in a society where “personal recommendation was the sole route to promotion.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 58.

<sup>73</sup> Neville Williams, *The Cardinal & the Secretary*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 153.

<sup>74</sup> L&P, vol. IV, Appendix: 1528-1530, no. 238.

<sup>75</sup> Steven Gunn, ‘The Structures of Politics in Early Modern England.’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995): 71.

### *Cardinal Thomas Wolsey*

At the same time as his advancements as a lawyer and in parliament in the 1520s, Cromwell also worked for the Lord Chancellor of England and Henry's right-hand man, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, rising to become his secretary and chief aide. In his work for the cardinal, Cromwell continued to use letters as an administrative tool in the management of land, and it may be this that led Cromwell into Wolsey's service in the first place by latest 1524.<sup>76</sup> Writing to the cardinal in 1528, Cromwell outlined "that I according to your most gracyous commandement have repayred vnto the late monasterye of Wallingforde where I founde aswell all the ornamentse of the churche & all other ymplementte of housold [...] Whych I sorted and romvyd vnto *your* colledge in Oxforde."<sup>77</sup> Later the same year, Cromwell reported that "I have spoken with maister Babington nowe lorde of Kylmayne for the exchange to be made bitwene *your* colledge in Oxforde and his religion for Saundforde."<sup>78</sup> Much like John Fleming's estates in 1524, Cromwell's correspondence demonstrates his continued involvement with land as an aspect of his legal work. It is significant that Cromwell was still able to conduct this business through his own correspondence; although he was now managing Wolsey's affairs rather than just his own legal practice, Cromwell continued to do this in his own letters. It is likely that Cromwell enjoyed an element of freedom in running Wolsey's lands because of his previous experience, and the success he had had using letters to do so. Using his own letters allowed Cromwell to also expand his own circle of correspondents, adopting many of Wolsey's contacts as his own. As will be seen in Chapter II using quantitative assessments of the archives, by Wolsey's death in 1530, Cromwell had developed direct contact with several of Wolsey's former associates, including some of the key members of Henry's court, such as Thomas More, Stephen Gardiner and Anne Boleyn.

Though Cromwell wrote letters in his own name to maintain Wolsey's legal business and manage Wolsey's land, he also took on secretarial work for his master, drafting and writing letters for the cardinal to sign and send. The role of the secretary in early modern letter writing cannot be overstated and it is important to unpack more specifically what this concept meant. The early modern concept of a secretary is often conflated with a modern understanding of the role, primarily as a scribe. Though scribal roles certainly existed in the Tudor period, especially given low literacy rates, the amanuensis or scrivener – "one who copies or writes from the dictation of another" – was not explicitly the same as a secretary.<sup>79</sup> Instead, as Angel Day outlined in his 1586 epistolary manual *The English Secretary*, the term secretary carried "with it selfe a purpose of much weightier

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<sup>76</sup> Merriman, vol. 1, 13-15; Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell redivivus,' in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, vol. 3, *Papers and Reviews 1973-1981*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 374; Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*, 28-30.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, SP 1/47 f.153.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, SP 1/50 f.70.

<sup>79</sup> 'amanuensis, n.', *OED Online*, January 2021, Oxford University Press.

effect” and “the very etymology of the word it selfe, both Name and Office in one, do conclude vpon secrecie [... and] in respect of the couertnes safetie and assurance in him reposed and not other wise, the party seruing in such place may be called a *Secretary*.”<sup>80</sup> To a great extent, Cromwell operated as both scribe and secretary to Wolsey during the latter half of the 1520s, and whilst the cardinal relied on his advice and legal skills, Wolsey also employed Cromwell to write out his letters for him. It was not uncommon for scribes to write as if they were their master; indeed Goldberg suggests that “secretaries were not only able to forge their master’s hands – they were permitted and even expected to do so.”<sup>81</sup> The freedom that secretaries could enjoy writing as their employer was certainly a cause for concern: Andrew Gordon points to anxieties surrounding “mastering the hand and wielding the tools of epistolary authority” leading to “secretarial subterfuge.”<sup>82</sup> Though this concern was pertinent later in Cromwell’s career, the extent to which he could commit this subterfuge was limited under Wolsey.

This is clear in Wolsey’s 1528 letter to Sir Francis Bryan: though Cromwell wrote as Wolsey, the letter is littered with the cardinal’s corrections and crossing-outs.<sup>83</sup> Evidently, Wolsey minutely monitored everything written under his name. The letter also acts as a significant window into the secretarial processes of Henry’s court. Though Wolsey was not Principal Secretary, he nevertheless took on the secretarial role of confidant and mouthpiece for Henry. The letter to Bryan contains different levels of secretarial input then: physically written by Cromwell, the letter was overseen by and contained instructions from Wolsey, who communicated on behalf of Henry. Though Wolsey closely monitored the contents of the letter, amendments from the king himself are notably absent. While this also says much for the way the king dispersed his power and the independence Wolsey enjoyed, there was a distinct difference between the freedoms a secretary could enjoy when writing *as* one’s master as a scribe and when writing independently on their behalf.

Assessing communication between Cromwell and Wolsey himself also offers insights into changes in power. On several occasions, Cromwell wrote to other members of Wolsey’s household rather than to the cardinal himself. Writing to Stephen Gardiner, another of Wolsey’s secretaries, Cromwell asked him “to aduertise my lorde his grace that the cause why I do not repayre thither at this present ys for that I have certin boke to be don and acomplished concerning his colledge.”<sup>84</sup> To a great extent, Cromwell activated the “multiple-party circulation and dissemination” of letters

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<sup>80</sup> Angel Day, *The English secretary; or, Methods of writing epistles and letters (1599). A facsimile reproduction, with an introduction, by Robert O. Evans*, (London: Felix Kyngston, for William Welby, 1614), 102-103.

<sup>81</sup> Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 248.

<sup>82</sup> Gordon, ‘Material Fictions: Counterfeit Correspondence and the Culture of Copying in Early Modern England,’ in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*, 101.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, SP 1/50 f.6.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, SP 1/52 f.146.

in the early modern period, which as Schneider highlights included “shared letters, letters enclosed within others, and letters read aloud.”<sup>85</sup> In doing so, Cromwell not only utilised the administrative opportunities of letters to their maximum effective potential, he implied a shared commonality and connection with Gardiner and other intermediaries to the cardinal.

It is in part because of this emphasis on multiple-part circulation that direct letter exchanges only appear between Cromwell and the cardinal after 1528 until his death in late 1530. This later correspondence offers insight into the changing dynamics between Cromwell and Wolsey: power – much like identity – was open to self-fashioning in letters, and correspondence provides a means of assessing both perceived and projected influence and importance. In 1528, Cromwell’s letters were humble and full of supplication, where

your gracious pleasure knowen touching the *premisses* I shall most humblie indevoir my self according to my duetie to accomplishe *your* most gracious comannement. As knowithe the holly trynytie vnto whome I shall duly during my lyfe praye for the *prosperous* conservacion of your good grace.<sup>86</sup>

Cromwell attested that he worked on the cardinal’s commands, and his sign off is full of great deference. From late 1529 onwards as Wolsey’s favour with the king began to wane, more letters addressed directly from servant to master appeared and by 1530, though Cromwell remained respectful, there was a distinct power shift as Cromwell began to instruct his fallen master. As Wolsey journeyed north, still hopeful that he would return to the king’s favour, Cromwell advised him that “your gift [to the king] shall stand so as *your* grac do accomplishe the *tener* of his hieghnes *letteres* nowe eftsones directed vnto youe, which myn aduise and counsail is that youe shall in any wise ensue.”<sup>87</sup> Cromwell not only demonstrated his new position as intermediary between king and cardinal, but there was a significant lack of supplication in Cromwell’s language. The sign off is far more familiar than two years earlier, suggesting that anything “I maye do vnto your grace stede or pleasure I shalbe as glad to do thoffice of a frend as yow shalbe to require the same of me Thus moost hartely fare youe well.”<sup>88</sup> The letter demonstrates that Cromwell, though still respectful and seeking to help Wolsey, held more authority than before. No longer his secretary or employee, Cromwell had become a friend, an equal, using this language to assert the new power he held within this relationship.

Letters from August the same year reinforce the new importance of Cromwell’s opinion. Pleading with the cardinal, now in residence at Cawood Castle in York, to reduce his expenditure,

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<sup>85</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 25.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, SP 1/50 f.70.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, SP 1/57 f.87.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

Cromwell wrote to Wolsey to “most hertelye beseche your grace to haue respecte to euery thing accordinglie and Consydering the tyme to refrayne your self for a Season from buylding all maner byldingge more than mere necessite requireth.”<sup>89</sup> Williams argues that these letters are “more businesslike in tone and he is not writing any longer as a loving servant, but as a friend at court;” yet the tone of Cromwell’s letters does not mean that he was distancing himself from the cardinal.<sup>90</sup> As Steven Gunn and Charles Fantazzi have asserted, ornate and “affected grandiloquence” were often shallow assurances to strangers, whereas more familiar letters to friends and equals used simple, direct language.<sup>91</sup> The more straightforward tone used by Cromwell in addressing Wolsey – and indeed, the many instances of crossing-out and re-writing in the letter – rather conveyed a state of urgency and a sense of familiarity. More significantly, as a friend rather than servant, Cromwell addressed Wolsey as an equal. There is, therefore, a significant shift in the authority he held and sought to project in his correspondence. Letters could perform power, not only through language itself, but by initiating and managing relationships within a wider structure of interactions, as between Cromwell, Wolsey, and Henry. As will be seen in the following chapters, network analysis offers a means of exploring these structures on a larger scale and considering their importance for quantifying Cromwell’s influence at court.

### *King and Court*

If Cromwell’s letters to Wolsey were not demonstrative of an emotional distance between the lawyer and his former master, they certainly pointed to a geographical one: the necessity of writing a letter intimated a physical separation between writer and recipient. Writing to Wolsey therefore demonstrated a very literal shift in Cromwell’s location, contrasting the references to the king in letters, which in turn displayed a proximity to the monarch. Cromwell’s letters not only demonstrate his move from Wolsey’s service to Henry’s, but themselves played a role in his new employment, much as they had in the run up to 1524. Contemporary accounts of Cromwell’s entry into Henry’s favour litter historiographical debates surrounding the minister, and it is worth considering how they compare with the narrative provided by Cromwell’s letters in this period. Despite evidence that Cromwell was at court from early in 1530, John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* places the initial meeting between Cromwell and the king later, after Wolsey’s death, when

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, SP 1/57 f.270.

<sup>90</sup> Williams, *Cardinal & the Secretary*, 156.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Fantazzi, ‘Vives Versus Erasmus on the Art of Letter-Writing,’ in *Self-Presentation and Social Identification: The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter Writing in Early Modern Times*, ed. by Toon Van Houdt, Jan Papy, Gilbert Tournoy and Constant Matheussen, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 45-48; Gunn, ‘Structures of Politics,’ 68.



“Cromwell amongst other, laboured also to be retheyned into the kynges seruice.”<sup>92</sup> Foxe portrays Cromwell as first meeting with the king – with the help of a few loyal friends and in spite of already mounting opposition at court – to discuss religious reform, informing Henry

how his princely authoritie was abused within his owne realme, by the Pope and hys Clergie, who beyng sworne vnto hym, were afterward dispensed from the same [...] Declaryng therupon how his Maiestie might accumulate to him selfe great riches, so much as al the Clergie in this Realme was worth, if it so pleased hym to take the occasion now offered. [...] After which] Syr thomas cromwell growyng in great fauour with the kyng, was made Knyght, & Master of the kynges Iewell house, and shortly after was admitted also into the kynges Counsell.<sup>93</sup>

Across the confessional divide, Cardinal Reginald Pole’s *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum* paints a similar story, though is infamous for portraying Cromwell as the Machiavellian servant of Satan who helped corrupt the king.<sup>94</sup> A staunch supporter of the Roman Catholic Church in England, Pole self-exiled in France after refusing to help annul Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon and spent the remainder of Henry’s reign preaching and writing against both Henry and Cromwell. Though now widely disputed, Pole’s report depicts Cromwell arriving at Henry’s court with a fully formed plan to make the king rich and powerful and rid him of both his wife and the pope.<sup>95</sup>

Yet Cromwell’s letters managing Wolsey’s business best support George Cavendish’s account, that Cromwell’s journey to court to “make or marre” and first meet with the king was to pursue support for his master: “wherfore [Cromwell] refused any sewte to [the king’s council], and made oonly sewte to the kynges owen person [...] and thorough the specyall mocyon of Mayster Cromwell the kyng was well contentyd that [Wolsey] shold remove to Rychemond.”<sup>96</sup> As Elton has consistently argued, Cromwell “used Wolsey’s affairs to bring himself to Henry’s notice” and by acting “as the link between court and cardinal [...] some of the glory stuck to his hands.”<sup>97</sup>

It was not the singular, life-changing meeting of some primary accounts then, but rather a series of opportunities to display his abilities that brought Cromwell into the king’s service. In fact, as Cavendish has shown, Cromwell’s early work for the king involved continuing to manage Wolsey’s lands:

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<sup>92</sup> John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO*, 1576 edition Book 8, (Sheffield: The Digital Humanities Institute, 2011), available from: <http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe>, 1174.

<sup>93</sup> Foxe, *TAMO*, 1570 edition Book 8, 1387.

<sup>94</sup> Paul van Dyke, ‘Reginald Pole and Thomas Cromwell: An examination of the Apologia Ad Carolum Quintum,’ *The American Historical Review* 9, no. 4 (July 1904): 696-724.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey: The Great Cardinal of England*, repr., (Chipping Camden: The Alcuin Press, 1930), 108; 126-127.

<sup>97</sup> Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, first published Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1955, 3rd ed., (London: Folio Society, 1997, published in arrangement with Routledge Ltd), 129; Elton, *The Tudor Revolution*, 85.

bothe noble men and other who had any patentes of the kyng [...] made earnest sewte to Mayster Cromwell for to sollicite ther causes to [Wolsey] [...] and [Cromwell] havng a great occasion of accesse to the kyng for the disposicion of divers londes wherof he had the order and governaunce; by means wherof and by his witty demeanor, he grewe contynually in to the kinges favor.<sup>98</sup>

Everett highlights the significance of Cromwell's work with crown lands in contrast to the "historian's tendency to focus on the more 'high' politics of these years," centring instead on official petitions and grants stored in the State Papers.<sup>99</sup> Yet as with his work as a lawyer and under Wolsey, Cromwell often operated outside of these formal methods, continuing to rely on letters as an administrative tool and means of personal management. Serving the king, Cromwell once more used letters in 1532 to grant "the Ferme of Myxberye vnto my veraye Frend and Felow *Master* John Welsbourne one of the gentylnen of the kynges preveye chambre."<sup>100</sup> Despite changes in roles and rank, letters provided consistency to Cromwell's operations and are a mode of tracing his work over time, as important for the historian examining his career as they were for the minister's administrative purposes. As this thesis will show, network analysis offers a means to trace these changes in new and exciting ways.

Whilst Cromwell entered the king's service by managing lands, he quickly rose through the ranks at court, amalgamating a collection of household offices. In 1532, Cromwell was appointed Master of the Jewels and Clerk of the Hanaper; in 1533 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer and began taking over many of the duties of the Principal Secretary, to which he was officially appointed in April 1534. In January 1535, Cromwell was made Vicegerent in Spirituals, and in 1536 was appointed Lord Privy Seal, allowing him to hold two of the three great seals of office. Combining these offices together to make himself ubiquitous and indispensable, Cromwell became chief minister, the ultimate – if unofficial – position of influence at the right hand of the king.

In all these roles, Cromwell preferred more personal and informal means of managing business, again using letters in place of official processes. Ironically, Cromwell himself established a number of these procedures, including formalising the signing and issuing of royal warrants in an act of 1535. Any warrant or grant approved by the king was given to the signet office to issue a warrant to the Privy Seal Office; on receipt of this, the Privy Seal Office sent a warrant to the Lord Chancellor, keeper of the Great Seal, to action an official grant.<sup>101</sup> In doing so, Cromwell ensured

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<sup>98</sup> Cavendish, *Thomas Wolsey*, 128-129.

<sup>99</sup> Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*, 98.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, SP 1/70 f.168.

<sup>101</sup> 'Chapter XI (1535) – An acte concernyng Clerkes of the signet and Privie Seale,' in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3, 1509/10-1545, (1817, repr. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1963), 542-543.

his inclusion in the process as Principal Secretary, stating that “all and every gyftes grauntes and other wrytynges [...] in the Kynges name to be passed under anye his Majestyes Seales, be in any wise, first [...] brought and delyveryd to the Kynges pryncypalle Secretarye.”<sup>102</sup> From 1536 to 1540, whilst Cromwell held both the Principal Secretary and Privy Seal offices, there are no warrants between these two offices, likely as communication between the two was made redundant by Cromwell’s management of both roles. It is important to note that Cromwell was quick to employ formal arrangements where they allowed him to regulate others but would ignore them or use letters instead when it suited him better. In doing so Cromwell recognised that his personal skills and abilities could not be replicated by other administrators or members of court, a theme that became increasingly prevalent throughout his time in power, and something that will be more closely explored through the network in following chapters.

In many instances, Cromwell once more used letters as a means of administrative management, as can be seen with the Court of Augmentations, created in 1535 to deal with the additional financial and property business created by the English Reformation and dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>103</sup> Significantly, the same act of 1535 as that organising warrants determined that “every parte and parcell therof shall extende to the Court of Augmentacion of the Revenues of the Kinges Crowne [...] for and concernyng the sealyng and writing of any maner patente lease or other graunte.”<sup>104</sup> Yet Cromwell regularly bypassed this process with personal correspondence. In 1538, Cromwell wrote to Richard Riche, Chancellor of the Augmentations, informing Riche that he had “appoyntyd the late Abbot of Kenellworth for his pension one hundred pownd,” Cromwell asked that Riche “cause his sayd pension to bee entryd in *your* bookes.”<sup>105</sup> Later that year, Cromwell informed Riche that, having reviewed the case of “one of the Brethern of the Late Monasterie of Kingeswood”, he “thought good to awarde hym foure *markes* pension.”<sup>106</sup> Though Cromwell acknowledged Riche’s position, addressing him as “Mr Chancellour,” Cromwell asserted his own authority: these letters contained instructions, not requests.<sup>107</sup> Cromwell used his personal correspondence and connections to conduct business, and it was this personal, individual element to and use of letters that contributed to Cromwell’s power. Cromwell adapted administrative systems to suit his style of management, which predominately relied on correspondence as a political and business tool. Cromwell’s use of letters not only impacted the way he conducted business on his own, but fundamentally changed some of the core processes of

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<sup>102</sup> *ibid*, 542.

<sup>103</sup> Leithead, ‘Cromwell, Thomas,’ *ODNB Online*.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Chapter XI,’ 543.

<sup>105</sup> Merriman, vol. 2, 139.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, 143.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*.

Henry's court, something that will be demonstrated further using network analysis in the following chapters.

The benefit of this explicitly personal correspondence was twofold: Cromwell was both able to stay at the centre of all information, making him useful to the king, and cultivate correspondents who wrote only to him like Wolsey before him, acting as their patron and receiving favours in return. This represents a shift from Cromwell's earlier letters to Boleyn seeking patronage, discussed above, reiterating not only the two-way benefits of the patronage relationship, but the change in Cromwell's own position that he was now able to offer patronage himself. In 1537, Cromwell promised to help the Sheriff of Wexford and "shalbe a contynuall solysytour for youe [...] and in suche wyse from tyme to tyme advaunce *your soeruite* and faythfull *demeanour*."<sup>108</sup> In return, Cromwell asked the Sherriff to "aduertyse me by *your Letteres* as you shalle See any thing doon that shalle in any wyse Be againste the kinges house."<sup>109</sup> Exchanging promises of advancement for important news, Cromwell dispersed patronage in return for information that allowed him to remain an informed member of Henry's court.

For Schneider and Lerer, Cromwell's primary objective was to create a spy system, the scheme of a "man charged with procuring information on dissent."<sup>110</sup> Yet this strives too far to simply perpetuate the well-used trope of the 'Machiavellian' Cromwell proliferated by Cardinal Pole; furthermore, it contradicts Schneider's own argument that "in general, the exchange of news was a duty, particularly in political administration and in patron-client relationships."<sup>111</sup> In fact, in most European administrations in the early modern period, it was common practice for ambassadors or diplomats to send 'supplementary' letters to the monarch's chief advisor in addition to reports sent to the monarch, to ensure important information was properly received and acted upon, and it was Cromwell who received these additional reports at Henry's court from the early 1530s onwards.<sup>112</sup> Cromwell recognised the benefits of this information system and extended it amongst his own correspondents, using his own communications to gather information on top of the reports he received alongside the king. This is not to say that Cromwell did not use these relationships to gather information, but rather that this was not a new tactic, and not inherently Machiavellian, as Cardinal Pole would allege. An information network certainly existed, but as Elton rightly argued, "the picture so often drawn of a rule of terror based on a vast network of spies

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<sup>108</sup> TNA, SP 60/4 f.188.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 98; Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 40.

<sup>111</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 153.

<sup>112</sup> Christine Vogel, 'Diplomatic Writing as Aristocratic Self-Fashioning: French Ambassadors in Constantinople,' in *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 194.

[...] must be discarded.”<sup>113</sup> Rather, Cromwell used his abundance of correspondents to keep himself well-informed and useful to his king, using these networks of information as the basis for his power, as the following chapters will demonstrate in greater detail using quantitative measures.

Cromwell further built on this practice when establishing new forms of devolved governance, such as the Council of Ireland, Council in the North, and Council in the West. Though Cromwell’s location at court necessitated his use of letters to communicate with other governing bodies elsewhere in the country, again the physical nature of correspondence brought additional advantages. Cromwell capitalised on his pre-existing set of contacts by appointing members to the Councils to ensure he was kept informed; indeed, as Steven Ellis points out, the nucleus of the new Irish administration were staunch Cromwellian loyalists.<sup>114</sup> Mary Robertson similarly suggests that Cromwell placed members of his own household and close acquaintances in positions of power in the West Country to maintain local influence and attempt to build a long-lasting legacy. Like the Sheriff of Wexford in Ireland, Robertson highlights a reciprocal correspondence network: Sir Godolphin “was active in county government and sent a steady stream of information up to Cromwell” and “while Edgecombe also wrote of [local government] matters to the Privy Council, the large number of surviving reports sent directly to Cromwell personally indicate that it was to the minister he looked for his just rewards.”<sup>115</sup> Discussing Lord Thomas Grey, Edward Zouche and the junior Walter Hungerford, Robertson argues that

had Cromwell lived longer, these three sons of aristocratic houses with substantial lands and power in the west, tied to the minister by personal service as well as self-interest, and with first-hand experience of the operation and concerns of the central government from their education in his service, would have been valuable allies both for Cromwell and for the crown he served.<sup>116</sup>

If, as Robertson suggests, Cromwell sought to establish ties with the West from within his own household, which he could then place in governmental positions, the minister relied on his personal correspondence to achieve this. Where Elton credited Cromwell that “as he climbed ever higher he acquired a justified reputation for never forgetting old friends,” this was just as much to the minister’s advantage as to those whose friendship he remembered.<sup>117</sup> Robertson envisages a Cromwell similar to Elton’s, suggesting this “powerful network of information [...] was] activated by that same combination of the formal jurisdiction exercised by Cromwell’s office of principal

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<sup>113</sup> Elton, *England*, 136

<sup>114</sup> Steven G. Ellis, ‘Thomas Cromwell and Ireland, 1532-1540,’ *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 3 (1980): 518

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*, 800; 805.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid*, 797-8.

<sup>117</sup> Elton, ‘Redivivius,’ 376.

secretary and the informal communications of a master politician.”<sup>118</sup> Yet, there was, as Robertson so aptly argues, “a clear gap between potential and its realization.”<sup>119</sup> It was to be Cromwell’s marshalling of his epistolary networks that allowed for this expanded monitoring, and “was primarily responsible for an epistolary revolution in beginning to administer the increasingly centralised state by employing the circular letter to organize and marshal the government.”<sup>120</sup> As throughout the minister’s work, Cromwell used letters and careful knowledge of contemporary epistolary customs to extend and consolidate his control, not just within central government but to wider, outlying counties as well. Again, adopting network analysis offers a means of formalising these arguments and considering the ways both personal and official connections contributed to Cromwell’s modes of control.

### *The Principal Secretary*

Whilst Cromwell managed the country’s business through his own letters, his ability to do this inevitably relied on his proximity to Henry. Having demonstrably utilised his correspondence as an administrative tool, maintaining connections and issuing instructions, Cromwell was a natural fit for Principal Secretary, a title he officially held from 1534 to 1540. Significantly, this role offered specific opportunities to use letters to demonstrate his position and the power it held by emphasising his proximity to the king and, in particular, his access to the king’s own correspondence.

To some extent, it is difficult to examine Cromwell’s correspondence in Henry’s service outside of this position, but as already noted, his use of letters for business far predated his promotion. Rather than being assimilated by the role, Cromwell adapted it, amalgamating it with his other offices and using the Principal Secretary position as a malleable platform from which he could move into other offices and opportunities. Some historiography has sought to minimise the significance of this position, suggesting that Cromwell’s power as Principal Secretary was only thanks to Henry’s lack of interest in writing letters, and did not extend beyond penning the king’s messages; as R. B. Wernham questioned, “why keep a secretary and write letters yourself?”<sup>121</sup> Yet this once more misunderstands the concept of secretary in the early modern period and diminishes the type of work Cromwell was doing. Cromwell was no longer merely a scribe as he had been under Wolsey, but with Henry had come to embody the position of secretary as confidant and secret

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<sup>118</sup> Mary L. Robertson, “‘The Art of the Possible’: Thomas Cromwell’s Management of West Country Government,” *The Historical Journal* 32, no. 4 (December 1989): 805.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, 811.

<sup>120</sup> Camiciotti, ‘Letters and Letter Writing’, 22.

<sup>121</sup> R. B. Wernham, review of *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, by G. R. Elton, *The English Historical Review* 71, no. 278 (January 1956): 95.

keeper. It is in understanding this that Cromwell's significance as Principal Secretary can be more thoroughly explored.

The Principal Secretary role gave Cromwell unprecedented access not only to Henry himself, but also the king's incoming and outgoing correspondence. Cromwell not only supervised the contents of Henry's replies or instructions, he also read letters written to the king, including petitions, reports, and invitations. As such Cromwell was well versed in the king's business, and regularly advertised this in his own correspondence to authorise instructions; consistently demonstrating his proximity to the king, Cromwell both displayed and subverted the essence of secretary as secret. Significantly, as Mel Evans has demonstrated, whilst many writers in this period may have referred to the king in their letters, there was "an unusual reluctance to use direct speech for royal reports," and Cromwell was one of only five men in the period in Evans' study to use this style to report on the language of any European male monarch.<sup>122</sup> For Evans, "it may be significant that these men were all social aspirers, who may have felt that pragmatic effects of direct speech were beneficial to their social ambition."<sup>123</sup> Whilst Evans' study focuses on direct reporting, Cromwell also related the king's intentions in more ambiguous terms, using general references to Henry to advertise and verify his own position and power at court.

Even when not directly reporting Henry's speech then, Cromwell's letters consistently refer to the king, as in 1535 to the Prior of Dudley to express the "kinges pleasure and commaundement."<sup>124</sup> In doing so, Cromwell repeatedly *displayed* his position as intermediary, and the influence it held, invoking the king's name to validate both himself and his letters as a trusted source. As Schneider argues, "one's inferior social status may and/or lack of direct access to information might 'debase' the quality or reliability of the news;" by referencing the king in his letters, Cromwell used the king's name to validate the information he dispersed.<sup>125</sup> In 1534, Cromwell informed the University of Oxford that "the kynges hyghnes therfore hathe commandyd me to aduise yow [to] onelie to restore all suche persons as yow haue discomoned."<sup>126</sup> Rather than relying on his own authority to command compliance, Cromwell employed the king's name to ensure the instructions were followed in deference to the monarch. Bernard also comments on Cromwell's use of the king's name, criticising Elton's assertion that "even when writing on his own Cromwell would often pretend to be merely communicating orders received from king and Council," asking "but who would have been taken in?"<sup>127</sup> Though Elton may overstate Cromwell's

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<sup>122</sup> Mel Evans, 'Royal language and reported discourse in sixteenth-century correspondence,' *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 18 (2017): 39; 42.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>124</sup> TNA, SP 1/89 f.134.

<sup>125</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 155.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, SP 1/83 f.225.

<sup>127</sup> G. W. Bernard, *Power and Politics in Tudor England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 117.

actions, the phrase ‘taken in’ is problematic, suggesting an inherently negative duplicity. Recipients were likely aware that this was an epistolary device, understanding it to be the general wishes of the king if not his exact words. Regardless of whether they absolutely believed Cromwell’s information, recipients were likely to follow the letters’ instructions so as to not inadvertently disobey the king. As Loades has argued, “the risks involved in not knowing the king’s mind, or guessing wrongly about his intentions, kept even the most distant noble alert for tidings from court.”<sup>128</sup> As such, not only would distant courtiers follow his instructions, but Cromwell could also invite favour and build power through those who needed his help to advance themselves. As will be seen in Chapter IV, these mentions can be explored in new ways using network analysis, demonstrating the ways this language was not just practical for displaying power, but held a practical ‘documentary’ function as well.

Cromwell was keenly aware of the power this language held, and though this thesis does not argue that he acted outside of Henry’s wishes, this is not to say that Cromwell never used Henry’s name ambiguously and to his own advantage. Cromwell often blurred his own opinions with the king’s, as in a letter to Mr Heron, where Cromwell’s “~~poor~~ aduyse shalbe that ye doo according to Justyce & Suffr the sayd Johnson to occupye his Ferme,” adding that “assurydlye his grace will thinke straunge yf ye sholde expell his seruauant havyng a lawffull graunte.”<sup>129</sup> Cromwell enhanced the importance of his own opinion by appearing to agree with the king. The crossed out ‘poor’ before ‘aduyse’ suggests that Cromwell was more confident in his opinion and did not need to be as modest about it as in the earlier letter to Boleyn in 1527. In 1533, Cromwell used the same technique to further his case with Mr Thomas Alen, from whom he expected “to haue had and receyued [...] at Midsomer last passed my Hundreth poundes,” also mentioning “the payment of vii<sup>c</sup> markes” owed “to the kinges highnes.”<sup>130</sup> In amalgamating his own complaints with the king’s, Cromwell made the charges appear more serious, and once more could ensure obedience to his own requests by association with the king’s.

In many instances, Cromwell used this position not only for his own preferment, but also as an aid to those close to him. As such, the dispersal of information became another form of patronage. Such can be seen with Stephen Vaughan: in Cromwell’s service from 1524, Vaughan rose alongside Cromwell and “enjoyed the hospitality of his master and the wide acquaintanceship that it afforded.”<sup>131</sup> When Wolsey fell from power, Vaughan expressed great concern for Cromwell:

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<sup>128</sup> Loades, *The Tudor Court*, rev. ed., (Bangor: Headstart History, 1992), 139.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, SP 1/67 f.158.

<sup>130</sup> Merriman, vol 1, 357.

<sup>131</sup> Ian Blanchard, ‘Vaughan, Stephen,’ *ODNB Online*, rev. 3rd January 2008, accessed 22nd July 2020.



like as a true hart is never ouerthrowne with the no tempest, like so cannot the same in your trouble but be now muche more thriftye to know your Fate, and more greedy to shew youe if it was possible by worke, how much it counditithe to serve you.<sup>132</sup>

Signed “*your* most faithfull Syr,” Vaughan’s heartfelt expressions encapsulate the relationship.<sup>133</sup> Kristine Haugen notes that though letters were becoming more feminised, many men still utilised the medium “as a vehicle for male friendship,” as Vaughan and Cromwell’s correspondence evidences.<sup>134</sup> This long-standing friendship continued into Cromwell’s service for the king, where Cromwell used his position and proximity to Henry to protect Vaughan.

In 1531, Vaughan’s work placed him on the continent and in contact with exiled bible translator William Tyndale. Forwarding “parte of Tyndalles boke” to Cromwell, “directed to the kinges highnes,” Vaughan verified both their pre-existing connection and Cromwell’s role as intermediary to the king.<sup>135</sup> By assuring Vaughan that “After the receipt whereof I dyd repayre vnto the courte and there presented the same vnto his royall maiestee,” Cromwell displayed his proximity to the king and the ease of access he enjoyed in talking to his royal master even as early as the start of the 1530s.<sup>136</sup> Cromwell repeatedly referred to the king in his letter to Vaughan, and attempted to warn his friend against displeasing Henry:

~~Wherefore~~ <sup>Wherfor Stephen</sup> I hertelie pray you ~~that from henceforth~~ in all your doinges and procedinges and wryting to the kinges highnes ye do iustely trowlie and vnfaignedlie ~~shew your self to be no Fautoer unto the saide~~ <sup>without dyssymylacyon</sup> shew your self to be his trew louyng and obedyent Subiect Beryng no manner Fauoer loue or affeccyon to the sayd tyndale.<sup>137</sup>

The manuscript itself speaks to the urgency of Cromwell’s missive; much of the letter is crossed out and re-written to clarify and emphasise the potential precariousness of Vaughan’s situation and the importance of showing loyalty to the king. Though it is important to be wary of projecting emotions onto Cromwell’s letters, there is a clear sense of urgency present in this missive. That Cromwell addressed Vaughan by his first name suggests a level of intimacy rare in Cromwell’s existing out-letters, addressing only two others – including his own wife – in the same way. In sharing information he had gained through working in close proximity to the king, Cromwell could

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<sup>132</sup> TNA, SP 1/55 f.198.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Kristine Haugen, ‘Imaginary Correspondence: Epistolary Rhetoric and the Hermeneutics of Disbelief,’ in *Self-Presentation and Social Identification*, 122-123.

<sup>135</sup> BL, Cotton Galba B/X f.354.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*

aid Vaughan, ensuring the protection of his friend whilst also guaranteeing Vaughan's continued loyalty.

These demonstrations of friendship to Vaughan sit in stark contrast with letters to Stephen Gardiner, from whom Cromwell had taken over the duties of Principal Secretary by the end of 1533 while Gardiner was on a diplomatic mission abroad. Whether or not the king viewed Gardiner's ambassadorial appointment a punishment, letters from Cromwell emphasise Gardiner's absence and its adverse consequences for the bishop. In these letters, Cromwell not only implied knowledge of court business, but again demonstrated his close relationship with the king. Discussing the arrest of Anne Boleyn and distribution of money taken from the men accused alongside her, Cromwell indicated that Gardiner would receive some, and that the rest "is bestowed of the vicar of hell," Sir Francis Bryan.<sup>138</sup> Nicholas Sanders reports that "the man had long ago been called the vicar of hell on account of his notorious impiety," and after a comic encounter with Henry, "the king burst forth into loud laughter, and said to Bryan, 'Well, you certainly are my vicar of hell.'"<sup>139</sup> Though Sanders was not at court at the time of this anecdote, Cromwell's letter certifies this nickname and furthermore suggests Cromwell was privy to an in-joke with the king. More than this, however, Gardiner's absence from court meant that he may have only recognised the reference to Bryan's impropriety rather than the king's endearment. As such, the bishop may have believed that he shared a common dislike of Bryan with Cromwell, leading Gardiner to petition the king for Bryan's money and believing Cromwell to be helping his cause. Yet in his next letter to the ambassadors, Cromwell reprimanded Gardiner: "youe shal my lord of Winchestre vndrestande that the kinges highnes was moche offended *with your* earnest sute for the pencion appointed to Maister brian taking it half vnkindly."<sup>140</sup> By addressing the matter in such a way in a joint letter, Cromwell made Gardiner's rebuke almost public – a topic as worthy of an ambassadorial dispatch as any other court business. Though Cromwell did not reference himself (only 'you [...] my lord of Winchestre' and 'the kinges highnes') Cromwell was present here as not only an intermediary, but a disruptive presence in the king and bishop's discourse, much to the detriment of the latter. Though Cromwell may not have deliberately used Bryan's nickname to maliciously mislead Gardiner, in doing so Cromwell affirmed Gardiner's status as an outsider and the issues this resulted in. By displaying his proximity to the king whilst using letters as a means of conveying important information, Cromwell amassed and maintained control amongst his correspondents. As the former Principal Secretary, it is unlikely that Gardiner would have failed to notice what Cromwell was doing. This question of access was a pivotal element of Cromwell's influence at court and allowed the minister

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<sup>138</sup> Merriman, vol. 2, 12.

<sup>139</sup> Nicholas Sanders, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, (1585), trans. David Lewis. (London: Burns and Oates, 1877), 24.

<sup>140</sup> Merriman, vol. 2., 16.

to act as a link between the king and the wider court, a key position that will be explored in more depth in Chapters V and VI.

### *Letters to the King*

Of all letters in his tenure as Principal Secretary, those to Henry himself speak most to Cromwell's changing status and his ability to use correspondence to maintain and manage his position at court. Where other letters conveyed Cromwell's power, they did so by demonstrating his physical proximity to the king himself; by contrast Cromwell's letters to Henry displayed an anxiety about physical distance above and beyond that which was normally expected in letters.<sup>141</sup>

In many ways, Cromwell relied not only on the contents of his own letters but the act of forwarding on material to necessitate his writing to the king. In May 1531, Cromwell had news "Cum from Ratyspone [...] translatyd out of Italyon into Inglyshe and according to *your* high commandment to me yevyn yesterdaye have Inclosyd them in this my *lettere*." <sup>142</sup> Similarly in 1533, Cromwell reported to the king that "vppon myn [arrival] at London I receyued certen *letteres* out of the North directed vnto [your] grace from the lorde dacre, Which I haue sent to *your* maiestee herein closed *with* also certen *letteres* and newes sent vnto me from my Lord Deputie of Calays."<sup>143</sup> In both instances, the letters from Cromwell to Henry enclosed other items. Where Schneider suggests "epistles framed as letters of news [...] were meant not only to provide intelligence, but also to assure a correspondent of ongoing social connection," Cromwell recognised the forwarding of news as an opportunity to remind the king not only of his existence, but of his usefulness.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, where Cromwell summarised letters for Henry – such as a letter from Vaughan, "which ys of no gret weight" and could be related in Cromwell's own words – the minister presented himself as an indispensable and knowledgeable source of information.<sup>145</sup> Elton argued that "to make life easier for [Henry], Wolsey would edit letters from abroad by summarizing them in his own," and Cromwell may have learnt this trick from his old master.<sup>146</sup> Yet more than just aiding the king, Cromwell's summaries allowed him to prove himself to Henry and to remain, in a way, 'present' at court. This advertisement of information pervaded Cromwell's letters and helped him to build power. By demonstrating knowledge of information surrounding the king, Cromwell could invite external favour; then, using this favour and the networks of correspondents established acting as intermediary to the king, Cromwell could remain a critically well-connected source of information

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<sup>141</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 31.

<sup>142</sup> TNA, SP 1/70 f.59.

<sup>143</sup> TNA, SP 1/78 f.25; Merriman, vol. 2., 360.

<sup>144</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 158.

<sup>145</sup> TNA, SP 1/70 f.59.

<sup>146</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 68.

for Henry. In all of this, Cromwell relied on letters to maintain this system and demonstrate his usefulness to Henry.

Even where the absence was Henry's own and Cromwell stayed at court, there remained a high frequency of correspondence, as in 1539 during Henry's inspection of the country's naval defences. The frequency of letters in themselves suggests the anxiety Cromwell likely felt in being separated from his king. Writing on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Cromwell disregarded standard correspondence customs and wrote without waiting for a response from Henry. Though Schneider suggests "in some epistolary situations such as governmental administration and reportage, the reporter might disregard the standards of reciprocity," the frequent assurances of work and loyalty speak more to an early modern sense of separation anxiety than a necessity of business.<sup>147</sup> Such can be seen especially where Cromwell mediated correspondence from other people,

so to thinke that *your* grace woll not be further be moved or pricked by suche reportes or *letteres* vpon suche unkowen reportes suspicions and tales grounded [...] Thus I do not write as thinking *your* grace nedeth any warnyng thereof being of so highe and excellent witt *prudence* and long experience But that I wold declare vnto *your* *Maiestie* howe I doo for my *part* tak the thinges and as I think other men shuld tak them.<sup>148</sup>

Evidently, Cromwell was distinctly aware of the implication of being unable to manage Henry's correspondence while they were separated. These reports are also much more verbose and longer than Cromwell's other letters, conveying a sense of supplication; Schneider suggests "correspondents equalled the length of the letter or the frequency of writing with love and affection."<sup>149</sup> Most of Cromwell's letters are short and to the point – as Elton termed it, the letters of a "practical man" – but where he broke from this form, as with Henry, it showed a distinct difference in the relationship.<sup>150</sup>

Some of the most significant correspondence from Cromwell to Henry appeared during Cromwell's illness in April 1539. These letters were once more much longer, with profuse declarations on the state of Cromwell's health:

I am compelled to be nowe absent and to forebeare such myn attendaunce vpon *your* Royall highnes [...] as I *purported* yesterdaye in the mornyng and made meself redy to have don Whan my fytt of the ague casted me downe and held me in a grete hete a bouthe a x howres.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 63.

<sup>148</sup> BL, Cotton Titus B/I f.265.

<sup>149</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 124.

<sup>150</sup> Elton, 'The Political Creed of Thomas Cromwell,' in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, vol. 2, *Parliament/Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 221.

<sup>151</sup> BL, Cotton Nero B/VI f.5.

That Cromwell took care to write a two-and-a-half-page manuscript in his own hand whilst so ill not only displays the extent to which Cromwell wanted to demonstrate his deference to Henry, but also his ability to recover – he was not so ill that he could not still write. The problem remained that, as Whigham argues, “even illness was nearly a form of disloyalty. The absent feared at the least a loss, however temporary, of status and influence.”<sup>152</sup> Cromwell perhaps feared that his absence would not be excused by the king, and therefore listed the work he continued to do from home to reinforce the impression of an endlessly hardworking minister.

These communications with the king demonstrate that Cromwell was distinctly aware that letters were not always the most appropriate tool for political advancement, and that with Henry a physical absence represented far more of a disadvantage than with any other correspondent. Though Elton suggested “in [the] early years, Cromwell knew that his influence and future depended on proximity to the king, so that naturally there was rarely any correspondence between them,” this style of relationship does not only apply to Cromwell’s early career, but throughout his time with Henry.<sup>153</sup> As Loades argues, “Wolsey’s embassy to France in 1527 had given his enemies at court an opportunity to influence the king’s mind against him;” as his faithful servant, Cromwell witnessed his master’s absence from the king and its impact and was conscious not to make the same mistake.<sup>154</sup> Whilst Cromwell strove to remain close to his king and negate the need for writing, their epistolary connection can still be explored in a quantitative network, and examined for insights into power. Qualitatively understanding the different types of epistolary communications at play during Cromwell’s career opens avenues for comparison using quantitative measures, using network analysis to supplement and extend these insights.

The survey and close reading of the correspondence in this chapter demonstrates that Cromwell actively employed letters to their fullest extent, relying on epistolary customs and the material advantages of correspondence not just as an aid in administrative management, but also in building and controlling influence at court throughout the 1530s. Understanding Cromwell’s own conception of letters as a tool for managing power is fundamental to exploring his role at court and in an epistolary network. This chapter has therefore established a crucial overview of Cromwell’s power, and the ways this was achieved through his astute deployment of epistolary technologies. The rest of this thesis looks now to extend and enrich this narrative through innovative analysis of Cromwell’s extant network, continuing to build a picture of Cromwell and his power, based, as shown throughout this chapter, on his own terms. Whilst this chapter has used the term ‘networks

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<sup>152</sup> Whigham, ‘Suitors’ Letters,’ 867.

<sup>153</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 76.

<sup>154</sup> Loades, *Tudor Court*, 133.

of correspondents' in a metaphorical or qualitative sense, using 'analogue' means to approach Cromwell's administration, quantitative analysis can reconstruct and consider these networks in new ways. By exploring all available correspondence in the State Papers between 1523 and 1540, rather than focusing on Cromwell's letters alone, what more can be revealed about Cromwell's position at court? The rest of this thesis will turn to this question, combining the qualitative understanding of Cromwell as a gifted advisor and administrator outlined in this chapter with a wider, statistical analysis of the rest of the letter-writers at court in this period, to understand further Cromwell's role at court, and the balance of power around Henry VIII.

## II. 1523-1540: A Network

This chapter turns now to this quantitative investigation, utilising the different approaches or ‘lenses’ mentioned in the introduction. If the qualitative survey of Cromwell’s career in letters offered in Chapter I relies on a manual or ‘analogue’ close reading of material, quantitative network analysis can be considered in the same – if simultaneously opposite – terms. Rather than close reading, large-scale data analysis is at the other end of the scale, a digital or computational distant reading or macroanalysis. Where a close reading of texts or documents offers an in-depth exploration of a – normally small – sample of material, distant reading ‘zooms out’, offering a broader picture of the dataset and opportunities to analyse an entire corpus and its connections at once. Macroanalysis is then a reading of the *contexts* of the letters as an archival collection or dataset, rather than the contents. Whereas the traditional qualitative approach of Chapter I built microanalyses to form an overarching narrative of Cromwell’s career, quantitative data analysis starts at the opposite end, creating a wholesale picture of the Tudor court that can be narrowed down and interrogated in more detail, creating a historical narrative from a ‘top-down’ approach to the sources rather than a ‘ground-up’ one. This is not just different but explicitly beneficial: whilst the ground-up approach of the last chapter offers detailed analysis of individual sources, it is a necessarily selective process of manual collection. In contrast, the ‘top-down’ approach offers a more representative picture of the available material. Adopting distant reading as a means of exploring the State Papers archives does not however mean abandoning the close reading interrogative practices honed in traditional humanities research, but rather requires a balance between the two approaches and the different insights they offer.

This chapter first introduces core elements of network analysis used throughout this thesis, drawing parallels between their function in the network and the early modern court to demonstrate the ways social network theories can be applied to a set of historical interactions. This chapter will then establish and examine three centrality measurements – degree, betweenness, and eigenvector – and how they contribute to understandings of the archives and the power structures therein, using rankings to navigate fundamental questions and debates surrounding influence in the Tudor court. These not only confirm some traditionally perceived actors of power – such as Henry, Wolsey, and Cromwell – but also explore the concept of power itself in new and innovative ways.

### *The Network*

As outlined in the introduction, visualisations are a common feature of network analysis, but there is a specific mode with which they should be engaged, bearing in mind that they can often obscure as much as they reveal. Again, it is important to remember that they are not reproductions

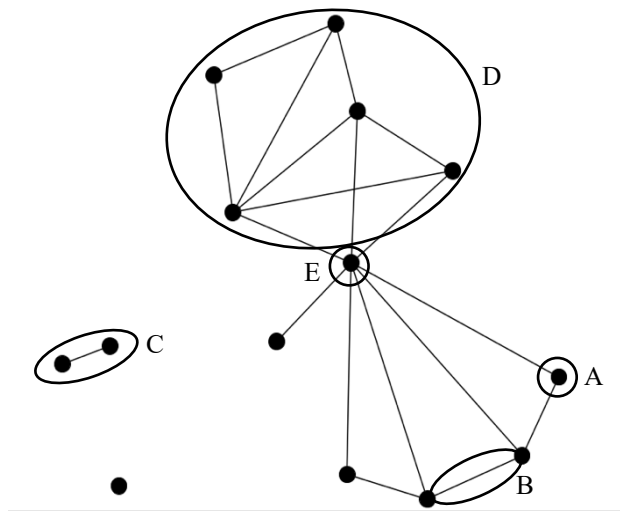


Figure 2. A ‘toy’ diagram as a guide for network terms. **A) node**, representative of members of or correspondents in a network; **B) edge**, a link or letter between nodes; **C) component**, separate disconnected portions of the network; **D) cluster**, a set of well-connected nodes *within* a component; **E) hub**, the most well-connected or busiest member of a network.

but rather malleable representations of interactions. Network graphs still provide a means of conceptualising or ‘mapping’ the data, however, and it is worth briefly illustrating this using the ‘toy’ diagram in Figure 2. When representing an epistolary network, each small dot (termed a **node**) signifies a correspondent. Each line (an **edge**) depicts a letter connection between these correspondents. As letters are used for the data in this network, the network consists of directed connections or edges, using the ‘to’ and ‘from’ categories built into epistolary practice. In a **directed network** each edge represents one direction: as such, if the correspondence is reciprocal there will be two edges between the same two people, indicating a letter going in both directions. This diagram, like those used throughout this thesis, has been arranged using a force-directed layout algorithm built into the network visualisation software Gephi, which arranges nodes according to their connection with one another. Nodes which have a strong connection (i.e., have a large body of correspondence passing between them) are placed close to one another, whilst simultaneously pushing away those they are not connected to. Again, it is important to remember that this is an artificial arrangement and does not reflect actual proximity of actors in a network but offers a means to quickly visualise who is connected.

The toy diagram also offers a means to explore other elements of a network structure, including **components**, **clusters**, and **hubs**. **Components** are disconnected portions of the network: while a network may be formed from one archival dataset, this may contain correspondence from separate groups that do not overlap with one another.<sup>155</sup> As such they form distinct units in the network. In Figure 2, there are three components of varying sizes: the largest containing eleven

<sup>155</sup> This is often a result of archival processes, as detailed in the introduction, and which will be explored in more depth below.



nodes; another, labelled C, containing just two nodes; and a single node on its own. **Clusters** similarly depict groups in a network, but inside of a component rather than as separate entities. As can be seen by the group labelled D in the toy network, though members of a cluster may still correspond with others outside their small grouping – keeping them part of the larger component – they hold a particularly close relationship within their group. Clusters often reflect communities or households within a larger connected grouping. Finally, **hubs** are a way of identifying the most well-connected, and often busiest, correspondents in a network. Like the node labelled E, they most often sit at the centre of a force-directed diagram, with their connections or edges stretching out from them, like a spider sat at the centre of a web. Spotting hubs in a visualisation of an epistolary network is a quick means of identifying the most active members of an archive.

These elements can similarly be seen in a visualisation of the State Paper archives in Figure 3. Whilst this thesis as a whole explores 1523-1547, this graph solely represents actors and interactions up to 1540, Cromwell's active years and those covered in Chapter I. In this network, there are 4,314 correspondents or nodes and 7,202 directed letter connections or edges. The network contains 161 components: of these, 160 are much smaller in size, ranging between two and fourteen writers and arranged in a ring around the **Giant** or **Main Component** at the centre of the diagram. This contains the largest group of connected nodes and edges, containing 3,966 writers, nearly 92% of the dataset. In the State Papers, the Giant Component contains the majority of state business and the most well-connected and important members of court, including members of Henry's council and key administrators. Those in the smaller remaining components are often writers who wrote to each other in a small group rather than to ministers at court. Quite often, these smaller groups contain household correspondence that has been accidentally included with state business, or letters that have been intercepted and stored in the same way. One such case is Jehan Lange, a French merchant and broker from Paris, visiting the English court in January 1537, meeting with the king and facilitating the sale of "my image, Jacques Poullain's image, [Thibault Comtet's] mirror, a hat of Mons. Caillot, and a collar and vizor (*cachenes*), and a martin (*une martre*), and some linen worth 400 cr. which belongs to Jan de Gran."<sup>156</sup> Writing only to his family, friends and fellow merchants at home in France, Lange's letters were intercepted in search of important information on French affairs and kept amongst other state materials.<sup>157</sup> Lange is therefore not connected to the Giant Component but exists in the network alongside his correspondents as a separate component.

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<sup>156</sup> L&P, Vol XII, no. 47.7.

<sup>157</sup> L&P, Vol XII, no. 47; no. 48.

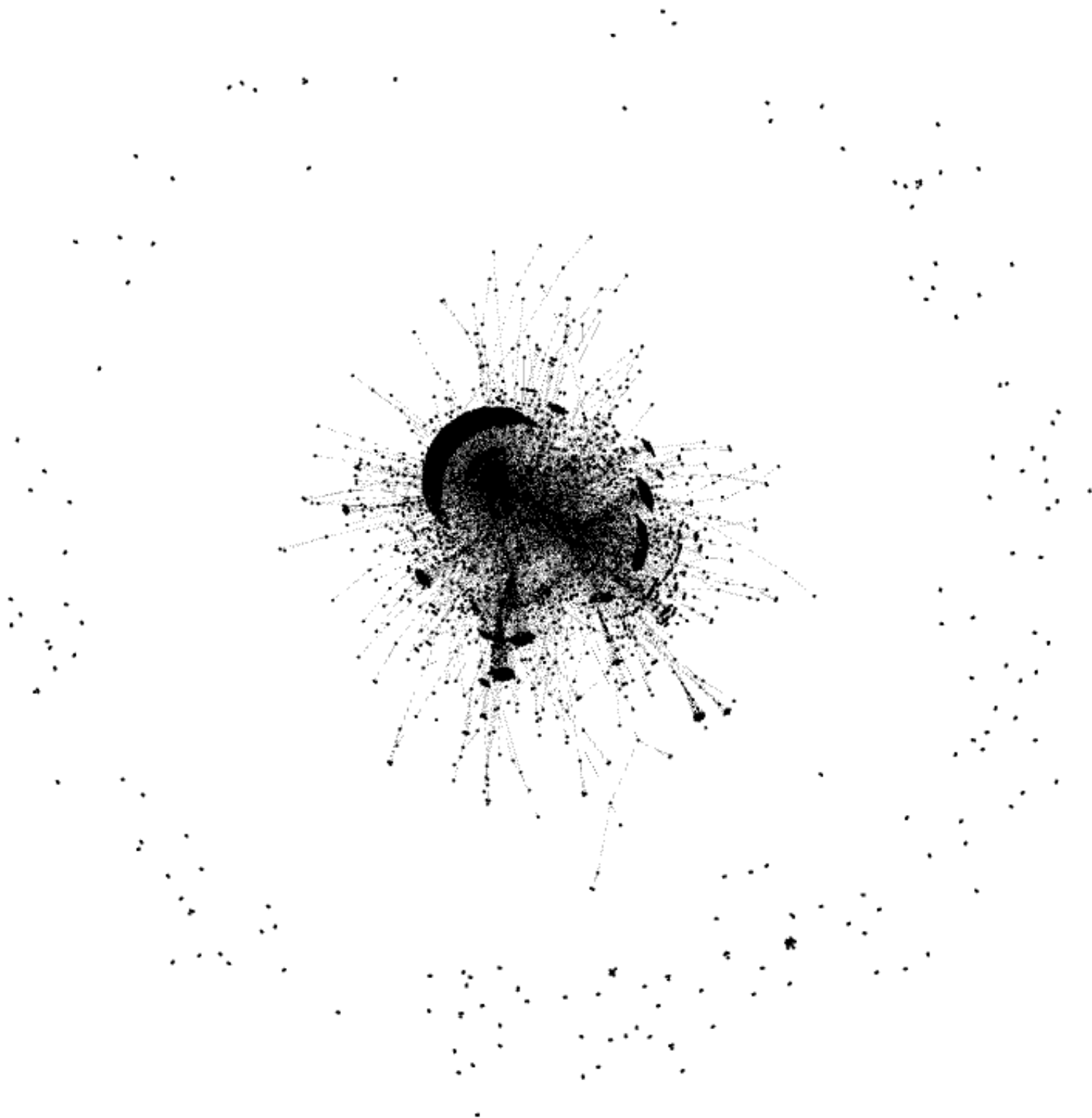


Figure 3. A network diagram of the letter data from 1523-1540, created in the visualisation software Gephi.

Whilst some writers exist in a separate component because of contemporary archival systems, other sub-structures within the network reflect Brewer's own editorial process outlined in the introduction. This applies not just to the smaller components, but clusters within the Giant Component as well: in some cases, clusters may be formed from family or household correspondence, or members of the same governmental office where extra material has been gathered and included within *Letters and Papers*. Identifying actors in different components and clusters in such a way offers one means of establishing archival processes and exploring the make-up of the State Papers in this period, offering fresh insight into the sources in new ways.

### *Degree Centrality*

Visualising the data in such a way establishes a general overview of the network and offers a means to draw some quick conclusions. As Franco Moretti has argued however, there are limitations to what visuals alone can do, and to gain more fruitful insight into networks, researchers should "turn away from images for a while, and let intuition give way to concepts [...] and to statistical analysis."<sup>158</sup> Using specific quantitative measurements allows for a more in-depth understanding of the make-up of the archives and detailed observations about interactions and measurements. One such measurement, **degree centrality**, quantifies the number of connections each node has in a network. Degree is most useful for identifying the most active members of a network and assessing the 'busy-ness' of each node. Whilst hubs are easy to spot when visualising the network in a diagram, they can also be identified by their significantly above average degree score. Again, it is worth remembering that because the network is directed, there may be two edges between the same two nodes, reflecting the bidirectionality of letter communication. Essentially, degree here is measured in terms of the number of unique people found in the 'inbox' and the number found in the 'outbox', but does not consider the total number of letters. As such if person A writes to person B ten times, but gets no response, this counts as only one edge and thus a degree score of one; however, if A writes to B only once but B writes back, this is then two edges and a degree score of two. In these measurements, degree does not count the number of contacts or number of letters, but number of distinct, directed interactions.<sup>159</sup> Identifying the nodes with the highest degree score in this network can detect the largest contributors to the archives in this period. Given the nature of the State Papers collection outlined in the introduction, these actors are therefore those most connected to or involved in state business and can be identified by ranking the top twenty-five scoring correspondents for degree in the 1523-1540 network [Fig 4.]

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<sup>158</sup> Franco Moretti, 'Network Theory, Plot Analysis', *LiteraryLab* 2 (2011): 12.

<sup>159</sup> A separate measure for exploring number of letters will be introduced later.

Rank	Name	Score
1.	Thomas Cromwell	2,134
2.	Henry VIII	726
3.	Cardinal Thomas Wolsey	449
4.	Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle	382
5.	Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle	195
6.	Thomas Wriothesley	161
7.	Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor	149
8.	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	139
9.	Archbishop Thomas Cranmer	105
10.	Francis I, King of France	104
11.	James V, King of Scotland	100
12.	Thomas Dacre	96
13.	Thomas Darcy	82
14.	Cardinal Reginald Pole	71
15.	The Privy Council	60
16.	Anne du Montmorency	59
17.	Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk	48
18.	William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton	47
19.	Thomas Magnus	41
20.	Desiderius Erasmus	39
21.	Sir Brian Tuke	38
22.	Bishop Stephen Gardiner	37
23.	Jean du Bellay	37
24.	Thomas Audley	35
25.	Philip Melanchthon	35

Figure 4. Top twenty-five ranked degree centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores.

It is unsurprising – and perhaps expected – that Henry himself, alongside Cromwell and Wolsey, the two chief ministers for his reign, claim the top ranks for degree in this network. Whilst to a large extent Henry’s busy-ness in the network reflects his role as king, the high rankings of Cromwell and Wolsey attest to the volume of work they both did in service to their royal master. The top twenty-five is predictably dominated by these closest advisors – Thomas Wriothesley; Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; Thomas Dacre; Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton; Thomas Magnus; Brian Tuke; Stephen Gardiner; Thomas Audley – many of whom were important court administrators or key members of the newly influential Privy Council, which as an institution was also a significant correspondent in the archives in 1523-1540, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in degree. Whilst maintaining correspondence in a much smaller volume than Cromwell and Wolsey, these actors still held many contacts and regularly wrote to or from court, keeping up to date with ongoing state affairs. These rankings support traditional narratives of importance, but also suggest perhaps more unexpected actors of interest. For example, Thomas Dacre ranks twelfth in the network for these seventeen years, despite only writing for a short period of time: a close advisor of Henry VII, Dacre died on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1525, only two years into the period for this network. Despite this, he still

ranks higher than other actors traditionally considered important in historiography, such as Suffolk, Gardiner, and the Privy Council who were present and active at court throughout this period.

For some, their high degree ranking stems from the ways surviving letters have been collected: Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, and his wife Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle, have a very high degree ranking given Lisle was only Deputy of Calais. Whilst his placement in Calais necessitated his writing to court – rather than regular physical attendance – it was his arrest in 1540 that guaranteed the survival of so much correspondence, seized alongside Lisle and stored as state documents. Whilst Lady Lisle was not arrested, many of her own writings were included in the seizure, accounting for her high degree ranking, and her place as the only female writer in the top twenty-five. Though most of the State Papers are political in essence, seizures and accidental inclusions occasionally add an extra ‘personal’ dimension to this archive. It is important to acknowledge the ways different parts of the collection have survived, and how this may influence the ranking of individual nodes in the network. In this way, viewing the archives at scale through network analysis quantitatively demonstrates the more traditional archival narrative outlined in the introduction and its impact on understanding history.

Another large portion of these rankings is made up from foreign monarchs and ambassadors: Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor; Francis I, King of France; James V, King of Scotland; Anne du Montmorency; and Jean du Bellay. Whilst their presence in the English State Papers is naturally smaller than in their own respective domestic state archives, these high-ranking foreign writers indicate the extent to which different national State Papers overlapped and the impact of European politics on English early modern letter networks. Some of Henry’s key advisors in this list also acted as foreign ambassadors: Gardiner was resident ambassador in France 1535-1538 and Thomas Magnus was deployed on several diplomatic missions to Scotland between 1524 and 1529. In this way, many of the largest contributors to the network did so by holding multiple offices or roles, and as such had more cause to write to a wider variety of people, contributing to their higher degree score. In doing so, they are also in part responsible for this overlap between national archives, reflecting again both contemporary archival practice and more modern editorial ones.

Finally, a number of these high-ranking nodes reflect contemporary events or issues. Desiderius Erasmus and Philip Melanchthon were both famous humanist scholars of the early sixteenth-century, involved to differing extents in the religious Reformation across both mainland Europe and England. Both men were in contact with Henry himself, as well as other humanists and reformists at his court, reflecting the ongoing correspondence around political and religious discourse in England in this period. Cardinal Reginald Pole, self-exiled from England from 1532 in opposition to Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and break from the Roman Catholic

Church, wrote extensively to the king, the Pole family in England, and various other members of the Church across Europe throughout Henry's reign. Lastly, whilst Thomas Darcy worked for Henry on the Scottish borders from the 1520s, he was more active in the epistolary network as a leading member of the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion in 1536, the impact of which will be discussed more extensively in Chapter III.

In ranking high in degree in the network, these final four correspondents demonstrate the temporality of state affairs, and the letters which discuss them. Whilst the top contributors to the network reinforce the focus of the State Papers as just that, papers about the state, this does not always mean consistent matters or events. Demonstrating these measurements and their changes year on year allows for considerations of temporality and dynamism in the network. Although the network diagram in Figure 3 depicts all connections made between 1523 and 1540, many of these would not have been consistently in place across the seventeen-year period. Considering changes in degree measurements across the years is one way of establishing a sense of evolution in the network. By breaking the data down further and plotting the scores for each year for the top ten degree scorers, the ebbs and flows in contributions and importance in the archive and corresponding network can be better understood. I therefore created an individual network graph for each year from 1523-1540 and took the degree score for each of these top-ranking nodes to consider changes to network rankings over time [Figure 5]. Though splitting the existing metadata from January to December for each year is arbitrary in many ways, it offers a consistent means of splitting time equally, and allows for some ambiguity in the data, where archivists are certain of the year the letter was written, but not the month or day.

Henry's consistent and high-ranking place in the network not only asserts the power he held as king, but also offers insight into governance and administration across these years. Focusing on a comparison between the degree scores of the king and his leading advisors, Wolsey and Cromwell, offers additional insight into the relationships between Henry and his chief ministers. Whilst Wolsey ranks third in the network overall behind Henry and Cromwell, he is only in this network for seven years and was actually the highest-ranking node while he was chief minister in this dataset from 1523-1529 [Figure 5]. At his peak in 1528, Wolsey held 214 contacts, corresponding to when he was first appointed by Pope Clement VII to settle the king's annulment to Catherine of Aragon in England, and regularly writing to scholars and other clergymen both at home and across the continent.<sup>160</sup> Yet even this large score is diminutive in comparison to

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<sup>160</sup> Though initially allowed by the Pope, the case was suspended in July of the next year, and Henry's annulment was eventually passed under Archbishop Cranmer and the Church of England in 1533, rather than the Catholic church in Rome.

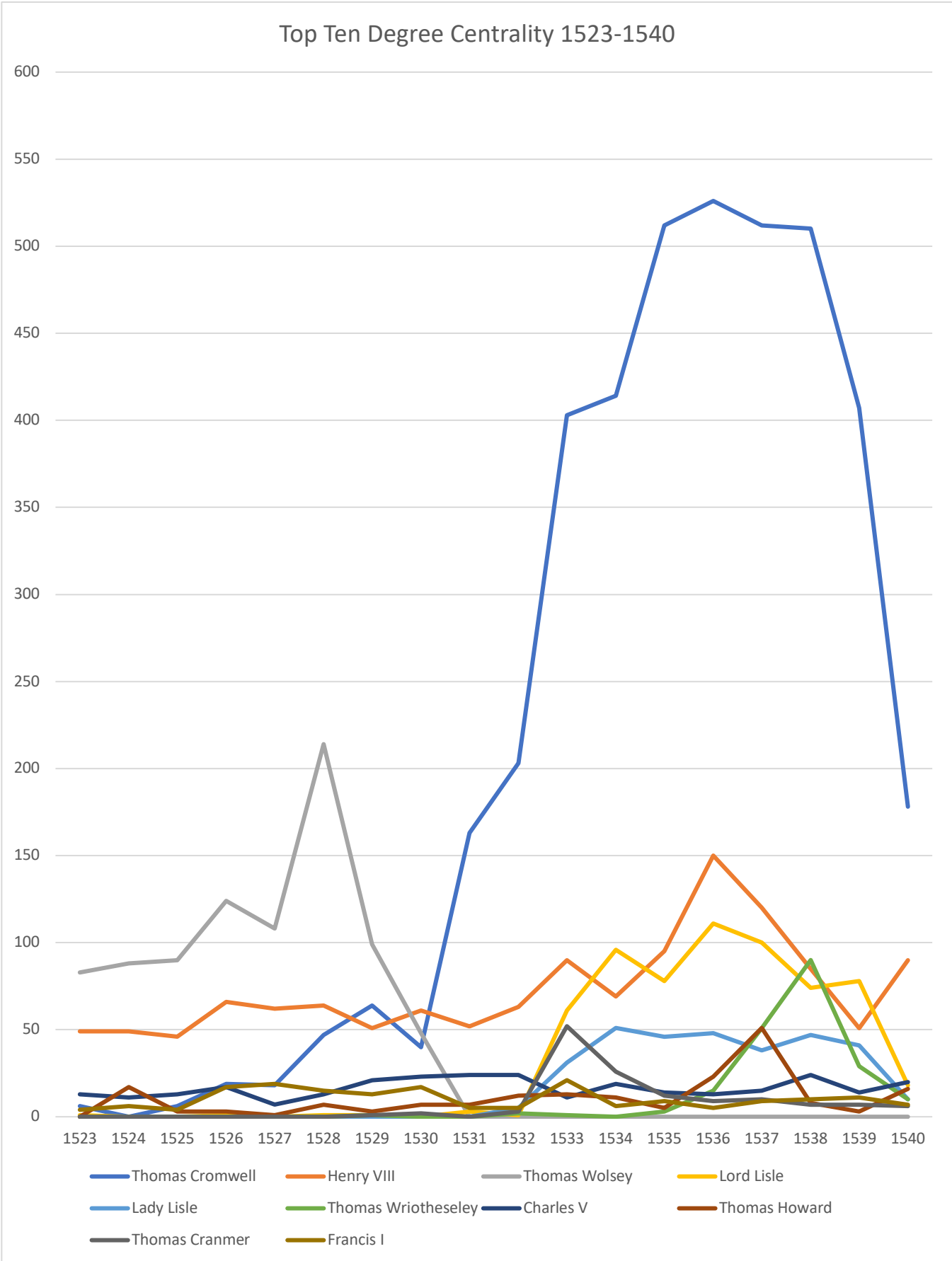


Figure 5. Top ten scoring degree centrality measurements across 1523 to 1540.

Cromwell, who clearly dominates the network during his tenure working for the king in the latter half of this period. In fact, Cromwell's highest-scoring year in 1536 registers a score of 514 contacts, three-and-a-half times the king's highest score in the same year and nearly two-and-a-half times the size of Wolsey's peak from eight years earlier.

Reading the changes in Cromwell's degree scores can offer further insight into the minister's career. Cromwell's degree score drastically jumps in 1533, almost doubling from 203 contacts in 1532 to 403 one year later. What is interesting is that this jump at 1533 indicates the point at which Cromwell unofficially took over from Stephen Gardiner as Principal Secretary. His official appointment to the title one year later registers only eight more neighbours. This suggests that Cromwell was recognised as a member of court managing a vast amount of the king's business before he was acknowledged with a title, a significant distinction explored further throughout this thesis. Although Cromwell does not have a distinctive degree score until the late 1520s, this is not to say that he was not writing at all before then. Rather, as has already been noted, this is an archive built on state business: as such, a high degree in this network reflects 'busy-ness' specifically related to affairs of the court. As seen in the last chapter, Cromwell relied on letters for his own personal law practice in the early 1520s. It is likely then that Cromwell had a much larger volume of correspondence in this period which has not survived into the State Papers archive.<sup>161</sup> Cromwell's degree continues to rise through the 1530s, reaching a peak between 1535 and 1538, reflecting further uptake in state business as he accumulated other household and governmental positions such as Lord Privy Seal and Vicegerent in Spirituals. Cromwell's degree then reverts back to 1534 levels in 1539, a year before his resignation from Principal Secretary in April 1540 and his execution in July. This perhaps implies that Cromwell's fall from power was not as sudden as commonly argued, and was building in the network from 1539.

Comparing the differences in scores between Cromwell and Wolsey also illustrates much about the two different management and administrative systems used by the chief ministers. Cromwell holds a drastically higher degree score across a similar period of activity in the network, confirming qualitative assessments made in the last chapter that he utilised letters as an administrative tool far more so than others before him, and emphasising that he and Wolsey selected different roles from which to operate as chief minister. Where Wolsey was Lord Chancellor and chose the Star Chamber as his mainstay of power, focusing in many ways on justice reforms, Cromwell, as discussed, preferred the Principal Secretary's office with its emphasis on epistolary management. Whilst Elton argues that "Cromwell deliberately avoided [the chancellorship] with all the prestige and power that it traditionally carried" in part because of

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<sup>161</sup> Whilst this thesis is primarily concerned with Cromwell, this pattern of 'loss' may apply elsewhere in the archives as well.



Wolsey's own fate and because the position "had become so burdened with the routines duties of a judge that it was increasingly difficult for him to be also an administrator and controller of policy", the Principal Secretary office was a more natural fit for Cromwell and his continuous use of letters as a mode for management.<sup>162</sup> The difference in scores demonstrates not just Cromwell and Wolsey's preferences in administrative styles, but also the offices of power they chose to reflect this.

The differences between Wolsey and Cromwell are also reflected in changes to the overall network size between the two advisory eras. Between 1523 and 1529 in the network under Wolsey, there are an average of 231 active writers each year and 336 letter links; in comparison, between 1531 and 1539 under Cromwell, there are on average 710 correspondents and 871 connections, a network almost three times larger in size. This is likely a result of two factors: first, there were simply more people writing in these later years than before 1530; and second, a higher percentage of these letters survived and were preserved in the archives. In many ways, this still can be considered an impact of Cromwell's time in power. In utilising letters for his management of business, Cromwell changed wider administrative systems to rely more often on letters – as seen with the changes to seal warrants – rather than other official documents, meaning more of this correspondence appears in the archives. Furthermore, because these letters were discussing formal, state business, more of them were likely to be preserved and saved in official ways, and this leap in network and archival size from Wolsey to Cromwell may demonstrate the beginning of some more formal filing methods.

These changes in network size also offer context for each minister's degree score and allow for a more accurate comparison between the two advisors' place in the network. Unsurprisingly, Cromwell remains the most influential, responsible for an average of 47% of all edges in the network for the years between 1531 to 1539 in comparison to Wolsey's 34% average in 1523 to 1529. Cromwell was not simply writing to more people therefore, but a larger proportion of those involved in state business. It is also worth noting that more of the higher scoring nodes appear in these later years, such as Lord and Lady Lisle, the Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas Cranmer. Whilst to a great extent this merely reflects periods of work at court coinciding with one another (the Lisle papers only span 1533-1540 and Cranmer was consecrated as Archbishop of Canterbury in March 1533), it also demonstrates a wider trend of using and saving letters as administrative documents by higher ranking officials in this second 'era'.

It is important to note that in Figure 5, this shift in network size from Wolsey to Cromwell's era is mirrored by a change in Henry's own degree score: the king's largest score in one year under Cromwell in 1536 is more than twice the size of that in 1526 under Wolsey. It is likely that with

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<sup>162</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 301.

Cromwell as Principal Secretary managing Henry's letters, the minister's own approach to letters would have been mirrored in the king's correspondence. There is also the likelihood that more of Henry's incoming and outgoing letters were preserved for Cromwell's own records to aid with managing court and Council business. However, when taking changes in the size of the network into account as with Wolsey and Cromwell, Henry actually holds less of the edges in the network in later years. Though Henry holds 17.2% of the edges in the network in his 1526 peak under Wolsey, this slips to 12% in 1536 under Cromwell. Despite Henry declaring after the fall of Wolsey that "many things were done without my knowledge, but such proceedings will be stopped in future", Henry actually demonstrates less administrative involvement under his second chief minister.<sup>163</sup>

Whilst the very high scoring writers, such as Cromwell, Wolsey, and Henry, are easy to spot in Figure 5, some of the other data remain hard to visualise, much like the Gephi network in Figure 3. Many of the slightly lower ranking nodes are harder to separate, as they were all writing to similarly small numbers of people across these years. It is worth remembering that even though these scores appear small, these are still the ten highest corresponding nodes of the 4,314 writers in this period. The majority of those represented in the archive in this period actually wrote to a very small number of people; in fact, 3,015 people have only one neighbour in the network. This conforms to a standard principle of social network theory: in any random network graph, there will normally be a large number of low degree scoring individuals, and a low number of large scores, following a 'power law' distribution [Figure 6].<sup>164</sup> What is interesting in this network, however, is that the top scorers – Wolsey, Henry, the Lisles and, most significantly, Cromwell – are not only exceptional within the whole graph, but amongst their fellow high degree scorers as well. Understanding this offers a means of contextualising the significance of the work of these biggest writers in contributing to the archives for these years. In fact, Cromwell's degree is 1,278 times larger than the average for the network (1.67), writing and receiving 1,535 times the average number of letters (5.33) per person in the archives for these seventeen years. Understanding these comparisons, and the ways degree scores change across different years of Henry's reign offers a means of not only contextualising changes in individuals of importance, but changes in wider political structures as well.

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<sup>163</sup> Pascual de Gayangos, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, Volume 4 Part 1, Henry VIII, 1529-1530*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1879), no. 250.

<sup>164</sup> Barabási, *Linked*, 67-70.

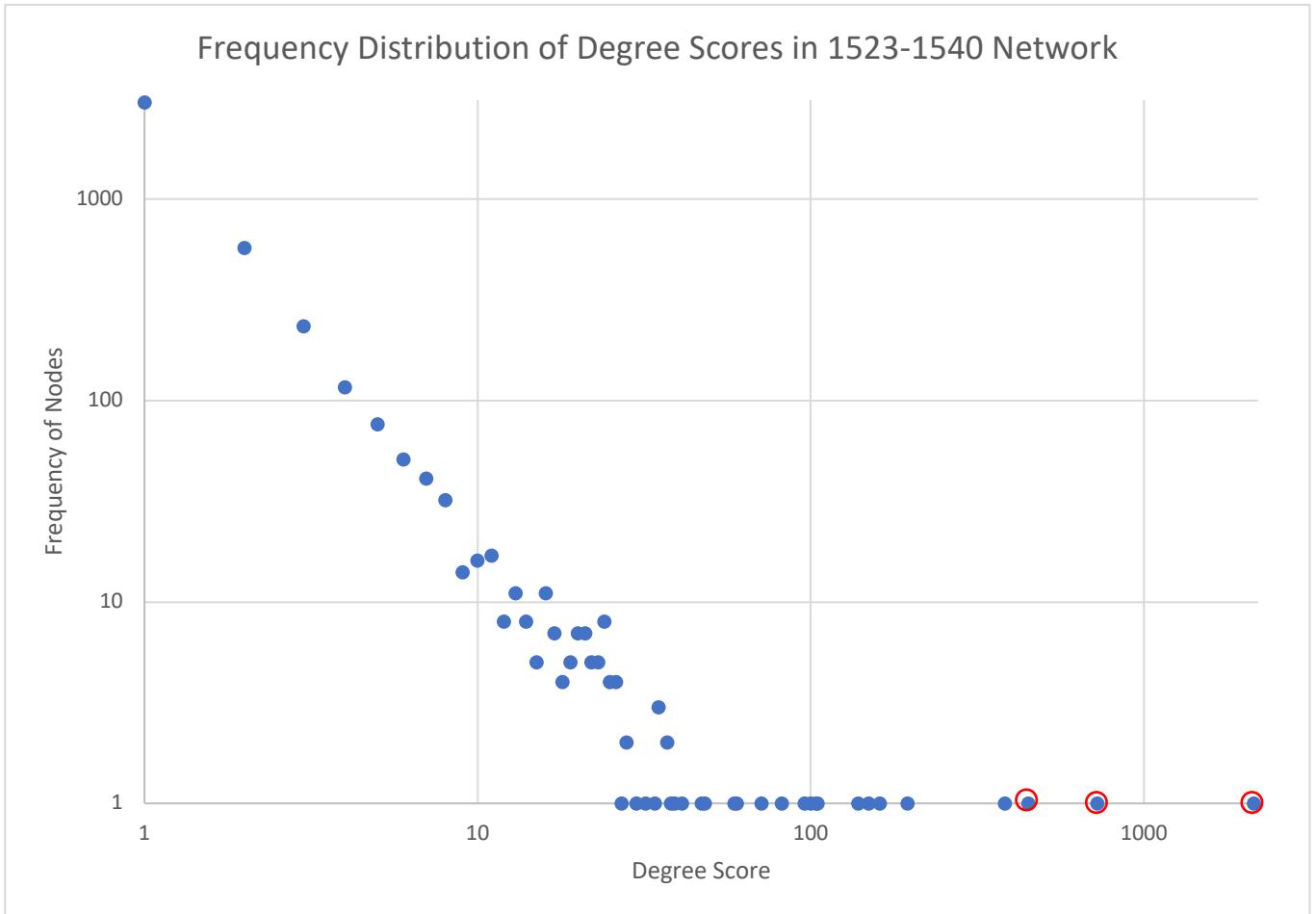


Figure 6. A graph demonstrating the distribution of degree scores against the number of nodes holding this score. Thomas Wolsey, Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell have been circled on the graph (in order from left to right).

### *Mapping the Archives*

As well as offering insight into individuals in the network, measuring degree offers a means of ‘mapping the archives’ and gaining insight into collection and archival processes. Whilst the State Papers are commonly considered a collection of the documents belonging to the Principal Secretary (later re-named Secretary of State), the letter network demonstrates that the archives are actually much less centralised under one main office. Rather, the State Papers are made up of eclectic sets of overlapping correspondences from several different original collections. Each collection makes up an individual egocentric or ego network, a network consisting of just one node and their neighbours as discussed in the introduction, that then overlap with one another. Several writers in this network appear in the intersection between other ego networks; whilst their own papers may not form part of the archives, they exist in a number of these sub-collections. At the same time, certain members of the network are demonstrably significant in their own right, rather than merely existing in the periphery of another person’s correspondence collection. This is one of the fundamental problems with regarding the State Papers as the collection of the Principal Secretary alone: some of the most qualitatively and quantitatively significant actors – Henry,

Wolsey, and other European monarchs – would evidently remain in the State Papers without their connections to Cromwell or other Principal Secretaries of this period.

Degree measurements are one way of understanding this overlap and considering how the archive has been shaped. This not only offers a means of contextualising individual actors but creates a means of measuring and defining the archives in a way that has not been achieved by traditional qualitative methods, generating a fresh insight into both contemporary and later storage and archival processes. Returning to the network shown in Figure 3 and focusing specifically on the Giant Component, these most prominent ego networks can be mapped out to visualise the overlap of the different collections and consider to what extent these dominate the network, focusing on the top five degree scoring nodes: Cromwell, Henry, Wolsey, and Lord and Lady Lisle [Figure 7]. In this diagram, created with my own custom-written code using Python's NetworkX, the nodes are coloured into seven categories according to their relationship to the top five scorers: if they are a neighbour to just one of these top five; a neighbour to two or more, demonstrating the overlap between collections; or not connected to any of these five. Each of the top five nodes are indicated by their larger size. From this, the proportion of the network 'belonging' to each of these five actors in the full 1523-1540 network can be calculated.

Unsurprisingly, Cromwell claims the largest portion of the network, with 40.8% of those in the archives (coloured purple in Fig. 7) corresponding with him but not with the other four highest degree scoring nodes. In large part this is because Cromwell held a number of one-degree contacts, actors with only one link in the network. In fact, of his 1,598 incoming correspondents, 1,009 – 63% – only communicated with Cromwell in the network. Unlike other nodes in the network that exist in an overlap, these nodes are only in the network because of their connection with the chief minister. In contrast, Henry (orange) and Wolsey (pink) hold only a small proportion of the network each as theirs alone given their high-ranking degree score, taking 6.4% and 3.7% respectively. These percentages suggest that whilst Henry and Wolsey both had a large number of contacts, there is a sizeable overlap between these contacts and those of other high-ranking nodes.

There is also a distinct overlap between just Lord and Lady Lisle (1.03%), though this is expected given their linked personal (as well as professional) circles and the seizure of their papers as one collection. Interestingly, at 3.8% Lord Lisle claims slightly more of the network as his alone than Wolsey does. This likely reflects the extent to which the Lisle Papers are a more distinct sub-collection within the State Papers, holding less of an overlap with some of the central figures, as well as the different time frames they cover: Lisle's presence in the network is most distinctive after 1533, three years after Wolsey's death.

Thomas Cromwell	40.77%
Henry VIII	6.38%
Thomas Wolsey	3.71%
Lord Lisle	3.81%
Lady Lisle	2.45%
Shared Contact	13.2%
Unattached Contact	29.7%

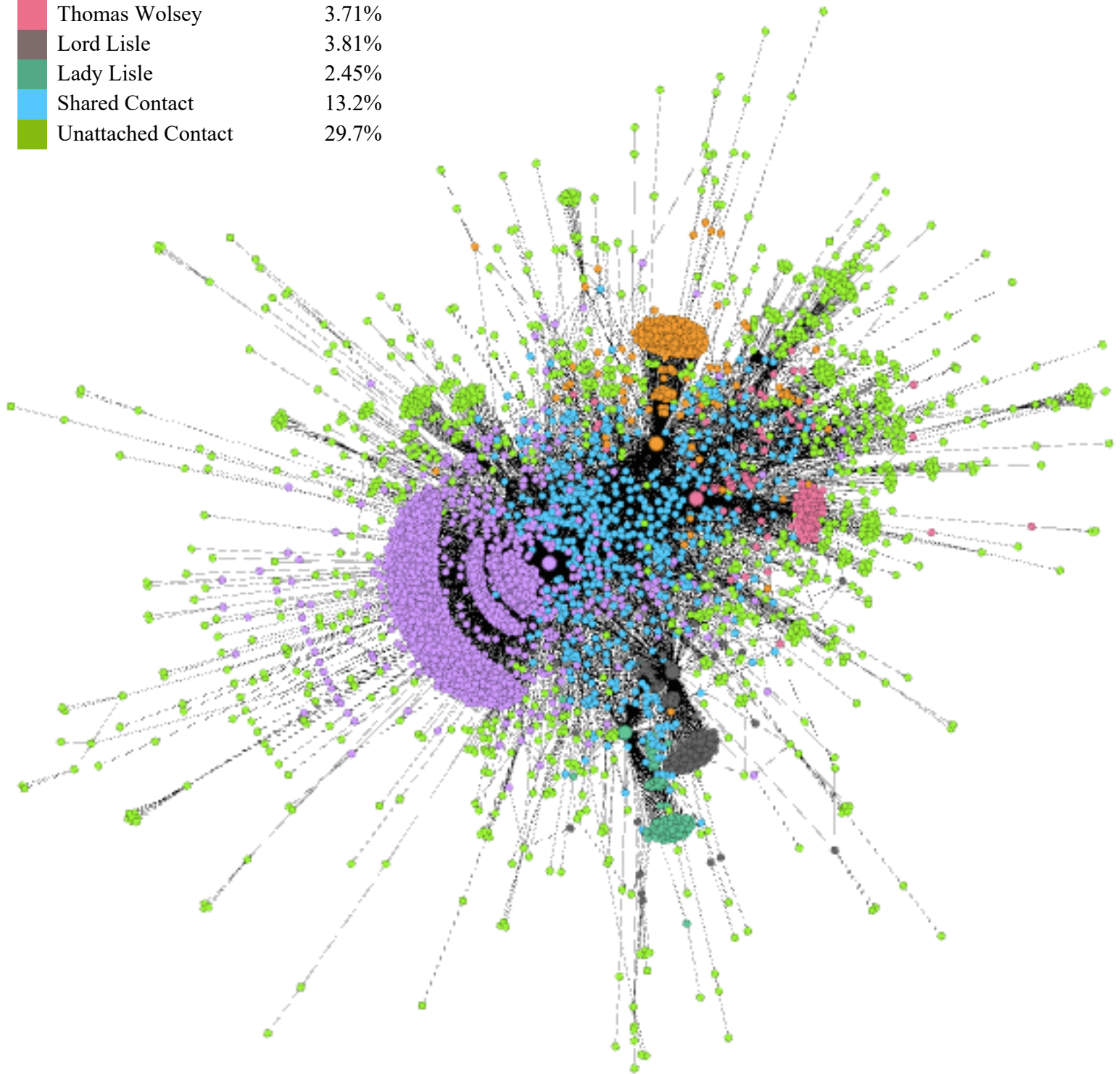


Figure 7. The Giant Component from the 1523-1540 network, with nodes coloured according to overlap between ego networks of the top five degree scorers (Cromwell, Henry VIII, Wolsey, Lord Lisle and Lady Lisle).

<b>Shared Contact Combination</b>	<b>%</b>
Cromwell and Henry	3.3%
Henry and Wolsey	1.56%
Cromwell, Henry, and Wolsey	1.54%
Cromwell and Wolsey	1.46%
Cromwell and Lord Lisle	1.21%
Lord Lisle and Lady Lisle	1.03%
Cromwell, Henry, Lord Lisle, and Wolsey	0.76%
Cromwell, Henry, and Lord Lisle	0.68%
Cromwell, Lord Lisle, and Lady Lisle	0.55%
Cromwell, Henry, Lord Lisle, Lady Lisle, and Wolsey	0.25%
Lord Lisle and Wolsey	0.18%
Cromwell and Lady Lisle	0.13%
Cromwell, Henry, Lord Lisle, and Lady Lisle	0.13%
Cromwell, Lord Lisle, and Wolsey	0.13%
Cromwell, Henry, and Lady Lisle	0.08%
Henry, Lord Lisle, and Wolsey	0.08%
Cromwell, Lord Lisle, Lady Lisle, and Wolsey	0.05%
Henry and Lord Lisle	0.05%
Lady Lisle and Wolsey	0.03%

Figure 8. A breakdown of the 13.2% of the graph as a ‘Shared Contact’ into the different overlap combinations.

The total overlap – nodes that are connected to two or more of the top five scorers – makes up 13.2% of the network, a larger portion than Wolsey, Henry, Lord or Lady Lisle hold on their own. This is a high percentage of the giant component, given that these are contacts shared between just five of a 3,966-person component. Such a large overlap between just the five largest contributors to the archives suggests that the affairs of state were not just the purview of one member of the court or administration but were regularly shared out. Figure 8 breaks this down further to indicate how this percentage is made up of different combinations. Perhaps as expected, the largest overlaps occur in a combination of Cromwell, Wolsey and Henry, accounting for 7.86% of the component. Interestingly, for both Henry and Wolsey, the percentage of the network they share with Cromwell alone amounts to around half of their independent contacts. This supports the argument made in Chapter I that Cromwell used his time in Wolsey’s employ to expand his set of contacts to include his masters’, and suggests Cromwell did the same with Henry as well.

Perhaps most interestingly, 29.7% of the correspondents – the second largest portion in this diagram, behind only Cromwell’s unshared contacts – are not connected to any of the top five contributors. This means that they exist outside of these five ego networks and take their place in the State Papers by other means. Though interception, accidental inclusion and Brewer’s editorial process clearly impacts the number of distinct components, mapping the archives in such away demonstrates that, even in the main component, almost a third of the network is made up of a medley of these smaller ego networks, likely included in the same way. As scholarship continues

to study the composition of the State Paper archives, network analysis offers a means of formally discerning the different segments of the collection and engaging with an enormous corpus of material that could not be so succinctly conceptualised with traditional modes of analysis.

Though many writers in the archives appear in an overlap between the five largest contributors, a number of these nodes would still operate as a member of their own collection without these five. Just as Wolsey and Henry would still appear in the archives without Cromwell, so too would other nodes such as Cranmer or European monarchs such as Francis I and Charles V hold substantial individual collections without communicating with one of the top five contributors mapped above. In fact, when measuring the communication links themselves instead of the writers, 44.99% of all the edges in the network do not involve any of these top five, reflecting communication between smaller actors. Cromwell, as the largest contributor, is part of only 31.5% of these edges in comparison. Even with Cromwell, Wolsey, Henry, and the Lisles holding the largest contributions towards the archives then, the State Papers still cannot be definitively classed as ‘their’ collection, but truly papers belonging to the whole state. Though Cromwell is still undeniably the most dominant *single* contributor to the network, it is unfair to suggest that this is simply because they are the papers of his office. Rather, it demonstrates that he was extraordinary for his time.

### *Power and Centrality*

Network analysis offers a means to map the shape and contents of the archives in new and innovative ways, but it also establishes a mode to consider power within the archives. There is a long tradition of considering archives as sites of power, including Michel Foucault’s power/knowledge theory, which linked the two concepts intrinsically. In part this stemmed from what Foucault termed ‘discursive formation’, the process by which knowledge was ordered and made articulate.<sup>165</sup> For Foucault, archives existed as a system built to both create and regulate these discursive formations, “systems that establish statements as events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use).”<sup>166</sup> In archives, knowledge is not just organised but authorised and validated: information therein is not just the available narrative of history, but the consciously presented one. As institutions which are consistently renegotiated and reconfigured, both in their origin and during later editorial processes as with Brewer, archives “*create* the histories and social realities they ostensibly only *describe*.”<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Joseph Rouse, ‘Power/Knowledge’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 96.

<sup>166</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (first published Editions Gallimard, 1969; London: Routledge Classics, 2002), 145.

<sup>167</sup> Joan M Schwartz and Terry Cook. ‘Archives, Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory.’ *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 7.

Within Foucault's power/knowledge framework, where both having and controlling knowledge are forms of power, archives are inherently sites of both passive and active influence. Archives have long been considered a means of constructing power then, but power itself also requires a *definition*, particularly in an early modern – and archival – context. How was power conceived? How was it used? And most importantly, who had it? Network analysis offers one way of reconceptualising these questions. Understanding how measurements in the network can act as a proxy for different kinds of interactions in the Tudor court presents a way network analysis can contribute to ongoing conversations around power and influence in the early modern period.

Defining power is in itself challenging: the nature of power and influence was inconsistent and flexible during Henry's reign, an era which witnessed many shifts in status and roles at court. It is vital to clarify what is meant by power to quantitatively measure it, however. As demonstrated, a high degree score implies heavy involvement with the king's affairs and a large volume of correspondence at the core of the Tudor court. Degree defines power in terms of busy-ness then, but this is only one possible perspective. To understand power in the context of the early modern court, a more nuanced and developed understanding of power is required. Power must be conceptualised as an interdisciplinary construct, framed between sociological theories around hierarchies, the formation of interaction networks, and the historical realities of the Tudor court. As in the introduction, conversations about power must remain grounded within early modern customs and constructs. By defining power and its role in historical interactions, the contribution of network analysis to understandings of the Tudor court can be more concretely established.

As established in the introduction, power is primarily defined in relational terms, in which having control or influence is dependent on the different relationships a person holds with those around them. Power exists in terms of a hierarchy, and it is important to consider what this type of structure means in terms of sociological theories and how this may be applied to the realities of the early modern court. In his paper, 'The Origins of Status Hierarchies', Roger V. Gould builds on the individualistic versus holistic debate outlined in the introduction, focusing specifically on the distribution of influence and importance in a hierarchy and reframing the approaches as emergent and enacted:

the alternatives are, on the one hand, a perspective in which hierarchy is a natural or *emergent* phenomenon reflecting underlying variations in individual qualities, and, on the other hand, a perspective in which hierarchy is artificially imposed or *enacted* by interested parties and as a result accords benefits to incumbents of privileged positions in a way that is largely independent of their individual qualities.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Roger V. Gould, 'The Origins of Status Hierarchies: A Formal Theory and Empirical Test', *American Journal of Sociology*, 107, no. 5 (2002): 1145



Like Degenne and Forse however, Gould recognises the need for a third approach “in which social hierarchies are understood to emerge and persist spontaneously rather than by conscious creation, but at the same time without ensuring that rewards exactly reflect differences in individual qualities.”<sup>169</sup> This third theory combines elements of emergent and enacted hierarchies, acknowledging the impact individual personality can have in changing status, whilst recognising the limitations that may be placed on this by overarching societal constraints and expectations.

Gould’s terms also offer an accessible mode of framing sociological theories of hierarchy and understanding power in the early modern world. An enacted hierarchy describes a reward (or power) structure built around the nobility, where wealth, land and social status was mainly passed from father to son and reinforced from generation to generation, regardless of individual ability. In contrast, an emergent hierarchy, whilst still placing value on specific *earned* jobs and roles, would be devoid of any of these hereditary titles and traditionally conferred notions of importance.

Though a purely emergent hierarchy could not have existed in the higher echelons of Tudor England, Henry VIII’s reign witnessed a shift in opportunities for social mobility, resembling Gould’s theoretical move from an enacted hierarchy to a more balanced view of merit, social judgement, and status. Many lower-class men were raised to some of the highest and most powerful positions at court, including Wolsey, Cranmer, and – of course – Cromwell. Cromwell’s rise in favour with the king and power at court was based on individual attributes, rather than – and even despite – any enacted social status. In contrast, many families of old nobility and hereditary titles held little power at court and dwindled in their ability to influence Henry. Though Borman argues that Henry’s predilection for common-born advisors stemmed from anxieties surrounding his own status as king, it also mirrored a wider change in governmental styles and structures of power.<sup>170</sup> Fickle as Henry could be in his affections, he was apparently willing to dole out favour and positions of responsibility to advisors of any background, sparking tensions at court surrounding status. The changes to hierarchy in this period complicate tracing power solely on traditionally conferred notions of status, and network analysis offers a fresh way to consider this more fluid conception of importance.

The changes to power and hierarchy formation in this period were not passive or spontaneous, however, and unpacking Henry’s role in these changes is critical to understanding influence in early modern England. Gould emphasises the role of ‘social judgement’ in determining changes to or in a hierarchy, suggesting that

In deciding which authors are central [to a hierarchy], researchers invariably consider names their peers have cited in print or mentioned in conversation; but

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<sup>169</sup> *ibid*, 1146.

<sup>170</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 202-203.

their peers have done the same thing in deciding whom to mention. Identification of a particular author's influence, as measured by frequency of printed or oral citation, is therefore partially endogenous: each person's evaluation of an author's importance is in part a subjective judgement of the quality of her or his writings, and in part is a function of other people's assessments. The resulting evaluation is, at the same time, an assessment that informs other individuals' evaluations.<sup>171</sup>

Gould uses author citation and popularity in this metaphor to demonstrate that power is self-reinforcing: those that already hold influence accrue more through collective social opinion. The same can be seen in epistolary networks: the more someone was written to and acknowledged as a useful contact in the network, the more likely other people were to choose them as a correspondent and build interactions with them, in a 'rich get richer' approach to developing personal networks.<sup>172</sup> This is termed **preferential attachment**, where new connections are distributed in greater abundance to those with a high degree or an already high number of connections.

In Gould's theory, preferential attachment, or self-reinforcing social judgement, is generated by society as a whole, and is able to instigate change or ensure stability in hierarchies. In Tudor England, however, social judgement did not hold such sway: rather than *en masse* opinion changing or entrenching hierarchies, it was Henry's favour, and his choice alone to appoint lower-class men to high-ranking positions. Henry himself was vital to the formation of power then. Yet whilst he moved towards a more flexible system of social mobility, Henry's own power relied on his status as king, conferred regardless of his personal attributes as part of an enacted hierarchical system. It is critical to understand that Henry's power was exempt from the impact of changing statuses at court; in many ways, he was 'external' to the power structures that can be used to measure others in this period. Yet his opinion was vital to defining the status of others, and it was from him that court and country took the lead on who held favour and therefore power in the Tudor hierarchy. Preferential attachment here can be redefined, applying not merely to those who held the most connections, but those who held a connection with the king and whom the king deemed important.

Power and influence are therefore considered interchangeable terms throughout this thesis: to have influence over Henry and his structure-defining opinion was to have power at court. This is vital to remember as this chapter moves now to consider the role of other network metrics in considering power at the Tudor court. Even a presence in this network is, to a great extent, only an extension of Henry's judgement: it was only with the king's favour and permission that advisors

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<sup>171</sup> Gould, 'Origin', 1156.

<sup>172</sup> For more on this phenomenon see Barabási, *Linked*, 85-91.

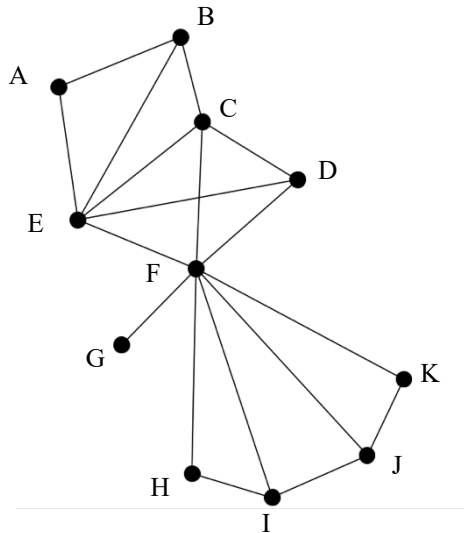


Figure 9. This illustrates the difference between edges and paths. An edge is one link (as seen between A and B, and B and C), whereas a path is any number of links needed to connect two nodes in a network. Here, there is no edge between A and K, but there is a path made up of the edges between A and E, E and F, and F and K.

and ministers would hold a role in state business, and thus be a contributor to the State Papers archives. The network offers not just a means of assessing changes to hierarchies in this period then, but of conceiving Henry's role in conceptualising power in early modern England.

Given that Henry's reign was a turbulent time for power shifts at court, with status and influence no longer purely determined by rank or role, it is an apt case study for network analysis to offer a different framework and means to map power fluctuations. As with degree centrality already discussed, other **centrality measurements** can be used as proxies for power in the network. As the name suggests, these measurements consider how central or essential a node is to the functioning of the network. Whilst degree considers 'centrality' as meaning contributing the highest volume of connections to the network, each measurement calculates this differently. Early modern conceptions of power were multi-faceted, and each centrality measurement can act as a counterpart in the network to a different aspect of early modern power. Considering the network as a whole, as with degree centrality above, also contextualises Cromwell's place in the structure amongst other influential actors at court from a number of different perspectives.

### *Betweenness Centrality*

The first alternate mode of measuring power in the network is **betweenness centrality**, which measures how often a person can act as a go-between or intermediary. As seen earlier in this chapter, one component may maintain many nodes, but these actors might not necessarily be directly connected to one another. Re-using the toy diagram introduced earlier, this time with the nodes labelled [Fig 9], it can be seen that whilst not all nodes hold a direct edge with one another,

there is a **path** between them. In the diagram in Figure 9, F acts as an intermediary connecting the two sides of the network. Though nodes A-E can reach each other without F, they require F as an intermediary to connect to nodes G-K. Betweenness centrality is used to measure these interactions, considering to what extent nodes can be used as go-betweens on paths in a network. Intermediaries at the early modern court often held tangible opportunities for influence, demonstrated by the change in Cromwell's status whilst acting as go-between for Henry and Wolsey as explored in the last chapter. Betweenness can also reflect wider opinions of someone at court and in the network, measuring the extent to which a correspondent is perceived as a useful contact to have, who can provide further access in the network. Whilst Chapters V and VI explore in more depth the ways Cromwell built and managed power as an intermediary, this chapter introduces how betweenness centrality can be used as a metric for influence. In the network, those with a high betweenness score are often bridges, holding together different parts of the network, existing in a structurally significant role. In this network, all betweenness scores have been normalised: this means that the scores are calculated as a percentage of all paths in the graph, and measured between 0 and 1, where 0 means a node is not used as an intermediary at all, and 1 means that a node sits on every path in the network.

Much like degree centrality, ranking the top twenty-five betweenness scores offers insight into power structures in the network and at court [Fig. 10]. Many of the highest-ranking nodes in betweenness overlap with those in the same list for degree centrality: eighteen of these top twenty-five are also in the top twenty-five for degree, and the top four – Cromwell, Henry, Wolsey, Lord Lisle – appear in the same positions. This crossover suggests that these writers not only have a high volume of contacts, but said contacts use them for access to others in the network. That Cromwell once more tops the list is again unsurprising. Not only does Cromwell have the largest number of edges in the network, increasing the number of paths he sits on, but as outlined earlier, over half of his contacts hold Cromwell as their only link in the network. This means that every path in the network going to or from these nodes *must* use Cromwell as an intermediary: they have no other alternative for go-between and as such contribute heavily to Cromwell's largest betweenness score.

Some writers that appear in both lists rank lower in betweenness than in degree, such as Lady Lisle (dropping from 5<sup>th</sup> in degree to 8<sup>th</sup> in betweenness), Wriothesley (dropping from 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>), and Tuke (dropping from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>). Though they are connected to many people in the network, their lower betweenness ranking suggests that their contacts are either also connected to one another (negating their need to act as an intermediary), or there are other options for intermediary, so the probability of them being used is smaller than if they were the only option, as with Cromwell's one-degree neighbours. As shown, Lady Lisle shared a large proportion of her

Rank	Name	Score
1.	Thomas Cromwell	0.124785
2.	Henry VIII	0.075723
3.	Cardinal Thomas Wolsey	0.028391
4.	Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle	0.018673
5.	Archbishop Thomas Cranmer	0.012388
6.	Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor	0.010533
7.	Cardinal Reginald Pole	0.009783
8.	Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle	0.008829
9.	Thomas Dacre	0.00796
10.	James V, King of Scotland	0.007641
11.	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	0.007585
12.	Francis I, King of France	0.006166
13.	Thomas Wriothesley	0.005265
14.	Thomas Darcy	0.004251
15.	Desiderius Erasmus	0.003866
16.	Philip Melanchthon	0.003508
17.	<i>Eustace Chapuys</i>	0.003443
18.	Anne du Montmorency	0.003349
19.	<i>Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland</i>	0.002972
20.	<i>Pope Paul III</i>	0.002814
21.	<i>Gian Matteo Giberti</i>	0.002694
22.	<i>Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio</i>	0.001848
23.	<i>Archbishop William Warham</i>	0.001803
24.	<i>Richard Riche</i>	0.001798
25.	Sir Brian Tuke	0.001729

Figure 10. Top twenty-five ranked betweenness centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores. Italics show those not in top twenty-five of degree.

contacts with her husband, Lord Lisle, reducing her ability to act as sole intermediary to the rest of the network.

In contrast to this, there are seven nodes who are new to the betweenness list, having not ranked in the top twenty-five for degree: Eustace Chapuys; Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland; Pope Paul III; Gian Matteo Giberti; Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio; Archbishop William Warham; and Richard Riche. Though these correspondents do not have a high enough volume of contacts in the network to register a high ranking in degree (with scores ranging from 18 to 26) the contacts they do have are more likely to rely on them as a go-between to the rest of the network. As such, ‘periphery’ nodes – those that exist on the edges of the network, both in the diagram and geographically – are more likely to rank high in betweenness, bringing in extra contacts that would perhaps otherwise not appear in the archives.

Eustace Chapuys was imperial ambassador to the English court for extended periods between 1529 and 1545, and his correspondence is regularly acknowledged as one of the most extensive sources for insight into Henry’s court in these years. A firm confidant of Catherine of Aragon and Cromwell’s neighbour in London, Chapuys held extensive contacts at both the English

and Spanish court, offering a variety of paths between the two. Margaret Tudor operated in a similar capacity at the Scottish court, though as queen consort rather than ambassador. Sister to Henry and wife to James V, Margaret held both political and personal links with both countries. Though Chapuys and Margaret are both outranked in betweenness by their respective kings, Charles V and James V, the ambassador and queen still hold structurally significant positions in the network, contributing to their high betweenness scores.

Richard Riche and William Warham both held significant positions within the English court, and it is likely that their high betweenness ranking reflects some of the requirements of their roles. An ally to Cromwell during his peak years at court, Riche was appointed Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations in 1536 and was responsible for the dissolution of the monasteries and the distribution of monastic lands, as discussed in Chapter I. Riche was first contact for monasteries and monastic orders looking to save their institutions from dissolution, as well as those at court seeking a share of the spoils from those less lucky houses, cultivating a select set of contacts and demonstrating the role of betweenness centrality in identifying key patrons.<sup>173</sup> Warham operated on the other end of the religious spectrum as a staunch Catholic supporter. Archbishop of Canterbury until his death in 1532, Warham was the most senior cleric in England, and as such had a specific set of contacts both at home and across the Catholic Church in Europe, managing much of the early ecclesiastical response to the English Reformation at the start of the 1530s.

Interestingly, a number of these nodes ranking high in betweenness alone reflect a specific event at court in this period, rather than a particular role in government. Like Warham, Pope Paul III, Gian Matteo Giberti, and Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio all appear in the archives in relation to the King's Great Matter, discussing and debating Henry's request for an annulment from Catherine of Aragon. Given the specific limited time period for their involvement in the archives, it is perhaps surprising that they rank so high in an important centrality measurement. Like Cromwell, their scores rely primarily on contacts that have no further links in the network, who must use the Pope, Giberti, or Campeggio as their only intermediary to the rest of the network. Unlike Cromwell, however, these three were not members of the English court and had no further reason for their correspondence to appear in the State Papers archives. Considering Henry's sense of urgency around this topic, some of these letters may be a result of epistolary interceptions, staged to gain information on the annulment procedure. For the most part however, they once again reflect editorial processes and later additions from other State Papers collections.<sup>174</sup> Much like degree centrality, understanding different network measurements offers insight into both power structures and archival history.

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<sup>173</sup> Despite this, many looked to Cromwell instead of Riche, as in Chapter V, 138.

<sup>174</sup> For example see L&P, vol. XV, no. 820.

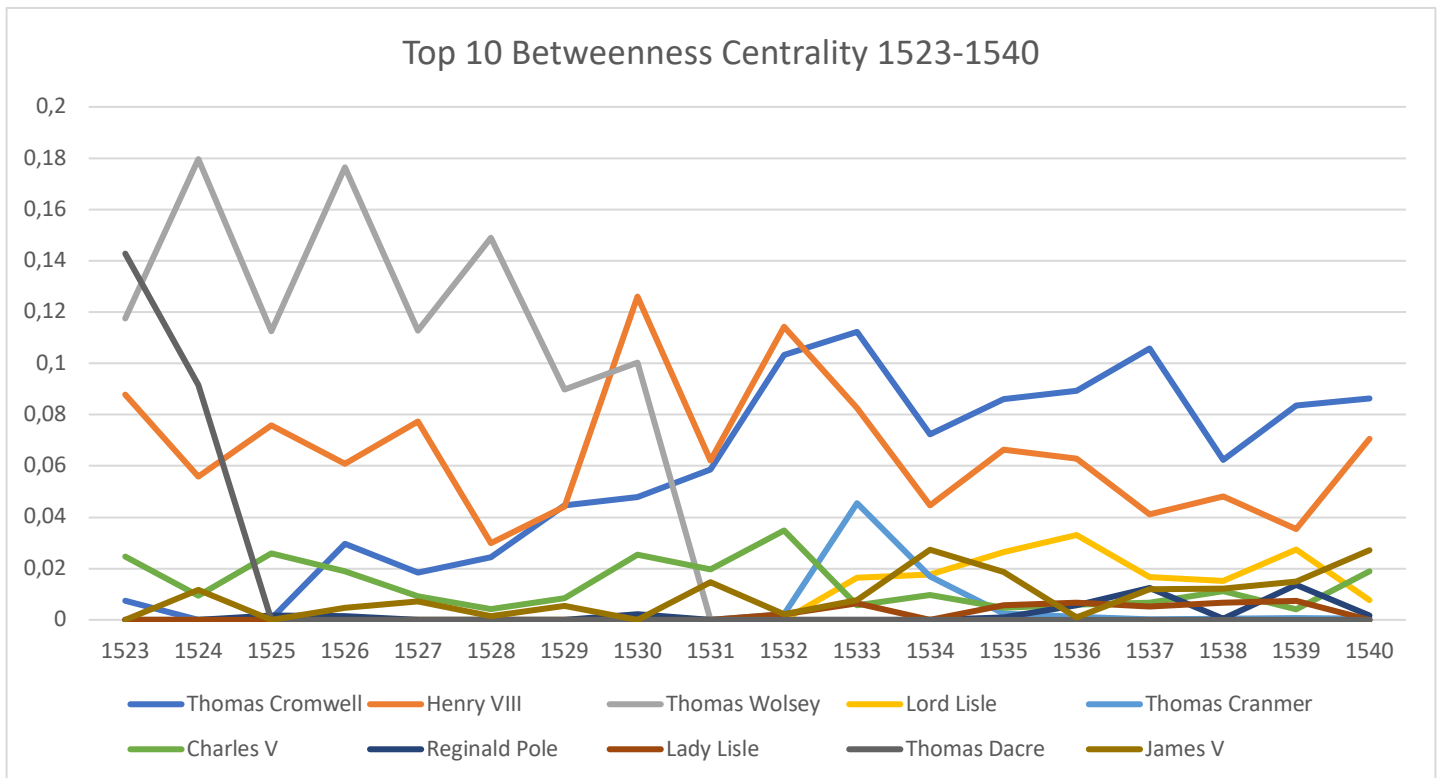


Figure 11. Top ten betweenness centrality measurements across 1523-1540.

Changes in betweenness centrality measurements for these top ten can also be mapped across 1523-1540, marking scores for each year as before [Figure 11]. There are similar issues with visualising the lower scorers here as with the degree diagram, where high scorers are easy to discern but lower ranking nodes in the top ten have similar scores. Much like degree, the top ranked nodes are exceptional in the network, once more following a power law distribution of scores. Between 1523 and 1540, there are in fact 3,834 correspondents with a betweenness score of 0; this means that only 11% of the entire network (across all components) could act as an intermediary even in the most limited capacity. In this reduced visualisation, a few peaks in betweenness scores can still be acknowledged, like Thomas Cranmer in 1533, reflecting his return to England in January as Archbishop of Canterbury. In recognising changes from year to year, the network demonstrates where certain actors held more influence or were looked to more often as an intermediary in certain periods.

Much like degree, mapping betweenness scores in such a way also offers insight into the power dynamics between Henry and his two chief ministers. Interestingly, changes in Cromwell's betweenness score often occur in opposition to Henry's own. Though their rankings do not change (Cromwell always holds first place in the rankings from 1533-1540 and Henry holds second place), their raw betweenness scores rise and fall in opposition to one another. Firstly, this once more enforces a sense of temporality and dynamism in the network: as relationships changed and connections were created or lost, there were differing opportunities to act as intermediary. Actors

were likely to sit on a different set of paths at different times, depending on their neighbours' own needs and contacts. Changes to Cromwell's score offer a potential insight into contemporary perceptions of his position at court, and the extent to which he was recognised and verified as an intermediary from year to year. More than this however, comparing Cromwell to Henry in the network reveals much about their dynamic, implying that the more often advisors were looked to as an intermediary, the less often the king was, and vice versa. The same connection between scores can also be seen between Wolsey and Henry in 1523 to 1529. Acknowledging and exploring this connection between scores may offer insight into the ways Henry's ministers' managed access to the king, something that will be explored in detail in Section II. Interestingly, Henry maintains a longer period as top-ranking node in betweenness measurements than in degree; whilst degree saw him take top spot in only 1530, the king registers the top betweenness score from 1530-1532. Though Cromwell began making contact with more of the network from 1531, it would not be until his unofficial takeover of the Principal Secretary role in 1533 that the minister would be most utilised as intermediary in the structure.

These changes to scores across time again demonstrate how total graph size affects the possible centrality measurements, as with degree. Whilst Wolsey, Henry and Cromwell all hold top ranks in betweenness scores at different times between 1523 and 1540, Cromwell's score remains lower than either of his masters', something that is worth briefly exploring. Though normalisation is designed to allow for comparison across graphs of different sizes, measuring the number of paths a node sits on as a percentage between 0 and 1 rather than the raw number, it does not consider the ways differing graph sizes impact the potential to act as intermediary. Comparing Wolsey and Cromwell's top scoring years for betweenness, Wolsey scores higher, with a score of 0.18 in 1524 to Cromwell's 0.11 in 1533. However, their 'raw' scores can also be compared: this means calculating the total number of opportunities each had to act as intermediary, rather than the percentage. In doing this, Cromwell's highest score in 1533 is more than eight times larger than Wolsey's in 1524, meaning Cromwell could act as an intermediary a total of 49,429 times to Wolsey's 6,115. The difference occurs because whilst Cromwell is sitting on more paths in total than Wolsey, Wolsey sits on a greater proportion of paths for his year. As demonstrated above, there were substantial changes in network size between these two advisory eras: the network itself is roughly three times larger in 1533 than in 1524. As such, whilst Cromwell acts as intermediary on many paths, the network contains a much greater number of paths in total. The more paths a network contains, the less feasible it is for one node to act as an intermediary on all of them, and therefore the graph as a whole moves further away from allowing any node to achieve a



betweenness score of 1. In comparison, Wolsey can act as intermediary on a greater percentage of paths because there are fewer paths offering this opportunity.<sup>175</sup>

Betweenness centrality measurements and rankings offer a means to assess ways writers could act as intermediaries or go-betweens in the epistolary network, a very real token of influence and control at the Tudor court, something that will be explored in more depth in Chapters V and VI. Much like degree centrality, ranking actors by their betweenness score offers a means of understanding how writers contributed to the archives and to interactions at court, and how this reflects different possible modes of control and influence.

### *Eigenvector Centrality*

The final centrality measurement in these experiments is **eigenvector centrality**, which measures the extent to which one person can influence others who are themselves highly influential. As Stephen Borgatti has argued, “the idea is that even if a node influences just one other node, who subsequently influences many other nodes (who themselves influence still more others), then the first node in that chain is highly influential.”<sup>176</sup> A high eigenvector score – again normalised between 0 and 1 – indicates nodes that are near other nodes of power at court and in the network. Like betweenness, eigenvector indicates perceived influence, reflecting ways being close to other actors of power could itself put someone in a significant position of influence. It also mirrors aspects of early modern life in which influential members of court regularly clustered together, sharing information and connections with the king as patronage and perpetuating their own

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<sup>175</sup> Van Wijk, Stam and Daffertshofer investigate the role this plays in brain networks, considering different network sizes and connectivity density. Experimenting with ‘model’ networks, Van Wijk et al suggest that experiments should compare networks of an equal size and density, “so that differences in graph measures appear solely through structural changes,” rather than differences in the datasets themselves. Whilst this solution works for random networks where the number of nodes and edges are controlled, the same cannot be said for ‘real-life’ networks. Manipulating the data to allow the networks to remain the same size each year undoubtedly introduces anachronistic bias and prevents investigation of organic changes to the network. Smith, Calder, and Browning experiment with five different network model types, some of which more closely relate to real-world networks. Focusing on normalised betweenness scores, Smith et al’s results match the 1523-1540 graph: the larger the network, the lower the top-end limit for betweenness centrality. Smith et al suggest that a mixed model approach is the most appropriate means of managing discrepancy between graph sizes, but this process still requires refinement and still uses model networks. Further experimentation on real-world networks is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to acknowledge that differentiation in betweenness scores occurs across a variety of datasets, rather than just those used here. For this thesis, it suffices to understand that the differences between Cromwell, Wolsey, and Henry’s scores as top ranking betweenness nodes are a result of the changing graph sizes in each year rather than differences in perceived influence or ability to act as intermediary. Bernadette C. M. Van Wijk, Cornelis J. Stam, Andreas Daffertshofer, ‘Comparing Brain Networks of Different Sizes and Connectivity Density Using Graph Theory,’ *PLoS ONE* 5, no. 10 (2010): e13701. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0013701; Anna Smith, Catherine A. Calder, and Christopher R. Browning, ‘Empirical Reference Distributions for Networks of Different Size,’ *Social Networks* 47 (October 2016): 24-37.

<sup>176</sup> Borgatti, ‘Centrality and network flow,’ *Social Networks*, 27 (2005): 61.

Rank	Name	Score
1.	Thomas Cromwell	1
2.	Henry VIII	0.370066
3.	Cardinal Thomas Wolsey	0.297722
4.	Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle	0.263081
5.	Thomas Wriothesley	0.158224
6.	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	0.155157
7.	Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle	0.149113
8.	Anne du Montmorency	0.101418
9.	Bishop Stephen Gardiner	0.09565
10.	William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton	0.092354
11.	Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk	0.089344
12.	The Privy Council	0.086081
13.	Thomas Audley	0.0825
14.	<i>Francis Bryan</i>	0.082073
15.	Archbishop Thomas Cranmer	0.080911
16.	Sir Brian Tuke	0.080505
17.	<i>Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire</i>	0.076398
18.	<i>Bishop Richard Sampson</i>	0.075921
19.	Cardinal Reginald Pole	0.074687
20.	Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland	0.074472
21.	<i>Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall</i>	0.072394
22.	<i>Bishop Edmund Bonner</i>	0.071898
23.	<i>John Wallop</i>	0.071409
24.	<i>Bishop John Longland</i>	0.06631
25.	<i>George Brooke</i>	0.065531

Figure 12. Top twenty-five ranked eigenvector centrality scoring nodes, with corresponding scores. Italics show those not in top twenty-five of degree or betweenness.

influence. In many ways, this measurement demonstrates the importance of who-you-knew rather than what-you-knew at the Tudor court.

As with the previous two centrality measurements, the top twenty-five scoring nodes for eigenvector between 1523-1547 can be ranked [Fig 12]. Whilst the top four – Cromwell, Henry, Wolsey, and Lord Lisle – remain the same as in degree and betweenness centrality measurements, the eigenvector rankings have slightly less similarity with the other two lists beyond this, with an overlap of only fourteen people with degree and eleven with betweenness. Those who hold high rankings in degree and betweenness but are absent from the eigenvector top-scores have a high number of contacts and regularly play an intermediary role, but not with correspondents that are in themselves structurally significant. A noticeable absence from this list in comparison to the previous two is the three other key European monarchs for this period: Francis I, Charles V, and James V. This is due to two primary reasons: first, whilst all three kings have a relatively high degree count, these are predominantly with members of their own court, who are not themselves near central power structures in the network. Whilst the contacts of these kings are likely to be important members of their respective state paper archives, in this Anglo-centric dataset these

neighbours are not connected to others of significance in the network and often themselves have a very low degree. Secondly, thanks to epistolary and political protocol, these kings were most likely to write only to Henry, their counterpart at the English court, or, in some circumstances, a very select few high-ranking courtiers. Whilst Henry himself is an influential node, ranking second in eigenvector, a connection to one important node is not enough to establish a high-ranking eigenvector score. Rather, these monarchs' lack of connection with other key members of the English court limits their influence in the network, again demonstrating the impact of archival processes. It is important to note that whilst Cromwell's contacts are similarly dominated by low-degree nodes, the minister was also in contact with the most significant nodes at court. In fact, Cromwell holds an edge with each of the rest of the top twenty-five eigenvector list. It is this balance between low-degree and high-influence nodes that allows the minister to hold top rank in all three of these centrality measurements.

These top eigenvector nodes also include eight correspondents who do not appear in either degree or betweenness: Francis Bryan; Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire; Bishop Richard Sampson; Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall; Bishop Edmund Bonner; John Wallop; Bishop John Longland; and George Brooke. Unlike the European kings, these correspondents may not have been connected to many people (with scores ranging from 19 to 32) or regularly acted as an intermediary, but those they *were* connected to were of great importance. In this way, eigenvector may reveal some of the more quietly influential members of the Tudor court: those who held more personal positions of importance close to the king outside of court administration or official roles. Francis Bryan was a popular courtier for most of Henry's reign, operating occasionally as an informal diplomat and, as seen, referred to fondly by the king as the 'Vicar of Hell'. Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire was father to Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, and held the office of Lord Privy Seal from 1530 to 1535 while his daughter was queen, though this role would not yet command the administrative power that it would under Cromwell when combined with the Principal Secretary office. John Wallop was regularly an ambassador for the English king, primarily based in Calais or at the French court in the 1520s and early 1530s and accompanied by an assortment of special diplomats, including Francis Bryan and Stephen Gardiner. George Brooke, though not promoted to a role of significance until the wars of the mid-1540s and not a member of the Privy Council until 1550 after Henry's death, was nevertheless a constant figure at court and around the king; indeed, these early eigenvector rankings and connections with influential members of the network pre-1540 may foreshadow Brooke's later promotions. Interestingly, none of these four men held typically significant or influential offices at court or in government in this period; Boleyn was qualitatively the highest ranking of these nodes as Lord Privy Seal, but this was devoid of any real authority under his tenure and merely a token office for the king's new father-in-law.

Their high eigenvector scores – and their connections to nodes of importance – stems primarily from personal or unofficial relationships which allowed them to hold influence that, in the case of Bryan and Wallop, resulted in other informal roles of diplomatic significance. This offers an insight into the ways personal relationships and political influence overlapped at the Tudor court.

The rest of the nodes new to the eigenvector list are all bishops, making eigenvector the measurement with the most English clerics in the top twenty-five rankings with six correspondents, now including Sampson, Tunstall, Bonner, and Longland, alongside Gardiner and Cranmer who already ranked high in degree and betweenness.<sup>177</sup> The high volume of bishops in this list demonstrates how religion – as a topic and as an institution – was at the core of state business. Nor was it limited to one important courtier or advisor, but rather connected to a multitude of influential ministers, resulting in this number of high eigenvector scoring clergymen. These rankings underpin the fundamental lack of distinction between church and state, a characteristic element of Henry's regime; not only for high-ranking clergy like Gardiner and Cranmer, but further down in the hierarchy of the church and official offices of the Tudor state as well. Given the limited seventeen-year timeframe of this network, it is difficult to discern whether this influence was a result of the English Reformation and break with the Roman Catholic Church, or whether this was a much more general condition of early modern governance. Tracing changes in eigenvector rankings across a longer period would perhaps offer insight into this relationship between religion and influential actors in power structures.

For the final time in this chapter, the eigenvector scores for the top ten can be mapped across each year from 1523-1540 [Figure 13]. Interestingly, there are more peaks and more distinctive scores here from those outside the top three than in the degree and betweenness graphs. This is distinctly so when Henry ranks as top eigenvector node (again a different amount of time to either degree or betweenness, covering 1530 and 1531). This suggests that influence and power were distributed amongst a larger group of people under Henry alone than under either of his chief ministers: a greater volume of advisors held contact with the most influential members of the network, rather than a smaller, closed-off selection under Wolsey or Cromwell.

Across this period, however, only Henry, Cromwell, and Wolsey hold a score of 1. Unlike betweenness, scores for eigenvector span the full range of 0 to 1 and are not overly affected by the size of the network (only in as much as a larger network may hold more nodes of importance). A score of 1 in eigenvector (the highest possible) implies that this is the most influential node, not only connected to other persons of influence but at the same time perceived as the most influential. In many ways this was self-perpetuating and repeatedly reified. Like preferential attachment, the

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<sup>177</sup> Though Wolsey and Pole were also members of the English church, Wolsey was more prominent in his role as chief minister and Pole was exiled from England for most of Henry's rule.

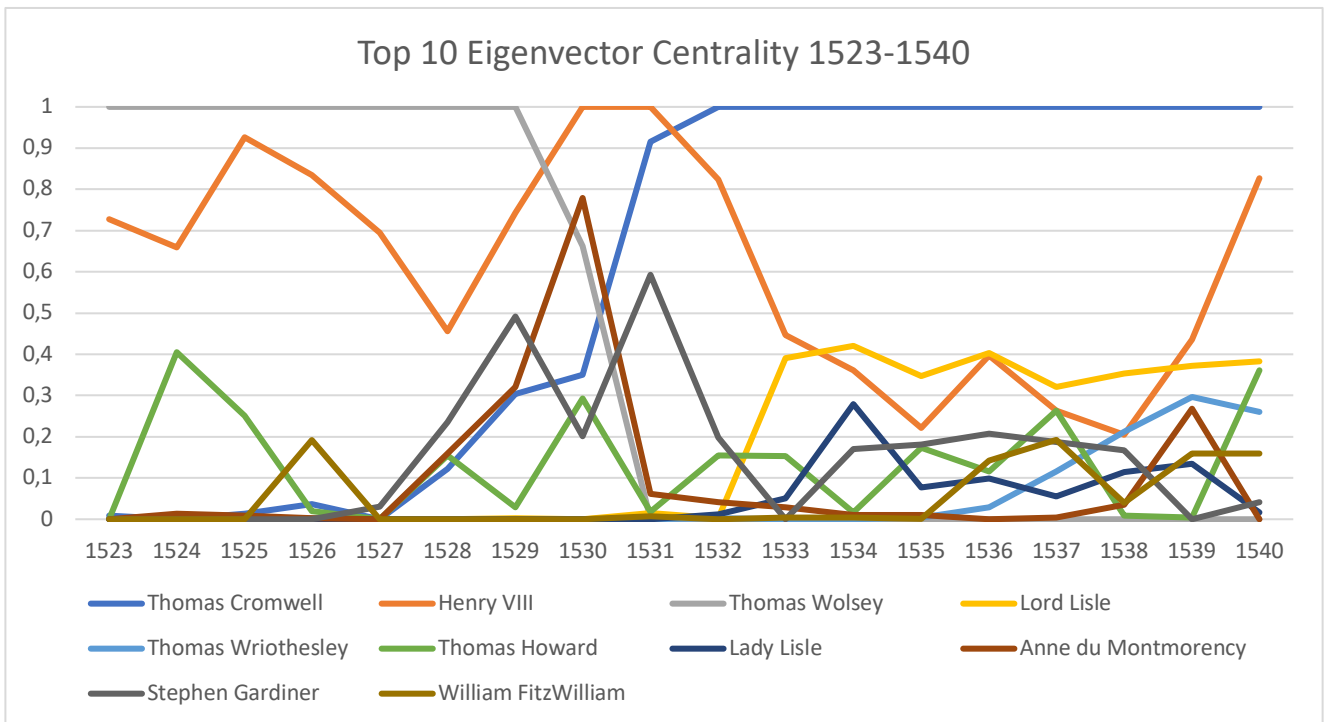


Figure 13. Top twenty-five scoring eigenvector centrality measurements across 1523 to 1540.

more an individual corresponded and surrounded themselves with influential members of court, the more likely they were to be perceived and *become* influential, inviting more influential contacts in a continuously iterative process. Whilst this is not built into measurements in the network, eigenvector in many ways also reflects those closest to the king in this period. Those perceived as influential with the king would also be considered as an important contact inside the epistolary network, receiving therefore a higher number of connections and influential positions in the structure.

Given then that the top rank in eigenvector was the node with the most influence in the network, it is interesting that both Wolsey and Cromwell hold a score of 1 instead of Henry during their respective periods as chief minister. In some ways, this is perhaps expected given Henry's apparent apathy towards letter-writing and Wolsey and Cromwell's comparative administrative dominance. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, Henry's power was 'external' to the network, and he would remain the most powerful person in the country regardless of his position in the network structure. In many ways, Wolsey and Cromwell's power in the network was constructed to serve the king and bolster his influence in other ways. Henry's precedence in 1530 and 1531 in both betweenness and eigenvector reflects an absence of a chief advisor to do this work for him and illustrates the ways the network automatically returned to the king as the head of the social hierarchy and administrative governance, something that will be explored more in Section III.

It is interesting to note that Cromwell's eigenvector rises dramatically in 1531 with his entry to Henry's service, taking top rank and a score of 1 in 1532, a year before his unofficial appointment to Principal Secretary, unlike degree and betweenness which saw significant spikes in the years following. This suggests that Cromwell was in connection with some of the most important actors at court during his initial rise to power, supporting the assertion in the last chapter that Cromwell used his carefully cultivated network of contacts to build his influence. It also implies that he himself was becoming one of the most valuable contacts at court before any significant uptake in the *volume* of work he was doing, in either number of correspondents or as intermediary. This may again reflect contemporary archiving of material: once recognised as a significant administrator at court, more of Cromwell's work was saved, resulting in the jump in both degree and betweenness scores, but it remains demonstrative of the way that Cromwell used letters to manage his own rise in influence.

Interestingly, though Henry's degree steadily increases during Cromwell's time in power, the king's eigenvector centrality drops as low as fourth in 1537 and 1538 suggesting that while the king was making more contacts in the network, these nodes were in themselves not particularly influential. It must be remembered once again however, that this is a letter network: not only does this not include Henry's in-person interactions with influential members of this network, but Cromwell in contrast is operating under a 'home court advantage', monopolising a structure based on his own tool for advancement. Perhaps more significantly, between 1534 and 1538, Lord Lisle takes second rank in eigenvector. This implies that, whilst Lisle's high-ranking betweenness and degree scores rely heavily on the seizures of his papers, these were not entirely unimportant connections, and he was still in contact with some of the most influential members of court, ranking second in eigenvector for these four years.

Though Cromwell's score does not change until 1541 after his death, Henry's own changing scores in 1539 may offer some insight into changing perceptions of the minister in his final year in power. Where Henry's higher eigenvector score implies an absence of a chief minister, the spike in the king's score a year *before* Cromwell's arrest suggests shifts in power earlier than traditionally suggested. This mirrors Cromwell's fall in degree in the same year mentioned earlier, building a broader, multi-faceted picture of changes in power structures in the network. Though Cromwell's fall will be explored in more depth later in the thesis, Henry's changing scores demonstrate the ways one individual's centrality measurements can be used to measure both their own power and others' around them as well. Eigenvector offers an insight into the use of powerful connections to build influence in the network, and together with other centrality measurements and rankings can lead towards a greater understanding of the archives and important actors within it, and wider changes to power in the network and at court.

Network analysis offers a fresh means to both frame and conceptualise the role of correspondence at the Tudor court, and the ways these wider structures of interaction can be used to understand social constructs and dynamics throughout the early modern period. The centrality measurements introduced through this chapter are pivotal to understanding the functioning of epistolary networks and the archives they are constructed out of – as illustrated by using degree measures to ‘map the archives’ – as well as key sociological theories at the heart of network analysis, which together offer new means not only of measuring but defining power in the early modern world. Whilst similar rankings across centrality measurements can be critiqued for **centrality redundancy** (the idea that there is little value in using multiple centralities if they return the same results), there are subtle differences between the centralities and, perhaps most importantly, what form of early modern influence they act as a proxy for in the network. By combining and contrasting the rankings across all three measures, a multi-faceted reading of power at the Tudor court can be built, offering novel means of engaging with ongoing debates and discussions about this era.

### III. Power and Centrality: A Case Study

The quantitative analysis of the epistolary network of 1523-1540, and the period at the Tudor court it represents, offers a comprehensive overview of modes of power in the early modern world to confirm traditionally assumed actors of importance and reveal potential new avenues of investigation. Exploring one of these avenues demonstrates not only the benefits of a quantitative approach in outlining actors of interest, but also the possibilities of building digital and traditional methodologies together to create an enriched and nuanced historical narrative. Building centrality measurements together to create a rounded picture of power at court also offers a means of narrowing down periods of interest in the graph; as shown, comparing Cromwell's degree and Henry's eigenvector scores in 1539 is an example of the possibilities offered by using these measures together to create fresh readings of events.

The graphs in the last chapter visualising the three different centrality measurements gave an overview of the most 'powerful' nodes and shifts in influence over time. Spotting distinct changes in measurements can not only indicate actors of interest, but periods of time as well. Whilst historical events may be well-known, comparing measurements establishes how events affected the network in different ways and impacted both perceptions and projections of power. Using the network in this way offers insight into contemporary ideas of important events, considering what topics were not only most written about, but what material survived into the archives. In this way, the research moves away from systems of importance assigned ahistorically by historians to those created by contemporaries instead. Though this chapter now turns to focus on a narrower period of history, the consideration of events is still led by the data and experiments.

This final chapter of the section, then, is a standalone case study, designed explicitly to bring together the modes of analysis introduced in Chapters I and II to examine a point of interest in the network highlighted by the data experiments and explore in more detail the relationship between power and centrality in a historical context. The case study not only demonstrates the qualitative and quantitative working in tandem but exhibits how digital experiments can be specifically written or adapted to suit humanities research, introducing extra metrics that are explicitly inspired by the quantitative findings already discussed, exhibiting the iterative nature of this approach. In doing so, it highlights both the importance of the approaches themselves and the methodological manoeuvres required to apply them. This chapter is not merely a case study of a historical event and its actors, but digital humanities itself in practice. This framework is at the core of this thesis, and this case study is in many ways an example of the approach that will be reproduced throughout Sections II and III to consider Cromwell's place at court. Though Cromwell himself is deliberately absent from most experiments in this chapter, exploring the structures



Measurement	1535	<b>1536</b>	1537
Undirected Degree (no. of correspondents)	88	<b>119</b>	101
Weighted Degree (no. of letters)	138	<b>347</b>	256
Average letters per correspondent	1.45	<b>2.31</b>	2.13
Percentage of edges in the network	9.42%	<b>12.09%</b>	9.85%

Figure 14. A table depicting changes in Henry VIII's network measurements 1535-1537.

around the minister offers an alternate means of contextualising Cromwell's work. As with measurements in the last chapter, it is only by investigating and measuring the network both on an individual level and as a whole that a richer view of power in this period can be achieved.

### *Henry VIII in 1536*

As shown at the end of the last chapter, comparing different centrality measurements offers one means of identifying periods of interest. In the graphs visualising changes in centrality scores across time [Figs. 5, 11 & 13], there are several spikes in scores in 1536, including for Henry himself, suggesting that the data for this year warrant further investigation. Focusing in on Henry then, additional metrics in the network for both 1536 and the years either side can be investigated to explore the king's place in and contribution to the network in this year [Figure 14]. Not only did Henry correspond with more people in the network in this year, he wrote and received more than twice as many letters as the year before, resulting in a higher average number of letters per correspondent.

As in the last chapter, the changing percentage of the network in contact with Henry can also be measured [Fig. 14.]. In 1536, Henry claims just over 12% of all edges in comparison to 9.42% in 1535; this suggests that whilst Henry's degree increased, it was not purely a result of a growth in the surrounding network. Rather, something occurred in 1536 which required Henry to take a greater dominance of the epistolary network. Importantly, the rise in Henry's contacts from 1535 to 1536 does not just mean an additional thirty-one correspondents were added to the king's network for this year. Rather, given the near constant dynamic state of the network, there was an almost complete overhaul of Henry's neighbours in this year: only twenty-six correspondents from 1535 are carried over to 1536, meaning a total of ninety-three new contacts for Henry. Not only does this reflect the temporal nature of an epistolary network, it also suggests that Henry was, for the most part, corresponding with people relating to issues specifically occurring in 1536, rather than the year before. In this way, the field of topics contributing to the increased network can also be narrowed down by marrying this distant reading with a more traditional close reading approach.

From a historical perspective it is unsurprising that the network registers such changes in a year of important events, including the death of Catherine of Aragon; the arrest and execution of

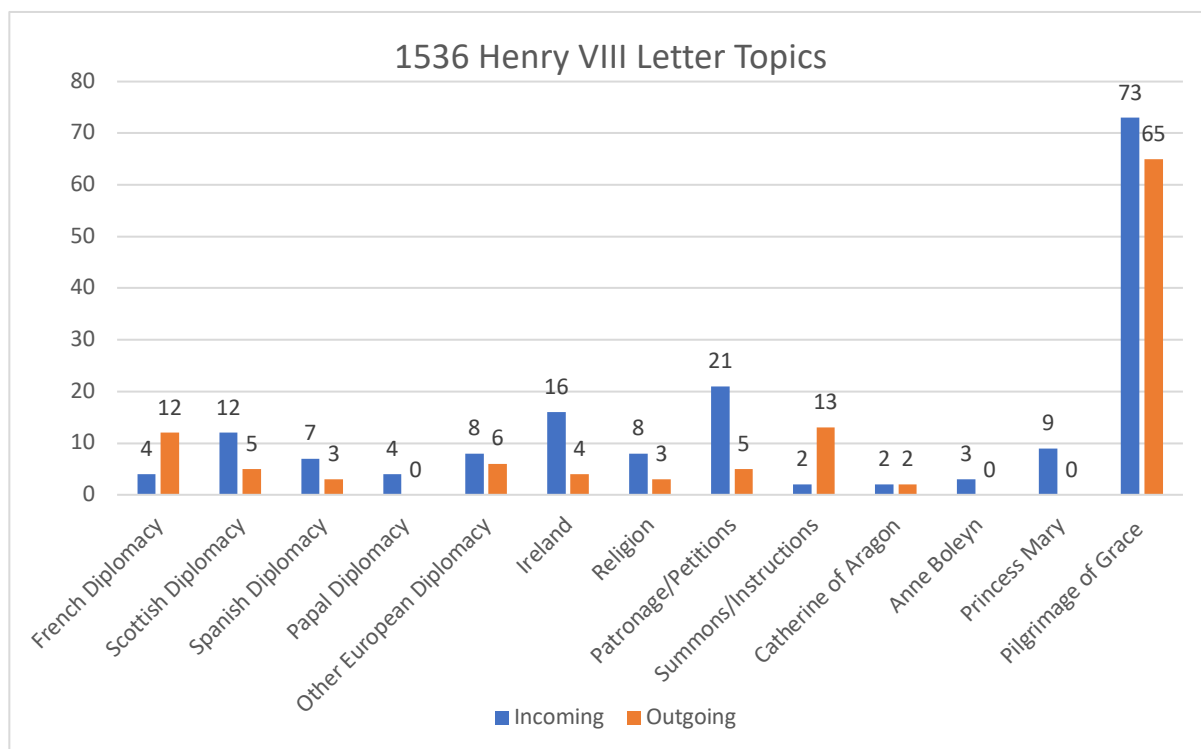


Figure 15. A bar graph illustrating the distribution of Henry VIII’s incoming and outgoing correspondence in 1536 across different assigned categories.

Anne Boleyn; Henry’s marriage to Jane Seymour; the Reformation Parliament’s passing of the Act for the Dissolution of the Monasteries; and the Pilgrimage of Grace uprisings in the northern counties of England. Considering Henry’s letters for this period in more depth offers a means of assessing which of these events contributed most to the spike in the king’s correspondence.

Using the summaries available in *Letters and Papers*, I assigned categories to Henry’s incoming and outgoing letters from 1536. It is worth quickly noting that this came to 288 individual letters, rather than 347. This is because much of Henry’s correspondence in this period had multiple authors or recipients, and therefore registers as separate edges in the network. When assigning categories however, each letter has only been registered once. This was a manual process, rather than an automated one, and as such relied on my own established definitions and parameters for categories. This categorisation resulted in thirteen different primary topic categories [Fig. 15]: the first bar for each topic indicates the volume of incoming letters on this subject, and the second bar shows the relative number of Henry’s outgoing letters.

The first nine categories are fairly expected and are likely to appear in any year of a Tudor monarch, particularly from Henry VIII onwards. The first five cover different diplomatic and ambassadorial ventures: France, Scotland, Spain, and the Papacy in Rome as the four main consistent topics, with other, smaller European diplomatic conversations (including those with the Consuls of Bremen and Mary of Hungary) in the final fifth category. The next four categories –

Ireland, Religion, Patronage and Petitions, and Summons and Instructions – relate specifically to topics within England and English governed lands. Both Patronage and Petitions and Summons and Instructions indicate aspects of Henry’s correspondence that do not refer to overarching themes but reflect individual or one-off cases unrelated to other parts of the king’s letters. Some of these categories overlap slightly – such as Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland’s petitions for personal help from her brother – but were placed in categories based on their primary theme.

The final four categories indicate historically important events of 1536 or one-off events that did not fall under other categories but could not merely be placed under Patronage and Petitions or Summons and Instructions. It is interesting to note that despite the attention traditionally paid to the deaths of Henry’s first two wives, neither Catherine of Aragon nor Anne Boleyn register as impactful topics in the king’s correspondence. Catherine of Aragon is the topic of only two incoming and two outgoing letters (both appointing official mourners), and Anne Boleyn is the subject of only three incoming letters to Henry, one of which is her own plea for mercy, with no replies on the matter from the king. Even Jane Seymour, Henry’s wife for the latter half of the year, has no category of her own, and is mentioned only once in passing in a letter to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer requesting prayers for the king’s family. Whilst some material may not have survived or, indeed, these topics may not have been considered appropriate for letters at all, it is significant that there is little reference to the queens in Henry’s written communications. Finally, whilst the king’s daughter Mary writes repeatedly to her father in this year, Henry leaves these communications unanswered, though the two reconciled in person in June of 1536. In many ways this interaction is demonstrative of how the king operated, preferring to discuss matters in person rather than by letter. In stark contrast to this absence, the king’s correspondence is dominated by the last category, the Pilgrimage of Grace, a rebellion against religious changes sweeping the North of England from October 1536 amounting to 73 incoming and 65 outgoing letters. Despite only appearing in the archives in the last three months of this year, Henry’s correspondence on the Pilgrimage of Grace is more than five times the size of the next largest topic, Patronage and Petitions.

The Pilgrimage of Grace is clearly the most important factor in Henry’s increased degree in 1536, but the king’s betweenness and eigenvector scores also show changes in this year. 1536 registers a spike in the king’s eigenvector score, rising from 0.221 to 0.397. This implies that Henry was himself considered a more influential member of the network and was more regularly in communication with other influential actors in this year than the years either side. Though the king’s normalised betweenness score drops slightly from 1535 and 1536, the total number of intermediary opportunities for Henry increased from 50,175 in 1535 to 58,779 in 1536. This means that Henry was more regularly connecting members of the network in 1536, but this was a smaller percentage of total intermediary opportunities than the year before. The change in betweenness

may suggest that more of Henry's correspondents were in contact with one another, negating a need for a path in the network that used the king as an intermediary and suggesting instead the presence of a cluster involving the king and several his neighbours. In summary, Henry was corresponding with more people and more structurally influential people than the year before, but these same neighbours were more likely to also be in connection with one another as well as the king in 1536. Building the different measurements together in such a way helps to create a more nuanced and detailed view of Henry's role in the network, and how understandings of power and influence played around this. What is most clearly demonstrated by changes in these measurements is that Henry's – and any node's – role in the network relied not only on his own decisions and place in the structure, but those of others as well.

### *The Pilgrimage of Grace*

Whilst the Pilgrimage of Grace has long been considered a significant occasion in Henry's reign, looking in more detail at other members of the network involved with the rebellion and how these events shaped the epistolary network in 1536 offers fresh perspective on this period, allowing the data rather than pre-existing narratives to lead investigations. Now narrowing down the case study further to look specifically at the events from October of 1536 onwards, these experiments further marry the digital and traditional approaches and narratives, using quantitative analysis to support and deepen pre-existing qualitative assertions.

Starting with the Lincolnshire rising in October 1536 before moving across Yorkshire and Lancashire under the leadership of Robert Aske, the Pilgrimage of Grace was “the most serious of all Tudor rebellions.”<sup>178</sup> The Pilgrimage was primarily a response to recent statutes establishing Henry as the head of the Church of England and dissolving smaller monasteries across the country. For the northern counties – a remaining Catholic bloc in the evolving, reforming religious landscape of Tudor England – these changes were deeply concerning. The revolt also spoke to larger political issues, believing there to be “evil-disposed persons in the King's Council [who] intend to destroy the Church”, in particular Cromwell, Cranmer, and Riche, the ‘Crim, Cram and Riche’ of the rebels’ popular ballad.<sup>179</sup> But the rebellion likewise reflected more local, day-to-day issues. Local churches and monasteries were often the centre of communities and their potential dissolution presented very real social and economic concerns. For many rebels, their problems were more temporal than theological.

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<sup>178</sup> Claire Cross, ‘Participants in the Pilgrimage of Grace,’ *ODNB*, published 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

<sup>179</sup> L&P, vol. XI, no. 705.

In response, Henry called on proven military commanders to quell the rebellion, relying primarily on Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, to lead the king's army with a number of noble courtiers. Based primarily in Lancashire and Yorkshire, these royal forces were forced to use letters to pass information on to the king – who remained in Windsor – rather than in-person conversations. With ever-changing conditions and an almost warlike mentality, reports were expected to be sent to and instructions received from the king on a more regular basis, and across a few different rebellion locations. As such, the number and frequency of these letters increased greatly, significantly contributing towards Henry's inflated correspondence. In doing so however, these correspondents also altered their own position in the network and as a result reflect wider authority changes at the time. By establishing 'key players' in the king's response to the Pilgrimage of Grace and their role in the structure, the ways increased correspondence between these actors changed power structures in the epistolary network in this period can be demonstrated.

To do this, I returned to Henry's letters and selected the correspondents who held a reciprocal epistolary relationship with the king discussing the Pilgrimage of Grace: Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton; George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury; Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland; Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby; George Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon; Thomas Manners, Earl of Rutland; John Russell, Earl of Bedford; and Thomas Lord Darcy. Together with Henry, these make up the 'Pilgrimage of Grace cluster'. I then reduced the network to contain only this cluster and their immediate neighbours, as illustrated in Figure 16. Here, the cluster are the larger eleven nodes in the graph, and epistolary links between them are drawn in blue. Retaining each cluster member's other connections demonstrates their wider roles in the network, and how this may have contributed to their role within the cluster. It is worth also noting briefly that Cromwell has been deliberately removed from this reduced network. Primarily, this is a result of once more knitting the close reading of sources with quantitative measurements: whilst the minister held a link with nearly every member of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster, none of these communications happened during or were related to the rebellion itself. Given Cromwell's exceptional placement in the wider network, he has been removed so as to not distort perceptions of control in the network during the rebellion. Though this may seem unusual given the focus of this thesis, it is just as important to investigate other, sometimes contending, power structures in the network, and the ways this approach can still offer insight into Cromwell's control in this period will be returned to later in this chapter.

These eleven nodes – the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster – contributed the largest volume of correspondence on the rebellion in 1536, and in doing so shift some of the power structures in the epistolary network for this year. In this smaller subgraph of 170 nodes, ten of these writers rank in the top twelve places in degree, betweenness, and eigenvector centralities. By virtue of all his other,

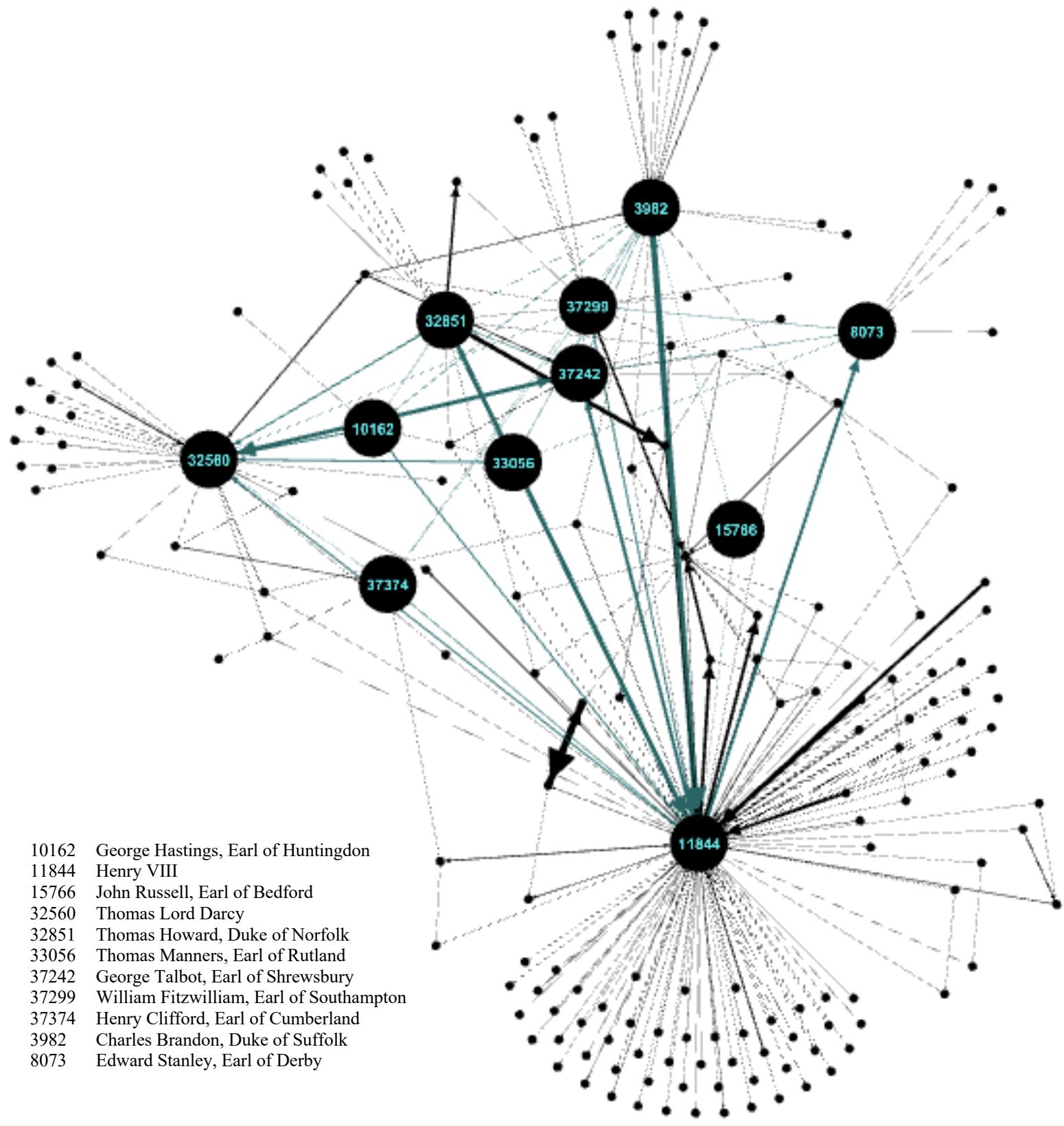


Figure 16: Gephi Graph depicting the ‘Pilgrimage of Grace Cluster’. Links between key cluster members are coloured blue.

Name	Degree Rank	Betweenness Rank	Eigenvector Rank
Henry VIII	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Thomas Lord Darcy	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton	6 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby	9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
George Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Thomas Manners, Earl of Rutland	12 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
John Russell, Earl of Bedford	21 <sup>st</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>

Figure 17. Table depicting the rankings of members of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster in each centrality measurement, recalculated within the reduced network shown in Fig. 16.

non-Pilgrimage of Grace related correspondence, Henry remains the top scoring node in this reduced network across all three measurements. Though as discussed, Henry was not needed as an intermediary between cluster members in this period, his high eigenvector score demonstrates that he was distinctly closer to the ‘centre of the action’ and more closely connected to the influential figures in the network than in either 1535 or 1537.

Ranking the rest of the cluster within this smaller subset of actors offers insights into hierarchies amongst Henry’s representatives, both assigned and perceived [Figure 17]. In his role as ‘leader’ of the king’s forces, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, places third across all measurements in this reduced network. This is a particularly significant change for Brandon, whose number of contacts jumps from 3 in 1535 to 26 in this period, his correspondence growing from 4 letters to 68. Brandon was in fact the first to be called to arms during the Lincolnshire risings, and, as Borman argues, was one of the only leaders against the rebellion to come out of the crisis favourably, whose “able service seemed to remind Henry of his former favourite’s usefulness.”<sup>180</sup> Brandon’s leadership also emphasised a hierarchy *within* the nobility demonstrated by the network and by other members of the cluster, with the Duke of Norfolk acknowledging Brandon’s position in a letter to the king: “wher *your* grace hath appoynted hym to be *your* lieutenant I shalbe as glad to go vnder hym as the most poure *seruant* ye haue.”<sup>181</sup> By referencing the king’s decision, Norfolk acknowledged that power stemmed directly from Henry’s choices rather than any preconceived order or enacted hierarchy in which the older duke would hold seniority. In selecting Brandon to lead the campaign in the north, Henry called on Brandon’s instrumental role in the invasion of France in 1513, relying once more on these demonstrated military skills. It is likely that Brandon’s ability to deliver success for his king in 1536 foreshadowed a similar ability for the duke to assist in the renewed French wars in 1545-1536, which once more sees a distinct presence in the network for Brandon.

<sup>180</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 305.

<sup>181</sup> TNA, SP 1/107 f.118.

In contrast to the Duke of Suffolk, Thomas Howard was late to be included in the response to the Pilgrimage of Grace; instructed to stay at home and allow his son to return to court instead, Norfolk wrote an impassioned plea to the king in his own hand, desperate to help, rather than “remayne at home *with* so moche shame.”<sup>182</sup> Once allowed to join the king’s forces in Yorkshire, he was supposedly instrumental in negotiations with the rebels. However, although Norfolk ranks fourth in all measurements in this smaller network, this is only a small degree increase from 1535, and the full network for 1536 shows a decrease in raw eigenvector score. Despite these rankings, then, Norfolk is less influential than in previous years. Here, the network reflects contemporary realities that Norfolk was being kept at an arm’s length from nodes of power after the fall of his niece, Anne Boleyn. Despite recent circumstances however, Norfolk remained a proven military commander having successfully fought at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, and the Pilgrimage was an opportunity to recoup lost favour. Whilst Norfolk’s scores are limited in 1536, 1537 sees a spike in all three centrality measurements for the duke as he remained in the north longer than his cluster counterparts to finish the king’s business and ensure peace. Whilst other leaders such as Brandon witnessed a return to pre-1536 roles in the network after their return south, Norfolk saw extended influence into the new year. It is important to note, however, that this growth in influence in the network does not last, and in fact returns to a negligible amount in 1538 when Norfolk was sent back home to Kenninghall.<sup>183</sup>

Military experience was a significant commonality through most of this Pilgrimage of Grace cluster, and it is likely that these shared endeavours in war is what caused the king to trust these men as his representatives in the north. George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, had fought for Henry VII in 1486, 1487 and 1492 before working in more diplomatic roles for the new king, but still managed to gather 3,654 men against the rebels within a week in 1536.<sup>184</sup> George Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, John Russell, Earl of Bedford, Thomas Manners, Earl of Rutland, and William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton, fought alongside the king and Brandon in 1513, and most had returned there in 1520 as part of the king’s courtly entourage at the Field of Cloth of Gold.<sup>185</sup> For Russell and Fitzwilliam, this service and their loyalty during the Pilgrimage of Grace later earned them a place in the Privy Council: Fitzwilliam was Lord High Admiral until 1540 when he was appointed Lord Privy Seal and Russell was promoted to the naval role.

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<sup>182</sup> TNA, SP 1/107 f.80.

<sup>183</sup> Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 153.

<sup>184</sup> Bernard, ‘Talbot, George, fourth earl of Shrewsbury and fourth earl of Waterford,’ *ODNB*, last updated 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

<sup>185</sup> Cross, ‘Hastings, George, first earl of Huntingdon,’ *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; Diane Willen, ‘Russell, John, first earl of Bedford,’ *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; M. M. Norris, ‘Manners, Thomas, first earl of Rutland,’ *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; William B. Robison, ‘Fitzwilliam, William, earl of Southampton,’ *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.



In contrast, Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby, and Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, had less military experience than their counterparts, but both held significant landholdings in the north.<sup>186</sup> Utilising local contacts and – more importantly – local loyalty, both were able to support the king in his suppression of the rebellion without a prior distinctive military service.

Though these other members of the cluster do not rank as highly as the dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk in the full 1536 network, they still score higher across centrality measurements here than in other years, evidencing the ways the response to the Pilgrimage of Grace and the necessary epistolary communications involved with this increased these nobles' standing in the network. Like Henry, both dukes and some of the higher scoring earls like Talbot and Southampton had a larger number of contacts beyond the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster who relied on their respective noble as the only connection to the wider network. Whilst these are unlikely to all be related to the Pilgrimage of Grace, they may be indicative of a wider range of resources that could be used to serve the king, as clearly demonstrated by Talbot's ability to raise such a large number of men for the king's army in such a short amount of time.

Significantly, although Henry appointed Suffolk as leader above Norfolk, the network rankings for the most part reflect a more traditional early modern social structure – the enacted hierarchy discussed earlier – where dukes ranked higher than earls in the peerage. In this instance, the network demonstrates the ways the noble hierarchy still directed levels of influence, and importantly, how Henry himself reinforced this when selecting leaders for the response to the rebellion. Henry's relationship with – and reliance on – the nobility in times of war or military need was often at odds with his promotion of 'new men' in other areas of governance, a dichotomy that would resurface repeatedly throughout his reign.

The final member of the cluster is Thomas Lord Darcy who, despite reciprocal conversations with Henry regarding the Pilgrimage of Grace, was a leader of the rebel forces rather than the king's. Having also served a military career under Henry VII and as part of the 1513 invasion of France, Darcy differed from his cluster counterparts in his overt opposition to the English Reformation, withdrawing from courtly life in the early 1530s.<sup>187</sup> Though Darcy requested aid from the king to help fight off the rebels at the beginning of the revolt, Darcy surrendered his hold at Pontefract Castle on 20<sup>th</sup> October and joined the Pilgrimage instead. Following the failure of the rebellion, Darcy was tried for treason and executed in June 1537. What is noteworthy is that whilst Darcy was unallied from the king's forces early in the Pilgrimage, he scores highly in degree,

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<sup>186</sup> Louis A. Knafla, 'Stanley, Edward, third earl of Derby,' *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022; R. W. Hoyle, 'Clifford, Henry, first earl of Cumberland,' *ODNB*, last updated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2004, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

<sup>187</sup> R. W. Hoyle, 'Darcy, Thomas, Baron Darcy of Darcy,' *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

betweenness, and eigenvector, ranking second only to the king himself across all three measurements. This evidences Darcy's position as an intermediary between sides and a bridge in the network structure. Communicating with both the king's forces and members of the rebellion within the epistolary network, Darcy amasses a higher score in all three measurements as one of the only nodes in this period to provide these connections.

This reduced network offers insights into power structures during the Pilgrimage of Grace, demonstrating the ways various actors managed the response to the revolt. Again however, the nature of letter writing implicitly means distance between them, and edges are often missing between nodes where they communicated in person instead. This was a regular feature of the relationship between Cromwell and Henry, as outlined in Chapter I: in fact, there is no edge between them in 1536, reflecting their physical proximity. The same occurs during the Pilgrimage of Grace, as groups of Henry's forces worked together to suppress the rebellion in different locations. As such, whilst these actors would not have written to one another, they were in fact stationed together. Fortunately, reports from and instructions to these groups regularly contained multiple addresses or signatories, offering a means of identifying who was physically connected to each other. Given the smaller subset of material for these experiments, I manually extracted shared correspondence data from the surviving manuscript copies for this period. These connections were then be re-entered into the pre-existing epistolary network as separate links.

In Figure 18, shared letter links are input as purple edges. Alongside the original eleven, there are now an additional eighteen members of this 'Pilgrimage of Grace Cluster' by virtue of shared letter links, shown as the mid-size nodes on the graph. These are:

Sir Anthony Browne; Roger Radclyff; Sir Francis Bryan; Henry Courtenay, Marquess of Exeter; Robert Tyrwhyte; William Howard, Baron of Effingham; William Parr, Baron of Horton; Sir William Lord Sands; William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester; Sir Marmaduke Constable; Archbishop Edward Lee; Sir Ralph Ellerker; Sir Robert Bowes; John Candysshe; Sir Anthony Wingfield; Arthur Hopton; William Harrington, Mayor of York; and Sir William Askew.

Not only does this process illustrate new, significant edges between nodes in the cluster, it also acts as an insight into early modern letter culture and the benefits offered by addressing letters to or receiving letters from a group of people. Though this affords Henry multiple separate edges – one to each of the nodes involved in the letter – it means that he could communicate with all of them with minimum effort (or, indeed, paper). The joint letter implies an element of shared authority and responsibility whilst maintaining a sense of hierarchy through epistolary practices, in particular in those to and from the Duke of Suffolk and others. Not only was Brandon the first signature in letters to the king, he was also listed first on the address in letters they received, and in some cases the

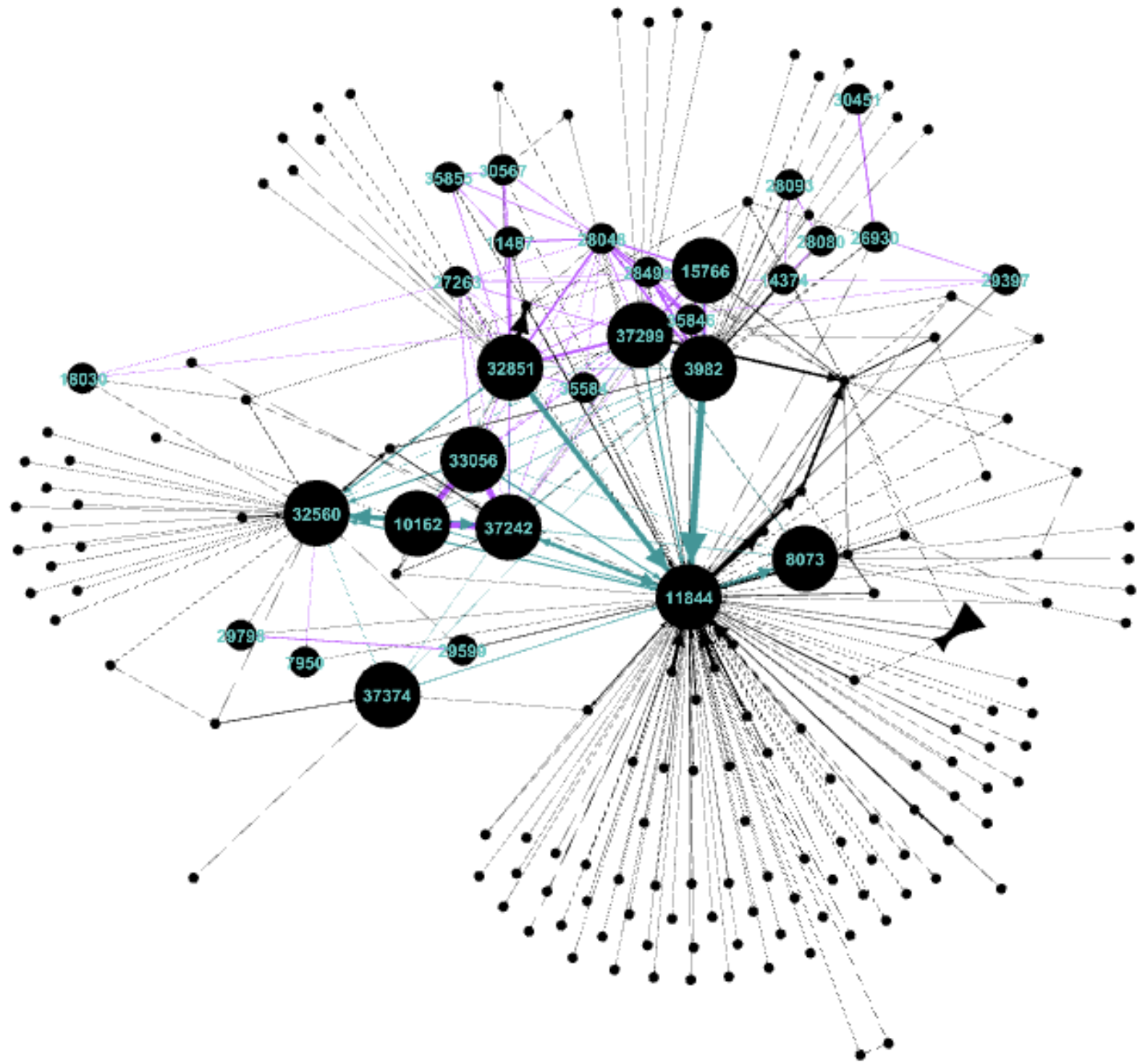


Figure 18: Gephi Graph depicting the 'Pilgrimage of Grace Cluster' with shared letters. Epistolary links between key members remain denoted in blue; shared letter links between all nodes are denoted in purple.

only person named. In the letters' opening, Brandon is repeatedly referred to as the king's "Right trusty and right entirely beloved Cousin" whilst the rest of the recipients are merely the unnamed "Right trusty and welbiloued."<sup>188</sup> In prioritising Brandon in these letters, Henry not only acknowledged his social status as duke, the highest amongst those in the shared instructions, but also his role as leader of the king's forces.

Including shared letters as an edge between nodes in the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster graph allows specific groups of people to be quickly and clearly identified. Some are very strongly linked: for example, the edges between the earls of Shrewsbury, Rutland, and Huntington indicate that they have eighteen to nineteen letters shared between them, but few shared letter links with others outside their small group, reflecting their shared charge in defending Nottingham from the rebels.<sup>189</sup> Unlike the forces under Suffolk, these three men were jointly responsible for their cause, and shared signatures as both authors and recipients. In other cases, nodes that are not connected to many by letters are instead included within a large group by shared letter edges. Such can be seen with Anthony Browne (node no. 28048): though in Figure 16 he only shares an edge with Henry and Brandon in the cluster, in Figure 18 Browne is involved in several shared letters, connecting him to thirteen nodes. Browne originally joined Suffolk in October in Lincolnshire before travelling to Yorkshire a month later, and eventually met the rebels to discuss terms in Doncaster in December.<sup>190</sup> Whilst not connected to many outside the cluster, Browne regularly interacted with a variety of the king's forces in person.

On the other hand, a lack of shared letter edges can also say much. As a leading member of the rebellion, Darcy unsurprisingly does not share any letter links with the king's men: whilst Henry and the rest of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster communicated with Darcy as a representative of the rebels, they did not collaborate with him in their letters. The absence of shared letter links isolates him from the rest of the cluster, clearly marking him as different. Furthermore, these additional letter links also shift centrality measurement rankings in the network. Whilst Darcy ranks second for these three measurements in the network without co-author or co-recipient links, once these are added he slips significantly in eigenvector ranking to 10<sup>th</sup>, behind seven members of the cluster and the newly well-connected Anthony Browne. Whilst Darcy's degree and betweenness rankings remain high (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively) because of his continuing role as a 'bridge' between sides, the extent to which he is connected to other actors of influence is now limited by his lack of shared letters. With these new links added to the data, who is considered influential by network metrics has now shifted, and new clusters have developed within the graph, to a great extent

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<sup>188</sup> TNA SP 1/108 f.97; TNA SP 1/108 f.59; TNA SP 1/109 f. 208.

<sup>189</sup> Norris, 'Rutland,' *ODNB*.

<sup>190</sup> William B. Robison, 'Browne, Sir Anthony,' *ODNB*, last updated 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022.

isolating Darcy, who is comparatively no longer strongly connected to the rest of the group. In contrast, adding these letters significantly increases Browne's ranking in all three measurements, reflecting his in-person influence. There is often a distinct variation in the picture these measurements create depending on how the sources are 'abstracted'. Building these measurements with a concrete understanding of epistolary customs and the archives used offers a novel way to understand interactions and power relationships in case studies such as the Pilgrimage of Grace.

### *Thomas Cromwell and the Pilgrimage of Grace*

The Pilgrimage of Grace cluster offers a novel means of assessing influence at court in 1536, but in doing so, it has intentionally placed Cromwell's contributions to the network on hold. As with the process of abstraction outlined in the introduction, however, this reduction of information need only be temporary, and this chapter now returns to Cromwell to consider his place in the network and the impact of the Pilgrimage of Grace on his epistolary influence, and how therefore this case study is also a means of conceptualising and exploring his power.

Though Cromwell still ranks first across all three centrality measurements in the full network for 1536, his scores do not spike in the same way Henry's degree does. Instead, Cromwell's number of contacts remain fairly stable from 1535 through to 1537. Whilst Henry's correspondence was dominated by discussions of the rebellion, contributing to the king's inflated score, mentions of the Pilgrimage of Grace are almost entirely missing from both the minister's incoming and outgoing letters, which remained focused on more day-to-day matters of governance. As with Henry's significantly increased role in the network in this year, the absence of perhaps expected correspondence – especially in particularly unusual circumstances, as with Cromwell – prompts areas for qualitative investigation.

It is important to emphasise that the lack of reports directed to Cromwell did not mean he was left uninformed: as Principal Secretary, he had access to and regularly read Henry's letters, as demonstrated in Chapter I. Unlike diplomatic dispatches, however, Cromwell did not receive his own copy of reports about the rebellion in addition to the king's. In fact, on one of the few occasions in which Cromwell wrote with regards to the rebellion, as MacCulloch explores, his letter was intercepted and evidence suggests it was circulated through the rebel forces, threatening the tenuous peace that had been negotiated.<sup>191</sup> Even as late as May 1537, instructions from Cromwell to the Duke of Norfolk that reports were "to be eftsones sent vnto me" were crossed out and replaced with "his hignes" instead.<sup>192</sup> Cromwell was not deliberately kept out of proceedings, then, but blatantly including the minister by writing to him was an unnecessary liability that risked stoking

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<sup>191</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 398-392.

<sup>192</sup> TNA SP 1/130 f.165.

the fires of rebellion further. As Loades has argued, “there is no reason to support that [Cromwell] lost his place as the king’s right-hand man [... but] Henry was sensible enough to realise that working through him in such a context would have been unacceptable, and he was kept in the background, working through the Duke of Suffolk and other front-line noblemen.”<sup>193</sup> Needless to say, this was a rational move: Cromwell was blamed by the rebels for the religious reforms sweeping England, and to promote his role in dispelling the rebellion was ill advised. Yet Coby and Borman both argue that Cromwell would have been unable to significantly contribute even if this had not been the case: “in Henry’s eyes he was merely a bureaucrat,” and he was unable to raise forces required to support the king as the other nobility had.<sup>194</sup> This was a rare occasion where Cromwell’s ‘common-man’ status not only damaged his reputation, but his ability to fulfil his duties to Henry.

Despite this, he was still at the heart of the action, involved – as would be expected from the Principal Secretary – in the king’s letters, correcting drafts from Henry to key leaders of the king’s forces. Significantly, this occurred at one of the most important turning points of the rebellion, in which Cromwell’s corrections in the king’s letter instructed Brandon to “practyse *with* the *merchauntes* men and *inhabytunttes* of hull such as ye thinke ye may be assuryd of truste and also to *promyse* them thayr *pardons*.”<sup>195</sup> Operating via Henry’s correspondence rather than his own, Cromwell still demonstrated meticulous management of governmental affairs. This also suggests that the spike in Henry’s network measurements in 1536 are not really his, but rather an absorption of Cromwell’s normal activities. There is an extent then to which Henry’s improved scores are in fact merely Cromwell’s under a different penname, the complexities of which will be explored more in Chapter VII.

Cromwell’s (relative) quietness was not a diminishment of the minister’s power, then, but a re-framing of it, and requires a more nuanced assessment of the network and the historical narrative. Understanding these changes offers a means of better framing Cromwell’s influence and considering the lasting impact of the Pilgrimage of Grace on Cromwell’s power and the extent to which it prefaced his fall in 1540. Whilst Cromwell’s fall will be explored in more detail later in this thesis, it is important to consider traditional narratives of the role the Pilgrimage of Grace held in changing perceptions of Cromwell and what networks of this period can reveal about this. Though MacCulloch suggests that after the rebellions had been dispersed, “Cromwell was left more powerful than ever,” he also argues that the formalisation of the Privy Council in 1537 was a direct response to the Pilgrimage of Grace and symbolised a significant diminishment of Cromwell’s

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<sup>193</sup> Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 140.

<sup>194</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 300; Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 136.

<sup>195</sup> TNA SP 1/112 f.13.

power, restricting Cromwell's ability to act alone in guiding the king.<sup>196</sup> Borman similarly argues that the establishment of the permanent Privy Council meant that "Cromwell suddenly found himself outnumbered in what had traditionally been his powerbase."<sup>197</sup> Yet the epistolary network demonstrates no such power shifts as a result of the Privy Council: though the Council – like Henry – experiences a spike in eigenvector centrality and a slight rise in degree and betweenness in 1536, these drop again in 1537 and revert to pre-Pilgrimage levels by 1538. The Privy Council played an important role during the rebellion, acting as alternate recipient to the king in place of Cromwell, but returned to the background once the danger had passed. It is important to note that Cromwell would have also read reports to the Council, just as he read the king's. Where changes to the Privy Council's scores in this period mirror Henry's, Cromwell was in fact operating and managing the response to the rebellion via the Council in the same way as he had through the king's correspondence. Instead, the network supports Elton's repeated assertions that the Privy Council did not pose any real threat to Cromwell's influence: the Council was not an opposing power structure, but an extension of Cromwell in the network. Though Cromwell's relationship with the Privy Council will be explored fully in Chapter VIII, it is important to recognise how qualitatively contextualising quantitative measurements helps to build a wider picture of Cromwell's modes of control.

Another 'threat' to Cromwell's position during this period was the Duke of Norfolk, whose – albeit small – rise in rankings directly reflects his involvement in the response to the Pilgrimage of Grace. The traditionally assumed antagonism between the two men has been framed as the ongoing battle at court between the nobility and Henry's newly promoted 'common men'. Despite the emphasis on religious issues, the 1536 rebellion and the response to it fundamentally hinged on questions of class and nobility. As discussed above, the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster consisted of noblemen: even those representing the rebels, such as Darcy, were of the nobility. Coby argues that the Pilgrimage was a populist movement 'co-opted' by the gentry once it began to make progress, but handed back to the common people when they had negotiated terms for themselves; yet Meyer suggests that the number of nobility involved "is one indication of the extent to which people at all levels of society [...] were in sympathy with [the rising's] aims."<sup>198</sup> Importantly, the common masses of the rising felt they were not in a position themselves to negotiate with the king's nobility, and recruited sympathising gentry to take the lead and formalise their movement. This hierarchy underpinned the entire rebellion: though the Pilgrimage's demands revolved around religion, they

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<sup>196</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700*, (Allen Lane, 2003; Penguin Books Ltd., 2004; London: Folio Society, 2013), 219; MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 398-399.

<sup>197</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 307.

<sup>198</sup> Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 144-145; G. J. Meyer, *The Tudors: The Complete Story of England's Most Notorious Dynasty*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2015), 269.

also demanded the removal of ‘common’ advisors (such as Cromwell, Cranmer, and Riche), and the restoration of the nobility to their rightful place at the king’s right hand. This was reinforced by Darcy in 1537, who blamed Cromwell as

the very original and chief causer of all this rebellion and mischief, and art likewise causer of the apprehension of us that be noble men and dost daily earnestly travail to bring us to our end and to strike off our heads, and I trust that or thou die, though thou wouldest procure all the noblemen’s heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet shall there one head remain that shall strike off thy head.<sup>199</sup>

Setting Cromwell up in direct opposition to the nobility of England, Darcy not only epitomised the spirit of the Pilgrimage of Grace, but foreshadowed issues surrounding the chief minister’s fall from power three years later.

Given this apparent dichotomy, Norfolk’s shifting rankings in the network may be perceived as a rise in influence and, more importantly, the king’s favour in opposition to Cromwell. More than this, though, it may be argued that the duke was deliberately attempting to capitalise on the widespread anti-Cromwell sentiment. Chapuys certainly suggests that Norfolk secretly supported the rebellion in his reports to Charles V, stating that

The bp. [of Carlisle] also has sent to me to say that he never saw the duke so happy as he was today, which I attribute either to his reconciliation with the King, or to the pleasure this report itself has given him, thinking that it will be the ruin of his rival Cromwell, to whom the blame of everything is attached, and whose head the rebels demand; also that it may be the means of stopping the demolition of the churches and the change in matters of religion, which is not to his mind.<sup>200</sup>

Elton suggests however, that the threat of the Pilgrimage superseded personal grievances at court: “even the factions among leading politicians, profound though they appear, proved to be only superficial when Norfolk prevented the success of a movement designed to destroy his rival.”<sup>201</sup> Though this bad blood was not ‘superficial’, service to the king took precedent. The Pilgrimage still provided opportunities for both to score points over one another with the king, however. In his letter to the king requesting to join those in the North, Norfolk asked “only shall I note Sit still lyk a man of law”, snidely commenting on Cromwell’s inability to act.<sup>202</sup> Yet Henry’s later letters to

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<sup>199</sup> L&P, vol. XII, no. 976.

<sup>200</sup> L&P, vol. XI, no. 576.

<sup>201</sup> Elton, *England*, 146-147.

<sup>202</sup> TNA, SP 1/107 f.80.



Norfolk reproached the duke for writing “in a far more desperate sort than we looked for, or than we yet think reasonable.”<sup>203</sup> Clearly, Cromwell still held the king’s ear (and pen) at Windsor.

Despite this continued hostility, Norfolk would not support the Pilgrimage of Grace in an attempt to usurp Cromwell: Darcy’s fate was a cautionary tale to those who sought to oppose either the king or his chief minister in 1536. Throughout Norfolk’s time at the Tudor court, the duke proved that he valued his own life above anything else – and indeed, above the lives of his family, as shown by the speed with which he disowned both nieces married to the king. More importantly however, as illustrated, despite a small increase in centrality rankings, the Pilgrimage did not significantly shift Norfolk’s influence in the network. Furthermore, any improvements to Norfolk’s position in 1536 were non-existent two years later. Norfolk did not have the social capital or network influence to be able to manage an effective takeover at this stage. Whilst Cromwell was able to manage his influence via Henry and the Privy Council’s correspondence rather than just his own, Norfolk’s diminished place in the network would not be made up elsewhere. Re-evaluating traditional qualitative narratives through a framework of quantitative network analysis offers a fresh means of assessing power dynamics in traditionally contentious moments of history.

Though Cromwell was abnormally quiet on the topic of the rebellion, understanding his structural role and – just as importantly – the roles of others, allows for an interrogation of underlying shifts in influence at the court of Henry VIII. Focusing on the events of 1536 as a case study not only allows for an examination of a smaller subset of data on a more readable scale, but also provides an opportunity to combine different network measurements together to offer a more nuanced view of influence in the network. In doing so, it demonstrates the ways quantitative analysis may support or challenge traditional qualitative narratives of history. Building on the methodologies and approaches used in this chapter to offer a broader overview of the network and the archives, this thesis will now begin to focus more specifically on Cromwell, as the last portion of this chapter has done, homing in on the minister as a key member of the epistolary network and exploring in depth his development of power.

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<sup>203</sup> L&P, vol. XI, no. 1226.

## SECTION II

### Cromwell in Power, 1534-1540

In introducing the core elements of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used in this thesis, the first section established an overview of Cromwell's career, the epistolary network as a whole, and constructs of early modern power and how they can be conceived and measured through network analysis. This next section will now turn to a more interrogative exploration of Cromwell in the network, expanding on the measures already introduced and creating additional experiments designed specifically to consider Cromwell's power in the epistolary structure and at the Tudor court. The following chapters each explore in different ways certain aspects of Cromwell's approach to power and in doing so engage in a series of thought experiments, using quantitative methodologies to test qualitative hypotheses. Chapter IV looks to the edge between Cromwell and Henry in the network; Chapter V considers Cromwell's significance as an intermediary by removing him from the network; and Chapter VI expands on this to explore Cromwell's role as 'gatekeeper'. As such each chapter contains large quantities of my own custom-written code designed specifically for these experiments. The off-the-shelf tools utilised in the first section are vital introductory measures in network analysis and offer an excellent wholesale view of the data. There remain some limitations for historical application, however, and specially written code can allow for more specificity surrounding early modern customs, required in the complex crossover between constructs of power in the early 1500s and network analysis. The experiments employed in this section therefore reflect a more active manipulation of the data, an important set of interpretative manoeuvres that in themselves will be discussed and analysed in more depth.

This section also begins to focus more closely on relationships in the network, in particular Cromwell and Henry's, and how these connections defined roles in the network and power at court. As already discussed in Section I, Henry's place at the head of the Tudor hierarchy and governance and Cromwell's proximity to the king were key elements in contemporary power structures; their relationship was qualitatively the most important in the network, but also the most complicated. This section explores this, utilising a variety of new quantitative measures to examine this relationship and its impact on the wider workings of the structure. In doing so, this section narrows the data to look explicitly at Cromwell's tenure as Principal Secretary and chief minister at the Tudor court between 1534 and 1540.

#### IV. King and Minister

This chapter focuses exclusively on the Henry-Cromwell relationship, and its form in the epistolary network. As noted in Section I, the need for written correspondence between Cromwell and Henry was often negated by their in-person meetings: occasionally, as in 1536, there is no extant network edge between the two. Despite this, their connection is both a qualitatively and quantitatively significant element of the network, linking as it does the two most ‘powerful’ nodes. This chapter offers additional means to measure this relationship, bolstering their edge with manually added in-person interaction data using textual information from Cromwell’s correspondence. In doing so, this chapter focuses on Cromwell’s role as the Principal Secretary and how the ‘king versus minister’ debate can be explored through the lens of this position.

The Principal Secretary role afforded Cromwell power in two key ways: proximity to Henry and control over the king’s letters. Exploring these two elements in the network challenges pre-existing conclusions about the relationship between Cromwell and Henry and power at court. Letters as part of the king versus minister debate illustrate that the conversation around their relationship depends not only on the wider picture and era-defining decisions, but also the balance of control down to the finest of details. The experiments in this chapter therefore offer a new means to quantify the relationship between Henry and Cromwell and the power dynamic therein, considering the ways their connection shifted and shaped their level of influence in the network. In doing so, these experiments establish the relationship less as a competition for power and more a sliding scale of dependency between king and Cromwell. In introducing and exploring extra measures, this chapter focuses heavily on the interpretative manoeuvres involved, and how they can reveal as much as the quantitative results themselves. As such, this chapter seeks not only to shed light on the relationship between Henry and Cromwell, but to demonstrate the ways quantitative methodologies can frame sources and traditional historical concepts in new ways, offering a fresh mode by which to engage with qualitative hypotheses.

##### *King versus Minister*

The balance of power between the king and his minister has been oft debated by both early modern contemporaries and historians, contributing to the ‘king versus minister’ debate, a cornerstone piece of Tudor and Cromwellian history. Simply put, this ongoing historiographical debate attempts to assign power or control to either Henry or Cromwell, often focusing on the English Reformation and theological trajectory of the English Church. As seen at the end of the last chapter, Lord Darcy blamed Cromwell as the source of the problems raised by the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Cardinal Pole’s account of the king and minister’s relationship similarly blamed

Cromwell, though he did not fully absolve Henry of these decisions. Intended for Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, in 1539, Pole's *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum* blamed Henry for the destruction of the monasteries and innocent deaths of Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher in 1535. The bulk of the blame remained with Cromwell, however, who as a 'messenger of Satan' supposedly approached the king with a fully formed plan to break with Rome and appoint Henry head of the Church of England.

Contemporaries of the Tudor court may have been more willing to place the blame on Cromwell in an attempt to avoid accusing the king of wrongdoing, a tactic even Henry himself used when regretting his decisions.<sup>204</sup> Historical studies take a more critical view of this however, often comparing the chief minister to his predecessor, Wolsey, arguing that "Cromwell never became the king's partner, nor did he ever enjoy the degree of influence over Henry previously achieved by Wolsey."<sup>205</sup> Eric Ives goes further to suggest that "the sovereign was no figurehead and it would be quite wrong to underestimate his direct responsibility – and not only for war and diplomacy which contemporaries saw as the special concern of a king;" rather, "Henry's retention of the right to intervene as and when he chose was essential to his understanding of monarchy."<sup>206</sup> Both Guy and Ives present a king in full control, though willing to take advice. As Jacqueline Rose has demonstrated, input from advisors – Cromwell included – was not an absence of Henry's control, but rather him doing his due diligence as king listening to advice.<sup>207</sup> While Bernard acknowledges Cromwell's work and even suggests there was "a close working relationship" he argues that

The strong impression is of a minister doing the daily executive work of government, drawing his master's attentions to the need to fill vacant posts, but asking the king for guidance on how to act in all issues of importance. There is not sense whatsoever here of a minister acting on his own initiative, or manipulating his master, or making substantial suggestions to the king, or trying to temper the king's proposals.<sup>208</sup>

Elton admits that Cromwell did not hold such obvious control as Wolsey, but he frames Cromwell's power in opposite terms to Bernard, suggesting that Cromwell instead "cultivated a sedulous

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<sup>204</sup> Henry blamed his advisors for Cromwell's death, claiming that "upon light pretexts, by false accusations, they made him put to death the most faithful servant he ever had;" L&P, vol. XVI, no. 590.

<sup>205</sup> Guy, 'Thomas Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell and the Reform of Henrician Government,' in *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, ed. Diarmaid MacCulloch, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1995), 42.

<sup>206</sup> Eric Ives, 'Henry VIII: The Political Perspective,' in *Reign of Henry VIII*, 13; 22.

<sup>207</sup> Jacqueline Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England,' *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (2011): 47.

<sup>208</sup> Bernard, 'Elton's Cromwell,' *History* 83, no. 272 (October 1998): 604.

obsequiousness” through which he could manage the king and therefore the country.<sup>209</sup> In such a way, Elton views the contrast between Wolsey and Cromwell not as a diminishment of independent ministerial power, but a display of Cromwell’s ability to adopt more subtle modes of control. In doing so, Elton paints a damning portrait of Henry in comparison:

the events of the reign – its confusion, its changing character, Henry’s dependence on ministers, and so forth – all go to show that his was definitely an unoriginal and unproductive mind; intelligent indeed and capable of the swift assimilation of ideas, but unable to penetrate independently to the heart of a problem and its solution.<sup>210</sup>

For Elton, it was not merely that Henry did not influence decisions in his own reign, he *could* not.

This divisive debate about power between Cromwell and Henry has become characteristic of what Gunn has termed the “wider polarisation amongst historians of Henry VIII’s reign,” who seek to assign power to one of these two camps.<sup>211</sup> For Gunn, the discussion around power and influence at the Tudor court is “a mosaic of pieces” which are too often re-arranged simply to reflect the side of the debate already chose by the author.<sup>212</sup> In fact one of the primary problems with this debate is the need to operate in a binary: only one *or* the other held control. Even the idea that Cromwell acted as a ‘puppet-master’, controlling the king behind the scenes, implies that Cromwell held power *over* Henry, even if the king appeared to officially hold control and make decisions. This binary mentality has now led to a sort of historiographical stalemate, often a battleground over the same materials and similar methodologies. To break this deadlock, Gunn has suggested that “what we need is either new evidence or new assumptions, and ideas for both may arise if we try to analyse the political system more carefully before we try to write political narrative, rather than vice versa.”<sup>213</sup> Network analysis offers a means to adjust this framework, allowing for a rethink of these ideas in a more complex and nuanced way, and approaching structures of political power – and the Cromwell-Henry relationship – independent from pre-assumed historical narratives.

### *Mentions in the Network*

The epistolary network offers an alternate framework to explore the relationship between the king and minister then. As already noted, Henry and Cromwell hold a fairly weak edge in the

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<sup>209</sup> Elton, ‘King or Minister? The Man Behind the Henrician Reformation,’ in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics Papers and Reviews 1946-1972: Volume One Tudor Politics/Tudor Government*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 176.

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*, 175.

<sup>211</sup> Gunn, ‘Structures of Politics,’ 59.

<sup>212</sup> *ibid*, 61.

<sup>213</sup> *ibid*, 61-62.

network: between 1534 and 1540, they exchanged only fifteen letters. Henry was notoriously fickle, and those closest to him knew they needed to maintain a close presence to ensure continued favour, and – perhaps more importantly – to prevent competing courtiers from turning the king against them. Letters represent the inverse situation: necessitated by separation, they indicate an absence of physical interactions (if still evidencing a formal or informal relationship that allowed for correspondence). The lack of an epistolary link implies one of two extremes: constant face-to-face communication that negated the need for letters; or, at the opposite end, zero contact at all. Yet, as established in Chapter I, Cromwell regularly used the king’s name as a means of authorising the instructions in his personal correspondence, and in doing so validated his own authority by emphasising physical proximity to the king.<sup>214</sup> These mentions can therefore be used as a means to enrich the existing connection between Cromwell and Henry in the network, added into the data as an additional edge, signalling physical interactions and using qualitative readings of the letters to bolster quantitative analysis.

Before detailing the process for incorporating these mentions in the network, it is important to acknowledge that in choosing to interpret the data in such a way, these decisions in themselves become part of the output being analysed and explored. The choices made at the most fundamental level about data – what data to include, how to present them, how to clean them – and even what questions are asked of the dataset can drastically affect the outcomes. In her work on the use of digital methods in the humanities, Johanna Drucker suggests that to better conceive of our own role in quantitative analysis researchers must “*reconceive all data as capta.*”<sup>215</sup> She coins the word *capta* to communicate the idea that, rather than considering information or numbers as organic or innate, they must be reframed as something actively extracted from the sources. Just as archives are not considered naturally occurring entities, but rather collected and curated selections, data need to be thought of in similar terms. Although quantitative analysis can produce ‘absolute’ results, the data fed into those algorithms are based on qualitative judgements and interpretative manoeuvres. This is not to say that results of experiments should not be trusted; but rather, it is important to remain actively aware of the role we as researchers play in shaping this output, and challenge conceptions of data as indisputable facts.

Adding this additionally extracted information changes the **weight** of the edge between Henry and Cromwell. In the original epistolary network, the weight of each edge is defined by the number of letters in each set of correspondence or, in a directed network, sent from one person to another. This makes **weighted degree**, which counts the total incoming and outgoing letters rather

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<sup>214</sup> Evans, ‘Royal Language’, 42.

<sup>215</sup> Johanna Drucker, ‘Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display,’ *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2011), available at <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/5/1/000091/000091.html>

than correspondents as in the initial degree measurement introduced in Chapter II. To explore mentions of the king in the minister's correspondence in detail, I transcribed 162 of Cromwell's outgoing letters from his appointment to Principal Secretary in 1534 to June 1540 before his arrest, using Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines to manually create an encoded dataset of the transcriptions.<sup>216</sup> Across these letters, Cromwell referenced the king 1,531 times; on average, 9.45 references per letter. These mentions range from the king's name as a proper noun, to its use as a personal pronoun or possessive: 'his grace's pleasure;' 'his majesty's subjects.' The mentions indicated a physical interaction and served to enforce the king's will, reminding the recipient that they owed their loyalty and service to Henry. In using the language of Cromwell's letters in this way, these experiments build on the qualitative assessments made in Chapter I and reflect the multi-purpose nature of early modern correspondence.

It is worth considering this dataset in depth. Of the 162 letters, 11 letters are to Henry himself, leaving 151 missives to others in the network. Interestingly, the number of mentions in letters to the king are significantly higher per letter than the rest of Cromwell's outgoing correspondence: in the letters to Henry from 1534 to June 1540, Cromwell referenced the king's name 296 times, nearly 27 times per letter versus the average 8.17 times to the rest of the network. The purpose of this repeated rhetoric in letters to Henry was multi-faceted. Cromwell used the king's official titles here in the same way as he did in letters to others ('your grace', 'your majesty'), though this was a formality, an expected show of deference, and mirrored by others writing to the king.<sup>217</sup> On a very practical level, where Henry's letters were frequently read aloud to the king, the recurring use of his name may have been an attempt to keep his attention by, in effect, repeatedly calling his name. The repetition of the king's name also reframed the focus on Henry, presenting him as the leading figure and in total control. This may be an extended linguistic duplicity, an attempt to disguise Cromwell's own ideas and decisions to effectively 'puppet' the king. More likely however, it reflects a man well-versed in contemporary epistolary customs desperate to evidence his ongoing service to his king and maintain his high-ranking position. It recognises not only that the king's name helped establish power with others, but also with the king himself, who often needed reassurance of loyalties. The overt use of Henry's name near Cromwell's own bound the two together linguistically; Cromwell sought for his letters to not merely be a reminder of him alone, but the work he and the king could achieve *together*. Where Henry's name in other

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<sup>216</sup> These are not all the 304 outgoing Cromwell letters in this period, but the available samples collected from scanned manuscripts on Gale's *State Papers Online*, accessed at the British Library. Some also available as Caitlin Burge ed., 'The Correspondence of Thomas Cromwell,' in *Early Modern Letters Online [EMLO]*, ed. Howard Hotson and Miranda Lewis, (July 2022)

<sup>217</sup> As Daybell has demonstrated, social customs existed around epistolary communications with monarchs in the early modern period, regulating both language in and physical presentation of letters. Daybell, *Material Letter*, 87.

Year	No. of References	No. of Letters	Avg. References per Letter	Letters without References
1534	110	20	5.5	6
1535	132	19	6.9	4
1536	117	20	5.85	3
1537	395	39	10.12	1
1538	127	22	5.77	2
1539	254	19	13.36	1
1540	100	12	8.33	2

Figure 19. A table to outline the changes in the total and average number of references in each year 1534-1540.

correspondence evidenced past physical interactions between king and his minister, letters to the king himself sought to guarantee future meetings. These letters naturally suggest distance rather than physical proximity, however, and as such, cannot be re-entered into the network as evidence of face-to-face communication.

In the remaining 151 letters there are 1,235 references, an average of 8.17 per piece. This can be split further to calculate the mentions per letter in each year [Fig. 19]. Though the average remains fairly stable, there are two significant spikes, in 1537 and 1539. In 1537 there is an overall rise in both the number of letters in the dataset and the average number of references per letter to 10.12 from under 6 in the years either side. This is predominantly a result of increased correspondence with the newly established Council of Ireland, and the higher average of references served to reaffirm Ireland as a newly more centralised political entity, subject to the King of England, and to remind the turbulent Council members of Cromwell's role in these political changes. Significantly, the spike of references in 1539 suggests that even at such a late stage the minister did not believe it sensible – or indeed, possible – to operate without reference to the king. In fact, 1539 also witnesses the highest proportion of Cromwell's letters *to* the king as well: of the thirteen total in this period (eleven available for transcription), ten were written in 1539, reflecting a clear anxiety and insecurity at their separation. Much like changes to centrality measurements outlined at the end of Chapter II, the greater number of letters written to the king in 1539 may indicate early shifts in Cromwell's power.

In contrast to this, there are only nineteen letters in this subset without reference to the king at all. These are weighted more to Cromwell's early years as Principal Secretary – six letters in 1534 and four in 1535 alone. These early interactions without mentions of Henry are instances of Cromwell's independent work as a lawyer, outside of ministerial business, in which Cromwell replied to requests for aid in managing land disputes and university college administration. Where the number of letters without references to Henry tails off in later years (a total number of six letters 1537-1540) while the average number of mentions increases, it suggests Cromwell's greater



involvement in the king's affairs, and more opportunities to openly display his position and proximity.

This leaves 132 letters containing mentions of the king's name which can now be used to reconsider the edge between Cromwell and Henry in the network. Counting each letter as one physical interaction, these mentions can be added to the pre-existing epistolary edge between Henry and Cromwell as proxies for further network communication.<sup>218</sup> In an undirected network, adding these mentions takes the total interactions, both epistolary and face-to-face, from 15 to 147. However, it is also possible to interpret these interactions as directed, much like letters in the original network. As outlined earlier, in a directed network there are two edges between reciprocal correspondents: one from Cromwell to Henry and another in reverse. The mentions can therefore be added to either directed edge. When these mentions are interpreted as directed interactions, they also more significantly impact measures of influence for both Cromwell and Henry in the network and offer a more interrogative framework through which to investigate the king versus minister dynamic.

Inputting these interactions as directed is in itself an interpretative process that can be experimented with further. By applying the additional weights to these edges in different ways and producing different scenarios of interaction, the impact of Cromwell and Henry's relationship on the wider network can be interrogated. In this experiment, the weight of the references received or given has been interpreted as indicative of the 'flow' of the relationship. Where the edge is directed from Henry to Cromwell, the contact is initiated and needed by the king, and Cromwell 'receives' the benefits of these mentions. In turn, where Henry 'receives' these references, the interaction is initiated by Cromwell and weight is added to the edge directed from Cromwell to Henry. Considered in terms of the king versus minister debate, whomever 'receives' the mentions is also then considered the most powerful. In this way, the directed mentions serve as a quantitative metaphor for early modern service and the ways attention and active attendance from one person to another marked differences in power statuses. Again, in interpreting and displaying the data in such a way these decisions in themselves become part of the output being analysed and explored, as Drucker argues. Experimenting with these added mentions in different ways is an effective demonstration of this inherent subjectivity and the ways decisions made as researchers tailor the outcome. Furthermore, the various outcomes produced are in themselves a significant result and provide a frame through which to explore the possibilities for the relationship between Henry and Cromwell and its ramifications.

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<sup>218</sup> This calculation uses each letter containing a reference rather than total number of references as a more accurate representation of in-person interactions. Though more than one mention of the king is used in most letters, this does not suggest multiple meetings.

Experimenting then with these additional interactions as weights in directed edges creates three basic scenarios: 1) all weight directed towards Cromwell (Cromwell 100%, Henry 0%); 2) all weight directed towards Henry (Cromwell 0%, Henry 100%); and 3) an even distribution of weight, reflecting entirely mutual interactions (Cromwell 50%, Henry 50%). For these experiments, each mention has been considered as open to this process of interpretation and therefore may be applied as weight in either direction. In each of these scenarios, the additional weight to the directed edge changes the results of the applied network measures. Though, as discussed, these changes add to Cromwell and Henry's weighted degree, their unweighted degree centrality as measured in Chapter II does not change, as there are no additional correspondents added into the network. Betweenness and eigenvector adjust to the changed weight in edges however, and eigenvector is particularly useful for assessing any changes caused by these added mentions. In assessing the extent to which nodes are close to other persons of power, weighted eigenvector measurements are more sensitive to changes in directed interactions and the ways this reflects changed perceptions of connections to influence in the network.

Focusing on eigenvector, changes in potential power can be explored and compared to the original letter-only network. It is important to note that the initial measurements in Chapter II do *not* use weighted eigenvector scores; as such, the 'original' scores or baseline used in these experiments for comparison differ slightly from those in Chapter II, though rankings remain the same. In Scenario 1, where Cromwell receives all the weight of these interactions, the minister retains top eigenvector ranking, with a slight increase of score. Henry's eigenvector is the inverse, dipping in score slightly but, like Cromwell, remaining fairly close to the original graph. In Scenario 2, however, the opposite is true. When Henry receives all the weight of the in-person interactions, his eigenvector score increases dramatically from 0.27 in the original graph to 0.7 in Scenario 2, taking the top ranking. In contrast, Cromwell's eigenvector score drops from 0.77 in the original graph to 0.53 in this second scenario. This also drops his ranking to second place behind the king. In the final scenario, where the interaction weighting is split evenly between the directed edges, Cromwell reclaims the top eigenvector above Henry, but his raw score is still lower than the original network by 0.05. Though Henry still only holds second highest eigenvector in Scenario 3, the raw score is higher by nearly 0.3. In all but Scenario 1, Henry is better off in the network with these additional interactions, whilst Cromwell's influence decreases.

These basic scenarios offer a means of visualising how alterations to directed edge weight can change eigenvector scores in the network. There are more options than just these three basic scenarios, however. Though Scenario 3 above splits the interactions evenly between the two directed edges, this division can also be split *unevenly*. That is to say, additional scenarios may split the mentions Cromwell 75%, Henry 25% or Cromwell 25%, Henry 75%, or anywhere on the

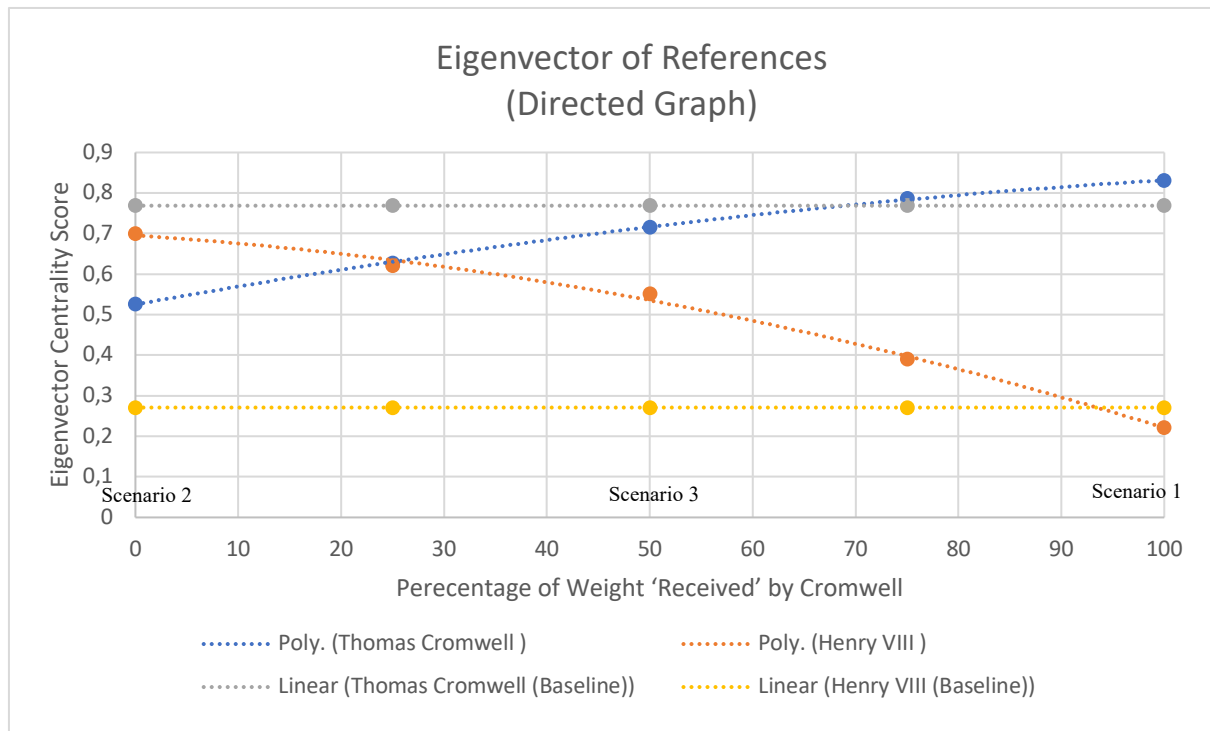


Figure 20. A graph depicting the changing eigenvector centrality score, where the variable is set as the number of references received by Cromwell, to display the different power shifts. The 'baselines' of both Cromwell and Henry indicate their eigenvector score before the addition of mentions as physical interactions into the network, and the three scenarios discussed are labelled.

continuum in between. Given that there are 132 letters or interactions to be added into this network, there are in fact 133 different possible scenarios, offering a spectrum of potential eigenvector scores. Figure 20 depicts this possible spectrum, creating a means to explore the changing relationship and its impact in smaller increments. Understanding the possibilities of the additional interactions as a sliding scale means the ways Henry and Cromwell's individual power was shaped and changed by their relationship with one another can be more closely interrogated.

The graph visualises how changes in weight received (the horizontal axis) alters the eigenvector score (vertical axis). Cromwell needs to receive around 68% of these interactions (an added weight of 90 to the edge directed from Henry to Cromwell) to have a higher eigenvector score than before the additional interactions. Any fewer than this and he is less powerful than before, ceding influence in the network to Henry, who rises in opposition. Where Cromwell receives fewer than 33 references (25%), Henry has a higher eigenvector than his minister. In contrast, the king needs fewer than 10 references directed to him (7.5%) to have a higher eigenvector than in the original graph. The trendline of the king's changing eigenvector score is also much steeper than Cromwell's. Interestingly then, the benefits offered to Henry by these mentions in the network are clearly much more drastic than for Cromwell, even when the interactions are not directed toward the king. Nearly any interaction for the king increases his

eigenvector score and, by extension, his influence in the network. This suggests that Cromwell is of more value to the king than the king is to Cromwell in the network, an interesting dynamic.

Again though, it is vital to remember that these scenarios and the relative changes in power they afford are figured around interpretations already made about the relationship between Henry and Cromwell. Depending on how the mentions data are encoded above, networks can be modelled that each support either side of the king or minister debate. Yet, as already suggested, data outcomes are often reflective of our own humanistic inquiry and even preconceived notions of history, and as outlined in the introduction, it is important to distance ourselves from conceptions of data as facts. The same data can be used to ‘prove’ that both Henry and Cromwell held the most power, and as such, we must be wary of using these experiments to definitively evidence one theory or another. Whilst historians are perhaps used to employing the same material for different arguments in qualitative research and often acknowledge or comment on this when engaging with historiographical literature, it is important to do the same with quantitative results as well. By simulating these variations and exploring this relationship in the network, these experiments can consider the ways power is constructed and construed, and how the king versus minister debate itself is framed around this. It is only by acknowledging this subjectivity and its implications that the impact these mentions have on power in the network can be explored further.

Rather than using these experiments to merely evidence pre-existing arguments then, this spectrum can be used as a framework to reconsider the power balance between Cromwell and Henry. Instead of assuming that this dynamic operated in the binary presumed by the king versus minister debate, existing purely at one end or another of the scale, or even sitting static at just one point in-between, their relationship was consistently renegotiated, and power existed at multiple points along this graph at different times. The relationship was a sliding scale of power and dependency, a metaphor that applies not only to the wider power balance in their relationship, but to the individual building blocks that made up their entire dynamic. With this in mind, this chapter now turns to Cromwell’s access to and control over Henry’s correspondence as Principal Secretary, and the ways this can be conceived within the same power spectrum, as a microcosm of the wider king versus minister debate.

### *Authorship in the Network*

There has been much discussion around the extent to which Cromwell could enjoy freedom within his role managing the king’s letters, particularly given Cromwell’s tendency for detailed management of affairs, and Henry’s well-known dislike for writing letters himself. Lerer suggests “perhaps Henry did not know what was passing under his signature,” building on Elton’s argument that “the habitual employment of signet clerks to draft Henry’s letters [meant] he never saw [them]

until they were submitted ready for his signature – and not necessarily even then if a stamp was used.”<sup>219</sup> Yet Kevin Sharpe argues Henry “carefully supervised correspondence, even though he disliked writing and wrote to few [people] with his own hand.”<sup>220</sup> Bernard similarly asserts Henry’s dominance, suggesting that he had explicit control both over his own correspondence and Cromwell’s as well: “the king not only took a detailed interest in policy, especially in diplomacy, but told his minister what to say; Cromwell then set out his master’s pleasure and instructions.”<sup>221</sup> Though Elton argues that “[Cromwell] could act without specific authority, as when he ‘thought better’ to send instructions ‘by my private letters’”, the letter Elton quotes is in fact addressed to the king, and Cromwell considered writing himself only better “then to put *your* highnes in the payne to have writen and troubled *your* self *with* thesame.”<sup>222</sup> The line between Henry and Cromwell’s correspondence was in itself blurred, and the extent to which either held complete control or input over the contents of these letters is challenged in historiography.

As explored in Chapter I however, many problems with this debate stem from the ambiguous use of the term ‘secretary’ to mean both scribe and, as Cromwell became, closest advisor or confidant. It is worth returning to this distinction, as understanding this term is critical to defining authorship in the network. In his tenure as Principal Secretary, Cromwell was closely involved in overseeing the king’s correspondence, but because of his role as confidant and chief advisor, rather than as a scribe, scrivener, or amanuensis, the physical writer. It is in this first sense that the term ‘secretary’ will continue to be used. Considering the role of the secretary within early modern epistolary customs offers a means of determining the author of a letter, both for the sender and the recipient. In examining the agency that the secretary – and, in particular, Cromwell – held within the correspondence process, the ways this concept might be incorporated into a network can also be explored; in essence, how to fit qualitative understandings of social constructs into a quantitative format for analysis. As with the mentions above, it is important to understand the active decisions made around authorship in the network, as well as those already made in curating the archives, and what this means for the king versus minister debate. It is important to note that the following discussion does not produce more quantitative results: rather, in performing the interpretative manoeuvres required to make adjustments for computational analysis, this thought experiment challenges traditionally held concepts and frames the interrogative process as a result in and of itself.

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<sup>219</sup> Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 87; Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 284.

<sup>220</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England*, (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 92.

<sup>221</sup> Bernard, *Power and Politics*, 121.

<sup>222</sup> Elton, ‘King or Minister?’, 177; BL, Cotton Titus B/I f.269.

In the dataset derived from *Letters and Papers*, authorship follows Brewer's editorial process and is attributed to the signatory of the letter, whether or not they physically wrote the rest of it. It is vital to make the distinction therefore between the 'author' of the letter, the one directing and authorising the contents, and the 'writer', connected with the material and physical action alone, terms which similarly describe distinct secretarial roles. This distinction can be seen in the different secretarial and authorial relationships outlined in Chapter I, between Cromwell and Wolsey, and Cromwell and the king. Though, as discussed, Cromwell is often thought of as Wolsey's secretary – using the same term to describe Cromwell's relationship with Henry – Cromwell was more often simply a scribe. It is fair then that the authorship remains under the cardinal. Though the penmanship may have been Cromwell's, as seen, these letters were still subject to scrutiny and corrections by Wolsey. Arguably, the edge created by and the content held in the letter are still at the intent of Wolsey and, therefore, should be ascribed to him in the epistolary network.

The same cannot be said for the king, especially if – as Lerer and Elton have argued – the king never saw those letters bearing his name and they originated primarily from the Principal Secretary's office. The Principal Secretary's office had its own scribes – or 'Clerkes' as Cromwell himself named them – whose duties were any formal writing or record-making beyond just the king's letters.<sup>223</sup> Though these clerks were mostly responsible for the 'clean' copies of the king's letters (which are primarily what remain in the archives), early drafts were written by Cromwell or his closest allies (including Thomas Wriothesley and Ralph Sadler), with indications of extensive amendments by Cromwell, like the letters to the king's forces during the Pilgrimage of Grace. With the king's letters, there was more explicit input from Cromwell than with Wolsey's correspondence.

There are therefore a number of different authorial scenarios: one in which the author physically writes and signs his own letter; one in which the letter is dictated or more loosely explained to a scribe, but is amended or supervised directly by the 'author'; and finally one in which letters are written by scribes, but the process is overseen and managed solely by a secretarial proxy.<sup>224</sup> Though these scenarios are very different, they are considered the same when attributing authorship in the dataset, reliant on the signature rather than considerations of input or control in the letter.

Bearing in mind this complex interplay between types of authorship and the responsibilities attached then, how can *Henry's* authorship be defined? There are several possible options. One is to consider only holographic letters in the king's own hand as truly belonging to him as author;

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<sup>223</sup> 'Chapter XI', 542-543.

<sup>224</sup> For secretarial involvement in letters see Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 231-278.

however, given Henry's apparent aversion to writing, these are notoriously few in number.<sup>225</sup> Whilst it would be interesting to discern these as an extra detail, or edge type, in the network, to suggest that *only* these can be attributed to Henry, and that everything else must be excluded, would be too extreme. Furthermore, not writing in one's own hand did not signal a lack of involvement in the letter's contents; Cromwell himself employed scribes for his own letters as his volume of work increased. Corrections and adjustments – as with Wolsey and Cromwell's letters – may indicate the king's involvement; yet only *written* changes are now identifiable, and any possible verbal amendments cannot be assessed. Furthermore, any alterations made on draft copies would have been incorporated into clean versions to be sent out; where these final copies are all that survives, no records of earlier changes exist. Finally, of these textual elements, the role of the signature (as opposed to the royal stamp) may indicate Henry's authorship.<sup>226</sup> Where, as Goldberg argues, the signature acts as the 're-making' of the hand itself, custom dictates that the signature should designate not only Henry's hand but, by extension, his active involvement in the letter's contents.<sup>227</sup> This, however, perhaps ascribes too much agency to the king, suggesting that he actively read, approved and therefore 'authored' every item with his signature attached.

Whilst there is historiographical precedent for conceiving of these ideas, the 'abstraction' of material for quantitative analysis prompts a re-evaluation of these commonly held constructs. The networks being created rely on and are changed by the information created by archivists, such as details on textual features like hands involved in letters, including scribes, corrections or comments, and the form the signature takes. Whilst this has been considered in some epistolary studies, it is important to acknowledge the impact this has on quantitative data and once again challenge the concept of data as indisputable facts. At the same time as methodology surrounding network analysis in the humanities is developed, the quantification of available sources and the ways supposedly 'concrete' ideas are qualitatively conceptualised must also be improved before we make the move to digital methodologies and expect quantitative results to do the work for us. As Drucker has argued, we must not only adjust our assumptions of data as stable facts, but also the idea of certainty in the categories or parameters being measured.<sup>228</sup> Drucker points to the instability of definitions for genders, nations, and even time in quantitative contexts; here, the meaning of author itself is being questioned.<sup>229</sup>

The problem of assessing Henry's intention and influence in the letters has been an age-old question in historical inquiry and is something that in some ways resists quantification and cannot

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<sup>225</sup> Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 89-89.

<sup>226</sup> Chapter VI, 176.

<sup>227</sup> Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 236.

<sup>228</sup> Drucker, 'Humanities.'

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*

so easily be added into the data for the epistolary network. More than this, however, just one of these options cannot be selected to fit the entirety of Henry's correspondence and Cromwell's six years as Principal Secretary. Depending on the recipient, the topic, or even the time of day, Henry's interest in his own letters varied, shifting the balance between the king and Cromwell as 'author' for that particular set of correspondence.<sup>230</sup> Though it is tempting to find one solution that neatly encapsulates the place of correspondence in the king versus minister debate, each letter must be interrogated at an individual level to understand this varying and intricate dynamic. Control over the king's correspondence instead operated in a similar spectrum of power depicted in Figure 20, in which each letter appeared somewhere along this sliding scale of influence and, indeed, authorship. Though Cromwell was undeniably involved with the king's correspondence and amassed personal power from it, this was not wholly unlimited or, indeed, unmonitored. The relationship between master and secretary was complicated, operating in a delicate equilibrium and reconfigured issue by issue and letter by letter.

What possible options are there to adjust the network to account for this supposed spectrum, this middle ground? Without a clear definition of Henry's 'true' authorship, it is difficult to simply reattribute these letters and their subsequent edges in a way that fairly recreates the networks of the Tudor court. As seen when considering the reduced Pilgrimage of Grace network in Chapter III, it would be possible to reconsider the king's interactions as shared edges with Cromwell, indicating a form of twin authorship at play and – significantly – more accurately reflecting the delicate balance of power and influence in the network. Doing this would increase Cromwell's total number of outgoing correspondents in 1534 to 1540 from 135 to 268, and number of outgoing letters in the same period from 307 to 721. Yet, at the same time, this approach may be too blunt, fundamentally misconstruing the nature and function of a letter from the king. To give both Henry and Cromwell agency suggests co-authorship, perhaps even equality in the production of the missive, an equality that was inconceivable in terms of early modern status hierarchies. Protocol dictated that the letter from the king's office embodied the king alone, whether or not this was how it was received in practice. Importantly, perception of authorship here is, in many ways, as significant as the ways it was intended or enacted. Royal correspondence held this strange duality, a Schrödinger's letter: it was at the same time both only-Henry and not-Henry, as much as it was obviously-Cromwell and yet also never-Cromwell.<sup>231</sup> These two scenarios are both simultaneously at play, not just in the

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<sup>230</sup> Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 87.

<sup>231</sup> Schrödinger's Cat is a thought experiment in quantum mechanics. A cat is put in a box with a flask of poison set to be released at a random time. Until the box is opened, one cannot know if the poison has been released and if the cat is dead or alive. As such, whilst the box is closed, the cat is simultaneously both dead and alive. The Henry-Cromwell authorship operates in a similar fashion: all options for real author of the letter are simultaneously displayed and assumed.



literal practicalities of letter writing, but in the perception of control manifested in the conception and reception of these letters as well.

Ultimately, the dynamic between Henry and Cromwell does not reflect a traditional master-secretary relationship like Wolsey and Cromwell in Chapter I. This is not just because of Henry's lack of interest in writing missives, but Cromwell's more active involvement with his master's letters than the typical 'silent', passive scribal role. More modes to delicately consider this in the network must be developed, to reflect the way it would have been recognised by recipients. Though a letter may have borne the king's signature, recipients would also have been aware of Cromwell's presence in the correspondence. Nuances are required when considering these and other state archives in an epistolary network to effectively consider questions of power at the royal court. Creating a network that attempts to incorporate the realities of the early modern secretary and epistolary customs prompts a re-evaluation of the concept of authorship and the control it warrants before it can be assigned. Simply put, authorship cannot unproblematically be designated without properly understanding it in an early modern context, and better articulating its role in constructing and conveying agency. Establishing Henry's correspondence as a malleable, sliding scale of authorship – being neither and both Henry and Cromwell in parallel – is a microcosm of the wider king versus minister debate.

### *King and Minister*

In considering questions around inputting mentions and designating authorship, it is clear that power did not simply lie with one *or* the other, a fundamental problem with the binary phrasing of the king *versus* minister debate. In part this is because there were two different types of power at play that cannot so easily be compared to one another. Cromwell was administratively dominant and held power as part of an emergent hierarchy, as explored in Chapter II; he worked for his influence and was the most powerful in the network because it is built on epistolary interactions, his choice of administrative tool. In contrast, whilst Henry might not have contributed as heavily to the day-to-day management of the country, his position as king left him as the indisputable leader of the country. These are two very different concepts of power: one formalised and institutionalised, cemented in enacted constructs of hierarchy and kingship; and another, more flexible and changeable, dependent on interactions and traceable through the epistolary network.

More importantly however, though changing the data may allow us to create scenarios in which Cromwell is the most powerful and served by the king, his power must always be contextualised *within* Henry's. Here, it is important to consistently find ways to integrate qualitative historical contexts and concepts into quantitative measurements. Though Cromwell held the most power in the epistolary network and was regularly pointed to as the most powerful man at court,

this was only because he worked *for* the king. In fact, Cromwell's dominance in the State Papers demonstrates exactly this: it makes sense that the most active person in the archives also served the king the most, in this fairly specific administrative context. This is what allows the network to be such an effective measure of power within Henry's court, and why Cromwell is drawn to the centre. Henry himself directly gave Cromwell means of control – be it promotions, titles, or money – but in allowing his minister access and a voice at court, Cromwell was also granted opportunities to influence decisions and the royal position. Cromwell's proximity to the king was recognised and reified in the epistolary network as others sought to gain from Cromwell's connections and verified his authority in return.<sup>232</sup>

Cromwell *was* incredibly powerful then, but only because he was in service to Henry and – as would be demonstrated over and over at the Tudor court – only because Henry allowed it. As argued in Chapter II, regardless of rankings in the epistolary network, Henry remained the most powerful person in the country: his power would always be external to the network and unchanged by it. Henry's influence was solely created by exogenous factors and merely *bolstered* by the network structure. Unlike others, a decrease in his network standings did not equal a diminishment in his power either. The top ranking in the network did not necessarily mean that a node became the most powerful person outside of it: though Wolsey and Cromwell would both become the most 'central' node (1523-1529 and 1532-1540 respectively), this did not mean they became king. Rather this indicates Henry ceding personal management of administrative business and allowing his advisors to amass enough influence to serve as chief minister. Again, in this way, the networks offer a means to trace the idea of an emergent hierarchy with an enacted head of state proposed in Chapter II.

Whilst the graph in Figure 20 suggests a sliding scale of power then, with a shared give-and-take in the relationship, in reality it would always be Scenario 2, with Cromwell receiving 0% of the references and Henry receiving 100%. The same can be said of authorship: whilst Cromwell may have been the 'author' in Henry's letters, the power in the relationship and in the network would remain with Henry anyway. Cromwell was unequivocally Henry's servant, and all interactions would be Cromwell giving to Henry, and therefore all the additional weight needs to be placed on the edge directed from Cromwell to Henry. With Henry receiving 100% of the interactions weighted in his direction, Cromwell comes below the king in terms of eigenvector, but not by a large measure and he still maintains second place. Though Cromwell's power is diminished by service to Henry – i.e., where all interactions are Cromwell giving to Henry – the

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<sup>232</sup> Another centrality measurement is perhaps required that assesses physical proximity to the king outside the epistolary network (as with Cromwell's mentions) to ground the network in early modern political realities and measure the extent to which the epistolary network mirrors the king's own assessment of court rankings. This is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis.

minister only has power at all because of this service. The argument, then, is that Cromwell is of use to Henry because of his high centrality in the network, but *only* when he uses this to support the king's own position. Cromwell's relationship with Henry is critical in defining the minister's power, but it also contributed heavily to Henry's own position in the network. Whilst the letter network perhaps depicts Cromwell as a separate and more dominant hub, when physical interactions are included, it shifts to show an *integrated* hub working *under* Henry, a more accurate reflection of court realities. Rather than competing, Cromwell and Henry relied on one another for power both in this epistolary network as well as in the wider court. Henry depended on Cromwell's administrative control in the network to help govern the country, but Cromwell needed this relationship with the king to verify his own position and build power in the network. It is not king *versus* minister then, but as the title of the chapter suggests, king *and* minister that better encapsulates their dynamic.

The debate around power between Cromwell and Henry is not so binary then. In part this is because of the question of power in and of itself, as explored in Chapter II. Power did not simply lie with one *or* the other: that is to say, Henry being the indisputable leader of the country did not mean that Cromwell did not have power and control himself. Considering their relationship within the network allows for a consideration of both their individual power in context, and the impact this had on the rest of the structure. In doing so, the use of network analysis offers a fresh means of examining the dynamic between Cromwell and Henry, and reinvigorates these key but often repetitive discussions, stimulating not only Tudor studies but opening possibilities for wider historical research as well. To do this, however, analysis of an epistolary network must consistently be grounded in its original historical context. Not only must human agency be considered in any communication network, but additional factors too: early modern epistolary customs; questions of authorship and secretarial intrusion; and the ways hierarchical structures and etiquettes were consistently enacted through everyday practicalities. These layers are interwoven in complex ways and must be considered alongside each other to build a rounded picture of power in the network, and particularly in the relationship between Henry and Cromwell. In this way, this chapter acts as a microcosm of the wider structure of this thesis, where layers of analysis and interpretation are built on top of each other, and the qualitative and quantitative work together in a continually iterative and epistemological process.

## V. Cromwell and Network Functionality

In examining the king versus minister debate using quantitative measures, the last chapter offered a means to consider the relationship between Cromwell and Henry in the network, and the ways this can be used to define Cromwell's power. Another way of conceptualising Cromwell in the network is to remove him and consider the ways this affects the rest of the structure. In doing so, experiments can also establish how often Cromwell was used to connect members of the network, and how fundamental this was to the overall ability of the network to communicate. This chapter can be conceived, then, as a kind of counter-factual history: Cromwell would not actually be removed from the network until his arrest and execution in the summer of 1540. Experimenting with the network in such a way allows however for an alternate means of considering how central or important Cromwell was to the running of the network and, further to this, if he was *unique* in this role, or whether there were in fact systems in place to protect the functioning of the network. This latter point is particularly significant in relation to the king given the importance of the relationship between Henry and his chief minister explored in the last chapter. Whilst the experiments in this chapter are explicitly 'not-history', they may also offer a prediction of network structures post-Cromwell, something that will be explored in more depth in Section III. This chapter therefore utilises the practice of modelling: much like the last chapter 'modelled' ways to add in mentions to experiment with changes in the network, this chapter does the same by deducting from – rather than adding to – the dataset, once again using a combination of Gephi and my own custom-written code in Python using NetworkX.

Removing Cromwell from the network and exploring the impact both models and tests many qualitative theories – particularly those of G. R. Elton – that attest to the minister's role in controlling administrative processes at court. In quantifying the efficiency of the network with and without Cromwell, this chapter establishes another means of measuring the minister's role in and contribution to the network and, therefore, the processes and communicability of the court. By then removing other influential actors from the network, this chapter more fully investigates the 'hidden' structures of the network, the slightly smaller nodes that are often hidden under the hubs and other high-scoring nodes. In doing so, it highlights the underlying, consistent elements of not only the network, but of court life, the courtiers and administrators able to operate without the 'key' members of Henry's reign. Whether or not these nodes would have, in practice, continued to operate without the king and the leading members of his council is to some extent trivial at this point: rather, these experiments seek merely to see if a structure remains to *allow* them to work. The removal of individual nodes to test the strength and robustness of the network combines both the individualistic and the holistic approach outlined in the introduction: marrying the historical

realities and what the data show about individual influence in the network with a structural assessment of the abilities and functions of the communication structure. Like the last chapter, this thought experiment is another framework and analytical methodology to critically investigate Cromwell's place in and importance to the network.

### *Modelling*

The primary methodological focus of this chapter is the use of 'modelling' and what this offers historical narratives. Essentially, modelling is a quantitative means of creating hypothetical scenarios: where historians might propose that Cromwell was the centre of court administration or the key intermediary in information networks, modelling generates 'faux' networks through which these ideas can be tested.<sup>233</sup> It is worth briefly exploring this process, and its current place in ongoing research. As with other elements of digital humanities, the use of modelling is still developing: not only the theory and the practice, but the rhetoric used to explore and translate this process into humanistic research. As Adrianna Ciula et al explain, "the highly self-reflexive arm of [digital humanities] research [...] calls for a shift from models as static objects (e.g. what functionalities they enable) to the dynamic process of modelling (e.g. how were models built and used and for what purpose, what constraints they embed, what effect they have in refining research questions.)"<sup>234</sup> One cannot simply create a model and analyse it: just like networks, we must also understand the process and decisions already made, and allow our consciousness of this decision making to lead the research further. In other words, it is not enough to explore the materials and models: the exploration of them must be analysed as well. In this chapter, theory is not just applied but simultaneously written and redefined during experiments. The framework and theory define the results and frame the data, but this same framework and theory are also defined and written whilst they are being used in research. Any research in the humanities – be it digital or not – should be subject to such scrupulous self-awareness.

Again however, there has been a tendency for many facets of the digital humanities – data, graphs, models – to be viewed as 'static,' definitive objects; as explored in the introduction, an ontological gap exists between history and the narratives, visuals, or models created to explore and explain it. Much like Drucker's discourse on the choices made in collecting and cleaning data, modelling is a similar opportunity to explore choices made in the presentation of these data and build on the methodological and interpretative decision-making process introduced in the previous chapter. As Claas Lattmann has shown, "it is not the original, 'real' object that we access in the

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<sup>233</sup> Though no networks are organic or 'real', models represent a more active manipulation of data.

<sup>234</sup> Ciula et al, introduction to 'Modelling Thinking in Practice,' *Historical Social Research: Supplement* 31 (2018): 10.

digital humanities, but a substitute, i.e. the ‘model,’ which we ourselves create, explore, investigate, and manipulate.”<sup>235</sup> In accepting this fact, the following experiments do not seek to find the ‘real’ in the model, or attempt an entirely neutral creation – a utopic, even impossible aim – but to again acknowledge the impact we as researchers have on the outcome both of our projects and the methodology itself. This is even more important given that this chapter explicitly explores counterfactual history; in creating these models, then, this chapter does not seek to change what data there are, but rather to introduce alternate methodological frameworks to explore what already exists.

In many senses, modelling offers a means of exploring and experimenting with counterfactual history, investigating those ‘what-if’ questions in a more tangible and demonstrable sense, even if they still only remain ‘what-if’ answers. Yet in June 1540, the removal of Cromwell from the network stopped being a ‘what-if’ and became an actuality. Modelling Cromwell’s fall before the fact demonstrates what the network is expected to look like after the events of summer 1540. Though the most obvious outcome appears to be a vast power-vacuum, by investigating *around* this, this chapter identifies those nodes with the highest potential to fill this vacuum and means by which the network could begin to recover. In doing so, it not only assesses the underlying actors in the network, but more importantly those specific to Cromwell’s role in the network, and what early indicators the presence – or absence – of these actors may say about Cromwell’s administrative legacy. Comparing this model to the actual network after Cromwell’s fall demonstrates where the modelled hypothesis proves similar to reality. In doing so, these experiments not only test the use of modelled networks in the digital humanities, but where the model differs, we can begin to ask why: does an unexpected gain in power perhaps suggest an involvement in Cromwell’s fall, a node reaping the advantages; or does an unexpectedly diminished role in the network perhaps imply that Cromwell’s fall was not his alone? This chapter starts by building these models for an extended exploration of these questions in Section III.

### *Cromwell as a Cut-Point*

The first step in this process is to model removing Cromwell from the epistolary network. When Cromwell and his edges are removed, it also eliminates paths between others in the network, cutting people off from one another. In network terms, Cromwell is therefore a **cut-point**: a node which, when removed, separates one component of the network into two or more distinct components, disconnecting one part of the network from another. Identifying cut-points offers a means of highlighting key members in a network, actors that link together disparate sections of a graph and act as bridges for communication and information. Whilst this is not a centrality, like the measures introduced in Chapter II, it is another potential means to explore and assign significance.

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<sup>235</sup> Lattmann, ‘Iconizing the Digital Humanities,’ 126.

In his canonical paper ‘The Key Player Problem’, Borgatti explored the possibilities of using cut-points as another proxy for influence in a network.<sup>236</sup> Borgatti separates ‘key players’ into two distinct categories, nodes that will either “maximally disrupt communication” or one which “is maximally connected.”<sup>237</sup> In highlighting cut-points as “the most obvious” possible solution to the first category of nodes (those that, if removed, would cause most damage to the structure of a network), Borgatti points to some of the initial problems with selecting all cut-points as key players in this first scenario.<sup>238</sup> Borgatti first introduces a measure of **fragmentation**, which counts the number of new components created by the removal of a node. However, Borgatti recognises that this calculation does not account for different sizes in components; that is to say, a node would have the same fragmentation score if it separated a component of one node as if it separated a component of five nodes. Borgatti therefore introduces a second fragmentation measurement “that simply counts the number of pairs of nodes that are disconnected from each other,” allowing for a closer idea of the impact of different cut-points.<sup>239</sup> Borgatti’s equations for measuring cut-point fragmentation offer an introductory solution to ranking cut-points and quantifying their impact on a network. The problem for the experiments in this thesis remains that when using NetworkX code, cut-points are returned as a list, which, like Borgatti’s initial measure, merely assesses whether the node causes fragmentation or not, and does not have any means of measuring the *extent* of this fragmentation, either by number of nodes separated or size of new components created. Actors are selected as cut-points whether their removal disconnects one node or one hundred.

To address the gap between Borgatti’s equations and existing analysis packages, I wrote custom code building on NetworkX’s initial measure to rank the 301 cut-points in the 1534-1540 network. My code assessed the cut-points based on the two fragmentation measures described by Borgatti, and a further examination of the disruption the removal of a cut-point would cause by measuring the new average length of the shortest path between nodes in the remaining network.<sup>240</sup> In all three measures, Cromwell ranked first, meaning that his removal created the most new components, left the smallest remaining giant component, and created the longest average shortest path between remaining nodes. As such, it can be comfortably said that Cromwell is the most

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<sup>236</sup> Borgatti, ‘The Key Player Problem,’ in *Dynamic Social Network Modeling and Analysis: Workshop Summary and Papers*, edited by Ronald Breiger, Kathleen Carley, and Philippa Pattison, (Washington: The National Academies Press, 2003), 241-252.

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*, 241.

<sup>238</sup> *ibid*, 244.

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>240</sup> Caitlin Burge, ‘Fragmentation and Disruption: Ranking Cut-Points in Communication Networks’, FORTHCOMING.

destructive and disruptive cut-point in the network: but what can this more specifically show about Cromwell's role in the network and wider court, and the power afforded by this?

Given Cromwell's high degree score and dominant place in the network established earlier, it is unsurprising that the minister's removal would be damaging to the network. Without the chief minister, 1,184 correspondents are cut off from the main component and this portion is left at only 58% of its original size. The number of components also rises from 126 to 1,227 after Cromwell's removal. To a great extent this rests on the make-up of Cromwell's correspondence: as shown in Chapter II, 1,009 (63%) of his incoming correspondents have a degree of 1 and are only connected to Cromwell in the network. This perhaps in some ways over-dramatises the impact Cromwell's removal has on the functioning of the giant component of the network and the administrative functioning of the court without the chief minister. As already seen, the network is made from overlapping collections; as such, Cromwell's removal does not result in other nodes such as Henry, the Lisles, and the Duke of Norfolk being removed from the main component. As suggested in earlier chapters, the main component represents the main state business, containing the key members of Tudor court and governance for this period. It is important to consider the functioning of this giant component after Cromwell's removal: not only its size, but who remained in it, and how it was able to function. In doing so, the following experiments assess Cromwell's place at the 'core' of the network and whether removing him from the network challenges traditional evaluations.

To assess the efficiency of the central workings of the epistolary structure with and without Cromwell, I excluded the nodes that would be lost without Cromwell's edges, focusing only on the remaining members of the giant component and Cromwell himself. This allows for an assessment of Cromwell's role explicitly within this central group of active members, who are not exclusively Cromwell's contacts but exist in an overlap. This initially leaves two networks: a giant component now containing 1,650 correspondents without the excluded nodes, but still containing the chief minister and his remaining edges; and a second version of this new giant component without Cromwell. It is important to note that even without the vast number of one-degree contacts Cromwell holds, the chief minister still holds the highest degree centrality score within the giant component, a total of 600 connections (36% of all edges) compared to Henry's second place score of 418 (25%). This supports arguments made earlier that Cromwell was essential to the network both by virtue of his low-degree contacts and those embedded in the core of the network. Cromwell also still scores top rank in eigenvector centrality with a score of one as well as the highest betweenness centrality, though this is by a much smaller margin than in the original network: where Cromwell scores 0.126, Henry is only slightly below him with a score of 0.123. Cromwell's high



Measure	Giant Component with Cromwell	Giant Component without Cromwell
Diameter	9	10
Average Path Length	3.478	3.773
Average Clustering Coefficient	0.208	0.09

Figure 21. Comparative measurements of the reduced Giant Component with and without Cromwell.

betweenness scored relied on his one-degree neighbours, and whilst he is still the most used intermediary without them, it is not to the same extent as before.

The following experiments assess the efficiency of the network after Cromwell's removal on three fronts: the **diameter** of the network (or the longest shortest path), the **average path length** in the network, and the average **clustering coefficient**, the extent to which a node's neighbours are also connected to one another [Fig 21].<sup>241</sup> In different ways, each measure considers the ease with which the network could communicate and collaborate without Cromwell. Though for the most part the difference between these graphs is negligible, it still evidences interesting changes to the core of the network that cannot be seen when simply measuring the fragmentation caused by Cromwell's removal from the network as a whole. The growth in both the graph diameter and average shortest path reflects Cromwell's top ranking betweenness score; it is minimal however, suggesting that there a number of alternative intermediaries to Cromwell in this core network, all a same path-length, an important factor that will be returned to later in this chapter.

The largest change is to the average clustering coefficient, which is more than halved. The clustering coefficient measures the extent to which a node's neighbours are connected and form a clique or cluster, where a score of one suggests that all of a node's neighbours hold an edge with one another and a score of zero implies that there are no extra connections between a person's correspondents in the network. Any writers with only one neighbour also automatically score zero, as their singular neighbour cannot hold an edge with itself. Even without Cromwell's volume of 1-degree contacts in this reduced giant component, the minister holds the third *lowest* clustering coefficient score of any node scoring above zero: a measure of 0.004 compared to the average 0.208. Despite holding the highest number of contacts in this component, a large volume of his neighbours are not in contact with one another, a tactic that will be explored more closely in the next chapter. Cromwell's removal, however – even just from this altered giant component – dramatically reduces the average clustering coefficient: without the chief minister, the network is significantly less inter-connected. Despite this, the residual network remains intact. Court business could continue virtually unimpeded through the epistolary network without the chief minister, if at

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<sup>241</sup> These measure the network as a whole, rather than individual nodes, as with centralities.

worse a little slower. This is not to say that Cromwell's fall would not seriously affect the workings of the court, but the counter-factual model demonstrates that the core structure of the network was built to withstand the sudden rise – and fall – of any core nodes and keep the system running.<sup>242</sup>

It is important to consider therefore whether the changes (or lack thereof) to the model network reflect Cromwell's attributes as a node or the wider network structure and its robustness.<sup>243</sup> To test this, I started by modelling the removal of the top ranked nodes for betweenness in 1534-1540 and measured the diameter, the average path length, the clustering coefficient, and the size of the remaining largest component each time.<sup>244</sup> Each node was removed in addition to the previous iteration, measuring the cumulative effect of these removals on the network. In doing so, the changes that Cromwell's removal causes in the network can be contextualised amongst the removal of other nodes, creating ten scenarios including the original component before Cromwell's removal as discussed above.

The scores for each of these experiments were plotted alongside each other to establish changes after each removal, as seen in Figure 22. The rise in both average path length [Fig. 22a] and total graph diameter [Fig 22b] is fairly steady, but in removing key nodes acting as intermediaries from the network, it takes increasingly longer (albeit slowly) to reach other parts of the network. That this process would simply become more time consuming is not the greatest impact of these longer paths. As Mark Newman et al suggest, the longer the path, the less likely information will successfully make it from sender to recipient: "individuals are more likely to forward a message when the messages intended recipient appears easier to reach. Thus message chains directed at such 'easy' targets experience lower failure rates than those for 'difficult' targets, with the result that many more of them reach their target."<sup>245</sup> As such, though all the remaining nodes in the giant component are still able to reach each other, the *efficiency* of these connections is diminished. Cromwell's removal has a distinct impact on this efficiency, lengthening the shortest paths and removing many 1-length paths, so the information that is passed through the network is disrupted, even if the existence of paths is not.

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<sup>242</sup> The extent to which this was accidental or by design is explored in Chapter VII.

<sup>243</sup> For more on robustness in historical networks see Yann Ryan and Sebastian Ahnert, 'The Measure of the Archive: The Robustness of Network Analysis in Early Modern Correspondence', *Journal of Cultural Analytics* 7 (2021): 57-88.

<sup>244</sup> Chapter II, 82; though betweenness is not a perfect proxy for assessing the most damaging cut-point in a network, given its ability to highlight nodes most used as intermediaries and connecting parts of the network it is the closest of the three centrality measurements used in this thesis. (Burge, 'Fragmentation').

<sup>245</sup> Mark Newman, Duncan J. Watts and Albert-László Barabási, *The Structure and Dynamics of Networks*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 556.

Figure 22. Graphs depicting changes in Average Path Length, Network Diameter, Average Clustering Coefficient and Component as a fraction of Original Graph. In each graph, removal ( $r$ ) represents a different node being removed. These are as follows:

Removal	Node
0	Original Graph
1	Thomas Cromwell
2	Henry VIII
3	Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle
4	Cardinal Reginald Pole
5	James V, King of Scotland
6	Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle
7	Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury
8	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk
9	Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor

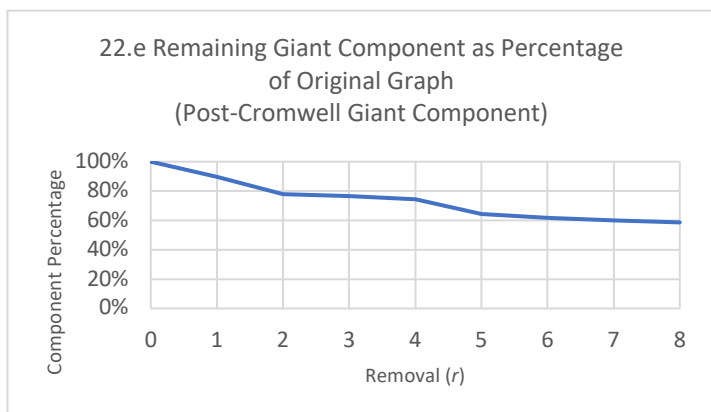
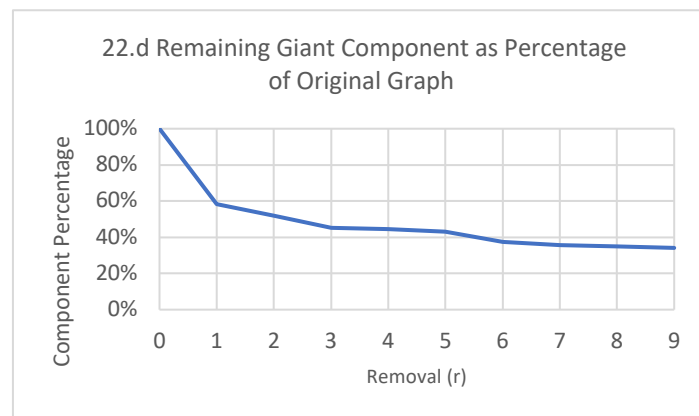
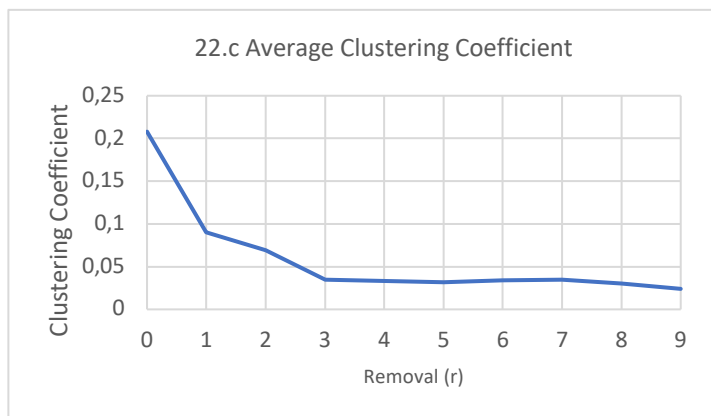
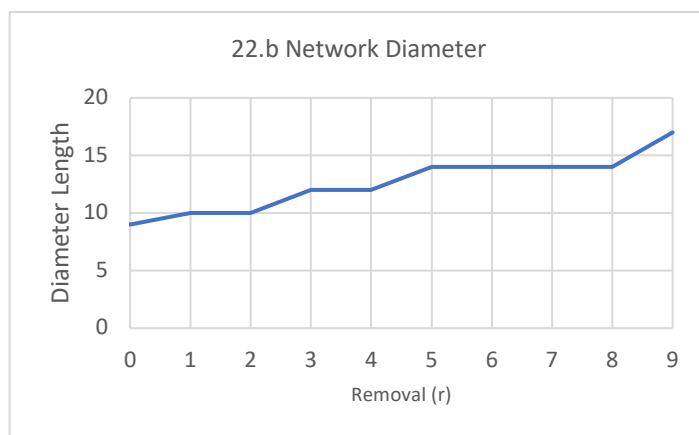
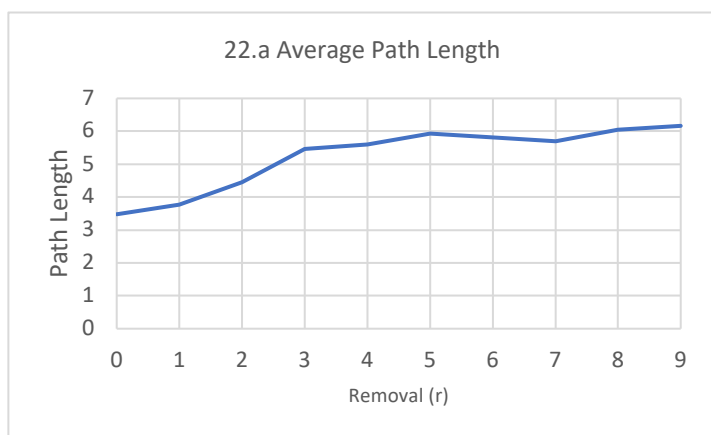


Figure 22e Here ( $r$ ) is instead as follows:

Removal	Node
0	Original Graph
1	Henry VIII
2	Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle
3	Cardinal Reginald Pole
4	James V, King of Scotland
5	Honor Plantagenet, Lady Lisle
6	Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury
7	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk
8	Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor

As suggested above, the largest measurement change after Cromwell's removal is to the average clustering coefficient, demonstrated by the plummeting score in the graph in Figure 22c. Despite another small drop in this average score with the removal of Lord Lisle (*r*3), the clustering coefficient plateaus at this lower level without Cromwell. This says two things. Firstly, no single node was as significant in holding this giant component as closely connected as Cromwell was, matching conclusions from changes to average path length and diameter that Cromwell's removal considerably damaged the efficiency of communication in the network. Secondly, it suggests that – despite this now very low average – the remainder of the giant component's clusters would stay stable despite further removals. Whereas Cromwell's removal does the most damage in this measurement, the network can function with minimal further changes in this regard without other supposedly structurally significant actors.

This is mirrored in the plateau of isolated nodes or changes in giant component size with each further removal. Whilst removing Cromwell from this altered component only changes the graph size by one, for this last measurement those nodes originally excluded from the giant component experiments have been re-included to measure the impact of node removal more consistently [Fig. 22d]. Though without Cromwell the component is left at less than 60% of its original size, removing another eight nodes only reduces the component size by a further 24%, suggesting that the core section of the graph is quite densely connected and therefore a robust sub-network. Though more and more nodes are removed, few of their neighbours are lost alongside them. Again, the impact of Cromwell's removal is only limited then because of the network's overall robustness, rather than because he is unimportant. This is made clearer by considering the giant component after Cromwell's removal *only* [Fig 22e]. When this is taken as the whole (1), and the removal of subsequent nodes is computed, even after *r*(8), the graph still holds at nearly 60% of the original graph.

In reality, the damage done by Cromwell's removal depicts the substantial growth of the network by virtue of his own administrative work. This work may also be responsible, in turn, for the remaining robustness of the core component. Where the number of nodes remaining in the giant component – and their connectedness – are reduced significantly by Cromwell's removal, it indicates the extent to which he conducted business through himself, independent of official means. That the main component remains able to communicate, however, implies an administrative system that was able to function without Cromwell, as the minister had designed, as will be explored in Chapter VIII. The removal of these influential nodes still leaves other foreign monarchs and ambassadors, but also the Privy Council and its members, including Thomas Cranmer, William Fitzwilliam, and Thomas Audley. This is not to say, of course, that all the remaining letters and edges in the network were focused solely on court administration; but the network still evidences

a robust – if diminished – main component of correspondents able to continue without the leaders and hubs. The robust main component in some ways reflects the centralisation of court by the early Tudor monarchs, who sought to bring security to their legacy after decades of fragile reigns. More importantly, however, it offers early indications of Cromwell’s administrative plans, both in the work he did himself and the administration he created.

### *Intermediaries in the Network*

Though dramatically reduced in size and less efficient, the remaining giant component of the epistolary network could continue to function without Cromwell. But what about the large quantity of writers that, without Cromwell, would no longer be connected to the giant component? For many, the most significant impact of this disconnection would be their inability to reach the king, qualitatively the most important part of the giant component. As explored in previous chapters, Cromwell was qualitatively and quantitatively important because of his proximity to the king, and the path he provided to the king in the network. Thinking once more in terms of the Henry-Cromwell relationship, the next experiments in this chapter explore how the king’s connections in the network are impacted when Cromwell is removed. This focuses on Cromwell’s role as an intermediary in accessing the king, as well as Henry’s use of Cromwell to reach others, as another means of assessing the minister’s importance in the network. Though Henry is not at the centre of the epistolary network, he was the centre of power, and access to him is a measure of this and – ultimately – the effectiveness of governing the court and country. As such, the king is an important actor to use to narrow down the experiments further and focus on a particular set of paths as a case-study. Examining this is another means of evaluating the importance of the Henry-Cromwell relationship, and the extent to which the king was dependent exclusively on his chief minister.

These measurements rely not just on Cromwell’s relationship with Henry, but the rest of the minister’s connections in the network as well. As such, this chapter moves from evaluating their relationship in a vacuum, as in the previous chapter, to evaluating its place in a wider structure. It is important to consider this in specific network terms, and the ways this structural viewpoint can quantify both relationships and their importance. Thus far, this thesis has approached the relationship between Cromwell and Henry as a **dyad**, a relationship containing only two people [Fig 23.a], not contextualised by the wider set of relationships in the epistolary network. Whilst it is too far given the fruitful experiments in the last chapter to suggest that “dyads become meaningless when detached from links to other dyads in the network,” Degenne and Forse are right that, to a great extent, “the structural position of a dyad necessarily impacts its form, content and



Fig. 23.a

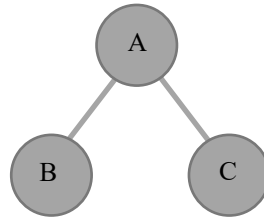


Fig. 23.b

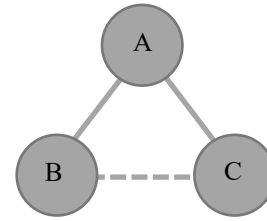


Fig. 23.c

Figure 23 – Fig 23.a shows a dyad; Fig 23.b shows an unclosed triad; Fig 23.c shows a closed triad. Granovetter argues that if A has a strong tie to both nodes B and C, as in Fig 23.a, a tie will always develop between B and C because of their relationship with A, as in Fig. 23.c.

Burt contests that A in Fig 23.b occupies a structural hole and can exploit this position to his gain.

function.”<sup>246</sup> This is to say that a relationship is shaped and influenced by a person’s other relationships. This was a constant reality of the Tudor court: Cromwell’s relationship with the king was regularly impacted by the information or benefits he could garner from his other contacts in the network, and many of these connections formed because he held a pre-existing edge with Henry. Modelling Cromwell’s removal from the network demonstrates his importance by virtue of this dyad in the context of the wider network, and specifically, how Cromwell could act as intermediary to the king.

As established in Chapter II, Cromwell holds the highest betweenness ranking in the network, which means he could most commonly act as intermediary. As an intermediary, Cromwell regularly operated in a **triad**, a set of relationships involving three people. In unpacking and understanding how triads form, what shape they take, and what they mean for power and influence in a network, Cromwell’s role as intermediary and its significance can be better understood. Primarily, triads fall into two categories, closed or unclosed triads [Fig. 23.b & 23.c]. Closed triads indicate a correspondence edge between all three members of a triad, though this does not necessarily mean that all the edges are reciprocal. Again given the bidirectionality of links in a directed network, although a closed triad will always contain three edges – one between each node – none of these edges need be reciprocal [Fig 23.c]. An unclosed triad still contains three nodes but will only contain two edges; two nodes will not interact, leaving the triad open [Fig 23.b]. Again, these can be directed edges, and as such the interactions may not always be reciprocal.

Mark Granovetter’s canonical 1973 paper ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’ sought to unpack the formation of these triads and their role in a network. Granovetter suggests that edges in a network are formed of either ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ ties. Strength or weakness is decided by a number of factors, such as “a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie.”<sup>247</sup> The

<sup>246</sup> Degenne and Forse, *Social Networks*, 3.

<sup>247</sup> Mark S. Granovetter, ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, no. 6 (1973): 1361.

more mutual emotional energy is invested in a relationship, the stronger the tie. Granovetter goes on to suggest that if there are two existing strong ties in an unclosed triad, a third edge will always eventually appear to close the triad, even if it is only a weak tie. Granovetter suggests that an unclosed triad containing two strong edges is impossible and calls this his ‘forbidden triad’. The closing of these triads in fact played a large role in Cromwell’s rise to power. As in Chapters I and II, Cromwell’s role as Wolsey’s secretary allowed him access to the cardinal’s circle of contacts. As Granovetter’s theory suggests then, Cromwell was able to develop his own relationship with many of Wolsey’s contacts, closing triads and bolstering his own network and position in the epistolary structure.

Granovetter acknowledges, however, the importance weak ties also hold in a network structure. In some cases where strong ties lead to closed triads, these connections become ‘information redundant.’ This is to say that, because members of closed triads are all communicating with one another, they are all likely to be privy to – and therefore able to share – the same information. Though this means information travels quicker – as any edge or ‘path’ can be used to transfer news – it means that an outsider to the triad will gain the same information regardless of which member they speak to, and no-one in the triad will have anything unique to pass on. As Granovetter puts it: “If one tells a rumor to all his close friends, and they do likewise, many will hear the rumor a second and third time, since those linked by strong ties tend to share friends.”<sup>248</sup> In contrast, as Granovetter suggests, ‘weak’ ties are particularly useful in this respect, and are often rich in novel information. Indeed, his study suggests that in a survey of job changers, many respondents heard about job opportunities through weak ties rather than strong ones: “not a friend, an acquaintance.”<sup>249</sup> Granovetter argues that weak ties offer the most useful opportunity to act as ‘bridges’, the only means of connecting dislocated parts of a network and allowing information to travel across this singular, non-redundant tie. As demonstrated, most of Cromwell’s contacts are these ‘weak ties’, those writing few and unreciprocated letters to the minister, without further connections elsewhere in the network.

In 1992, Burt sought to build on Granovetter’s thesis with his structural holes theory, effectively inverting Granovetter’s ‘bridges’ as ‘structural holes’, referring to the gap in the structure rather than the tie.<sup>250</sup> Where the structural hole is bridged, the two concepts function in the same way, creating a link between two otherwise separated parts of a network. Burt however suggests that the strength of the tie bridging a structural hole is to a great extent irrelevant: “[the] structural hole argument is about the chasm spanned [...] Whether a relationship is strong or weak,

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<sup>248</sup> *ibid*, 1366.

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*, 1371-1372; fn.17.

<sup>250</sup> Burt, *Structural Holes*, 89-126.

it generates information benefits when it is a bridge over a structural hole.”<sup>251</sup> In doing so, Burt also contests Granovetter’s assertion that an unclosed triad with strong ties will always close; rather, in a competitive structure, an open triad offers many opportunities and advantages, especially in negotiations and power management. Burt’s assessment more closely reflects Cromwell’s role as intermediary in the network: in connecting neighbours not already linked to Henry in unclosed triads, Cromwell functioned as a key linking member of the network and was crucial to the functioning of the network around the king.

Whilst triads focus on interactions containing two edges, Cromwell could also act as intermediary on paths with a much longer length. Assessing the relationship between Cromwell and Henry and its importance considers not only the immediate contacts of Cromwell, but the entire wider network. As such, this measure of the intermediary role can be developed to include every possible connection to and from Henry, and in doing so assess how often Cromwell acted as a link to the king. Having done this, the impact of Cromwell’s removal, and how valuable he was in reaching the king, can once more be evaluated.

### *Paths to the King*

In order to assess Cromwell’s role as intermediary to the king, I used NetworkX again to calculate all possible shortest paths to and from Henry, assuming that the paths with the fewest number of links would be the most likely used in connecting members of the network to the king.<sup>252</sup> This returned 639 people who could be reached by Henry in the network (henceforth Henry-Source-Paths or HSPs) and 2,360 people who could reach Henry (Henry-Targets-Paths or HTPs). Of these, 176 people held a direct edge from Henry and 242 writers held a direct edge to Henry, and therefore have no intermediary. Given that some actors had multiple options for intermediary as closest link to Henry on their path to or from the king, the code returned 750 unique Henry-Source-Paths and 2,662 unique Henry-Target-Paths. On these remaining paths, Cromwell acts as the most frequent go-between, appearing on 168 HSPs (22.4%) and 1,577 HTPs (59.2%). These specifically designed experiments create a new alternate betweenness measure, focusing explicitly on go-betweens for the king.

Using percentages (or ‘normalised’ scores) suggests that Henry used Cromwell much less often to reach others than Cromwell was used by others to reach Henry. There may be several explanations for this. The first – and perhaps most unlikely given arguments made so far – is that

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<sup>251</sup> *ibid*, 28.

<sup>252</sup> This was filtered to remove duplicates where the node next to Henry – i.e., the intermediary – and the start or end node was the same. At this stage these experiments are not concerned with options elsewhere in the path, but just the closest link to Henry, and the importance of this. As such, experiments only focus on the proportion of times Cromwell was used by Henry to reach others and vice versa, and the disruption caused by Cromwell’s removal from the model.



public perceptions of Cromwell's role did not match Henry's own view of his Principal Secretary. Though the court and wider country perceived Cromwell as closely linked to Henry, it would appear from the network that the king did not rely on his chief minister as much as is often claimed, perhaps diminishing assumptions of Cromwell's power and influence with the king.

There are, however, more convincing reasons to consider. First is protocol and decorum: many would use Cromwell as means to contact or petition the king, as they felt they did not have the status to write to the king directly. Whigham argues that in matters of patronage, "some of the hopeful saw themselves as too humble to reach out personally to those controlling the goods [... or] felt they didn't know the ropes."<sup>253</sup> In many cases, a courtier would first have to gain approval to write to the king before writing. Such can be seen with the Princess Mary, who wrote to Cromwell in 1536 asking him "to be a suitor for her to the King, to have his blessing and leave to write to his Grace."<sup>254</sup> As such, a large portion of HTPs used Cromwell as an intermediary, a mediator, or for introduction: there was no alternative wherein these petitioners could bypass Cromwell and create a direct edge with the king. In contrast, Henry could contact anyone: that is to say, there was no-one that protocol could suggest he was too low in status to write to directly. The king would not require his chief minister to mediate between social classes on his behalf, though this is not to suggest that Cromwell was not doing this anyway. As discussed in the last chapter, attributing letters wholly to the king is to a great extent disingenuous, and Cromwell's role in this cannot be easily dismissed.

Finally, it is important to again consider the role the survival of Cromwell's archives plays in the perception of these paths. A significant amount of Cromwell's incoming correspondence has survived given the seizing of his papers at his arrest on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1540; yet vast amounts of Cromwell's outgoing letters are missing. Whilst Henry-Target-Paths require Cromwell's inbox (which remains, if not in its entirety, at least in abundance), Henry-Source-Paths require Cromwell's outbox to evidence further paths in the network. As such, though only 22.4% of HSPs use Cromwell in the path, this may simply reflect the lack of surviving outgoing correspondence.

### *Lost Contacts*

Having calculated these paths, and the minister's position on them, it is important now to again consider the impact that removing Cromwell has. To do this, I once more removed Cromwell from the model network, and tested to see which nodes were still able to reach or be reached by Henry without the chief minister providing the necessary connections. Predictably given the drastic reduction in size of the giant component after Cromwell's removal modelled above, a large portion

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<sup>253</sup> Whigham, 'Suitors' Letters,' 869.

<sup>254</sup> L&P, vol. X, no. 968.

of these paths to and from Henry in these experiments are no longer able to function without the minister. In fact, of these writers using Cromwell as an intermediary, Henry can no longer reach 84 (50%) and, more drastically, 1,214 (77%) can no longer reach Henry.

This disconnect comes in several forms and, as expected, the greatest impact of Cromwell's removal is those who could not only no longer reach the king in the modelled network but would be cut off from the giant component entirely. This amounts to 1,143 nodes, 40% of the original giant component before Cromwell's removal, who relied on the minister for access not only to the king but to the rest of court and government as well. This represents a large amount of business only in contact with and solely managed by the king's chief minister. It is important to not only acknowledge the volume of contacts lost by Cromwell's removal, but the contents of the correspondence as well. Of these 1,143 entirely 'lost' nodes, 1,009 had Cromwell as their only contact in the network and warrant further investigation. As with Henry's correspondence in Chapter III, I manually assigned a category to each set of letters to Cromwell, to quantify the role these correspondents played both in Cromwell's inbox and the wider giant component.

Unsurprisingly, given that they were only communicating with Cromwell, over 50% of these nodes wrote petitions for aid or promotion, or sought patronage from the minister. Whilst the majority of these were generic requests for help, some can be categorised further. Despite the existence of the Court of Augmentations, designed specifically to manage the dissolution of the monasteries, thirty-eight of these letters of petition asked for Cromwell's help to protect a religious house from dissolution, or thanked the minister for his personal intervention, sometimes circumventing Richard Riche in his role as Chancellor of Augmentations. Whilst these perhaps support Pole's depiction of the evil Cromwell seeking to destroy religion in England, sixty-six petitioners wrote to Cromwell in this period to seek promotion in religious offices, and to thank him for his aid in religious intervention and progression, reflecting perhaps a more balanced view of Cromwell's approach to and involvement in religious changes in this period. A further thirty-one people wrote to Cromwell to seek possession of dissolved monastic lands, both as secular petitioners and former members of these monastic houses. This speaks to Cromwell's assumed role as in charge of the dissolution of the monasteries, as well as his – clearly well-known – experience with managing lands.

This management of lands, so important in his early years under Wolsey, is further reflected in the forty-seven petitions for aid with other types of secular land disputes, whilst another eighteen wrote to discuss specific legal issues or from prison seeking aid. A further fourteen wrote to Cromwell in the hope that he would settle expenses still owed to them by the king, reflecting Cromwell's control over the crown's purse strings. It is interesting to note that of these lost petitioners, eighty-two are female writers, sixty-five of which seek Cromwell's help outside of

monastic or religious problems. Many in fact were widows, seeking to keep their former land or possessions without the protection of their husband, painting an interesting – and overlooked – image of the minister as the defender of ill-disposed women, both at court and beyond.

Whilst some of these petitioners looked to Cromwell to intercede with the king, many acknowledged Cromwell's role as a patron as separate from that of the king and sought his aid as an individual of influence and legal knowledge. These petitioners and patronage seekers, whilst interesting case studies for Cromwell's role in aiding those in different forms across the country, do not speak to a wider loss in the administrative effectiveness of the main component, nor would have drastically impacted the king's relationships, and perhaps reflect the topics that would be expected to be lost with the removal of any central node in the network.

In contrast, the remaining portion of these lost contacts represent a more significant issue for court, governance, and information gathering. Over 400 of these lost correspondents sent reports to the minister, often responding to explicit instructions from Cromwell and the king and sharing important information about governance across the country and further abroad. Again, these can be broken down into smaller categories. Seventeen discussed Irish affairs and twenty-eight were from foreign agents outside of official ambassadorial roles. A further seventy-nine reported specifically to Cromwell on religious dissention across the country, both from officials in the role and other individuals seeking to inform on neighbours and local priests. Again, despite the Court of Augmentations, eighteen of these reports referenced visitations to monasteries, addressed to Cromwell alone. Supplying as they did important information, these correspondents would represent a real loss to court administration and Henry's extended paths in the network. The wealth of these writers, communicating – at least in surviving material – only with Cromwell, speaks not only to the supposed network of informants that Cromwell had both at home and abroad, but emphasises the extent to which this relied on and was built around Cromwell alone. Though in many of these cases – as with religion, the monasteries, and foreign affairs – there were other avenues of communication explicitly set up to manage this information, their exclusive relationship with Cromwell establishes the minister's pivotal role in the network and at court.

Other forms of disconnect from the king are more complex. For a number of correspondents, they remain in the residual giant component after Cromwell's removal, but no longer have a path to or from the king, as without Cromwell they do not have the necessary contacts with the required directed edges. For some nodes, this means that they would only be *half* cut-off from the king: though they may have required Cromwell as an intermediary going to *or* from the king, they still held an alternative path in the other direction. There are twenty-five members of the network whom Henry was still able to contact without his chief minister, but who would have no remaining intermediary to connect them to the king once Cromwell is removed. In the other

direction, there are forty-five nodes who are now missing a path directed from the king to them, but who have other means of reaching Henry in the network without Cromwell. This latter scenario can be seen with Princess Mary. In part still isolating his daughter for her support of her mother Catherine of Aragon and her refusal to submit to him as head of the English Church, Henry did not write to Mary in these six years, using Cromwell instead to pass on messages and instructions. Without the minister, Henry is effectively cut-off from Mary in the model network, having utilised no other advisor to mediate with his estranged daughter. In contrast, Mary wrote directly to her father twelve times in this period. Despite this, Mary was aware that Cromwell was actively acting as intermediary between the two royals, referring to the minister as “her sheet anchor next [to] the King,” a term that means someone or something that one places all reliance on when everything else has failed.<sup>255</sup> Though Mary retained a direct edge with the king in the model network without Cromwell, in practice she still required the minister’s mediation to allow this connection to remain active.

There are a further four nodes in the network who required Cromwell in paths both to *and* from the king, and who are therefore cut off in both directions once the minister is removed from the network but remain a part of the leftover giant component by virtue of other connections. One such node is Thomas Boleyn: despite holding a reciprocated direct edge with the king between 1529 and 1534, from this period onwards all epistolary communication between Henry and his father-in-law was filtered through Cromwell, suggesting significant leverage for the chief minister and a drop in favour for Boleyn. In a twist from Cromwell seeking Boleyn’s help in his early years as lawyer, by 1536 Boleyn was instead using Cromwell to reach the king and thanking him “for your goodness to me when I am far off, and cannot always be present to answer for myself.”<sup>256</sup> It is important to remember again though that this is only a letter network, and that not everyone requiring Cromwell to reach the king in the network needed similar mediation in person. Jane Seymour, Henry’s third wife, is one such example: whilst cut-off from her husband in both directions in the model network without Cromwell’s edges, she would, of course, have retained in-person contact. Indeed, she would not need to write to Henry as she does to Cromwell to inform him of the birth of her son, Edward VI.<sup>257</sup>

Cromwell was vital in connecting members of the court and wider country to the king, then; but he was also critical to the overall efficiency of administrative and information structures. Modelling Cromwell’s removal from the network in such a way offers one means of critically assessing Elton’s arguments that Cromwell sat at the centre of court bureaucracy and administration

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<sup>255</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 518; ‘sheet anchor,’ *OED*.

<sup>256</sup> L&P, vol. XI, no. 17.

<sup>257</sup> L&P, vol XII pt. 2, no. 889.

during his years as chief minister. Elton describes Cromwell's Principal Secretary as "the most powerful active element in the state", in which "Cromwell was a prime minister who kept a strict control on his associates and subordinates, and in addition personally attended to much business in the smallest detail."<sup>258</sup> This personal, detailed control and apparently self-assigned role as the "unifying factor in [the state's] multiplicity of departments" elevated Cromwell's power and influence at court but, as Elton argues, meant all administration was built around the minister and unable to function without him.<sup>259</sup> In some ways, the modelled network supports this: as established, Cromwell is the most destructive and disruptive cut-point, with a huge volume of contacts relying on the minister cut off from the king. The survey of these letters indicates not only the quantity of Cromwell's petitioners, but the wide variety of matters with which he was involved. Arguably, much of this correspondence – especially that regarding religious reform, monastic lands, and the king's expenses – should have instead been directed to the relevant offices and departments Cromwell himself had established for such purposes. Yet its appearance in Cromwell's inbox supports Elton's assertions that Cromwell was content to ignore his own administrative processes to manage this work personally.<sup>260</sup>

These experiments demonstrate Cromwell's significance just using his own letters, let alone when including his involvement with and management of the king's correspondence which, even with the complexities explored in the last chapter, enabled the minister further administrative control. For the most part, however, these 'petitioners' remained outside of central court administration. Whilst they serve to testify to the volume and variety of work in Cromwell's correspondence, their absence from the giant component at most removes potential sources of information without frustrating the fundamental administrative or organisational structure and Henry's ability to govern. In fact, as can be seen from the first set of experiments in this chapter, although Cromwell's removal would be most disruptive to the giant component, the administrative structure remains for the most part intact: the other most active and influential nodes in the network are still able to contact one another and conduct business.

### *Cromwell's Replacements*

Though Cromwell's removal impacts communication across the network, a number of nodes would still be able to reach or be reached by the king without Cromwell, and function as a reduced giant component. This means there was an alternative intermediary to mediate between Henry and remaining contacts in the model network. Identifying and evaluating these

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<sup>258</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 300-301.

<sup>259</sup> *ibid*, 223.

<sup>260</sup> *ibid*, 416.

intermediaries and the paths they offered is a means to assess the extent that Cromwell was unique or, indeed, replaceable. Possible alternative intermediaries also represent different types of importance at court: those used by the network to reach Henry reflect those considered by the wider court and country as an alternate to Cromwell; in contrast, those used by Henry represent those most able to keep the king in contact with the rest of the network and the king's most likely choice to replace his minister, should the need arise. To identify these alternatives, I re-used the custom-code to select the nodes that formally used Cromwell who still retained a path to or from Henry in the model network and used the modified concept of betweenness centrality established earlier to calculate the intermediaries used on these remaining paths.

Starting with the Henry-Source-Paths, 84 nodes (50%) could still be reached by Henry in the model network without Cromwell. Of these 84, 7 have a longer path than in the original graph, implying that though Cromwell's removal from the network makes it more difficult for Henry to reach these nodes, it is not impossible. Of those made longer by Cromwell's removal, Richard Riche can be used in six of the seven paths, evidently relied on for an alternate if more inconvenient means of contact. The other 77 surviving shortest paths from Henry to another node in the network are essentially unaffected by Cromwell's removal from the network, suggesting that the king has other neighbours that are **structurally equivalent** to Cromwell in Henry's need to reach certain nodes, meaning that within the network structure they can offer similar access to a range of neighbours.

In these remaining 77 paths, the top five options as alternatives to Cromwell on HSPs are:

- 1) Anne de Montmorency (28 paths), (=) Francis I, King of France (28 paths),
- 3) the Privy Council (27 paths), (=) Henry Lord Montague (27 paths), (=) Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall (27 paths).

It is perhaps surprising that Montmorency and Francis are the most common alternatives given this discussion of the network and administrative practices at the English court. Though the French king and his diplomat were far from the centre of the English administration – and thus it is reasonable to consider the practicality of their replacing Cromwell as go-between for Henry – it is worth remembering that administration of the Tudor court also included foreign relations and intelligence reports. Their place in this list therefore reflects the extent to which the English State Papers, as a marker of administrative work, are not focused on Anglo-centric household departments alone but are influenced and impacted by a wider array of correspondence and political actors.

Montmorency and Francis still only appear on 28 of the remaining 77 paths each, however. Though Henry would still be able to reach his target nodes without his chief minister, he would not

have one person he could use to reach all of the network, as he had with Cromwell. While these paths are not longer, more effort is required in a different way to reach a large number of these nodes by going through multiple different connecting nodes.

It is important to also comment more on the practical uses of edges to act as path components, and to again consider the dynamic and temporal nature of this network covering six years of epistolary communication. Some correspondence may be rare occurrences, one-off petitions, or even nodes that have died between 1534-1540, and can no longer serve as a connecting node by the end of this period. Indeed, Henry Lord Montague, cousin to the king, was executed for treason at the start of January 1539, and therefore would not actually be able to replace Cromwell after this date. Many more may have been cut off from Henry if – though the edges existed – they were not, in practice, connecting the two nodes. In reality, only active paths could have been utilised for intermediary purposes.

The impact of Cromwell's removal in the model is greater for those looking to reach the king, as would be expected considering the greater proportion of these paths that use Cromwell. Once more utilising the custom code from before, of the 1,577 members of the network using the chief minister on a path to the king, only 363 (23%) can still reach the king in the new graph, 69 of which have a longer path without Cromwell. Repeating the same experiments, Lisle and Wriothesley top the list for longer post-Cromwell HTPs with 51 and 22 more paths respectively. In same-length paths, the top nodes are:

- 1) Lord Lisle (152 paths);
- 2) Thomas Wriothesley (103 paths);
- 3) Privy Council (24 paths);
- 4) Bishop Roland Lee (20 paths);
- 5) Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (17 paths)

That Lisle appears as the most used replacement intermediary in both same-length and longer paths is not entirely surprising; he has a large degree and one of the highest betweenness scores of the overall network for this period, and as such is a likely connecting node. Wriothesley acting as one of the most regular for these paths, however, implies that he was also one of the most structurally equivalent to Cromwell for nodes attempting to reach the king. As with the HSPs, Wriothesley is not completely equivalent: there are still 282 former Cromwell-HTPs that do not use Wriothesley, but these experiments indicate that he was one of the nodes closest to Cromwell's role at court in relation to Henry. This is likely owing to his role as Cromwell's secretary; as more and more work came through Cromwell, the more he delegated to Wriothesley, and he would go on to be Cromwell's successor as the king's secretary in April 1540. Again, the network may offer early indications of the minister's plans, something that will be considered in more depth in Section III.

As one of Cromwell's biggest rivals at court, the Duke of Norfolk's role in these remaining paths offers a means of contextualising Cromwell's power as well as considering competing structures of influence around Henry. It is important to first note that, in the original graph, Norfolk is not involved in many paths to and from the king, occurring on only 17 Henry-Source-Paths (2.3%) and 31 Henry-Target-Paths (1.2%). When Cromwell is removed from this model network, Norfolk is unable to act as a replacement intermediary on any of Cromwell's HSPs, and, although ranking fifth, only 17 of the 363 surviving HTPs. Though this in some ways reflects Norfolk's lower betweenness ranking, it more importantly demonstrates that Cromwell and Norfolk were structurally dissimilar, providing different things in their service to Henry. Whilst a handful of people in the network could look to both Cromwell and Norfolk as the quickest means of reaching the king, there is no overlap in the set of contacts that the two advisors could provide quick access to for Henry. As will be explored more in the next chapter, this was of great importance: as Henry's desires changed, so would his favour sway towards those that could easily and quickly contact those needed to enact his latest wishes.

Like the HSPs, there is not one person that appears on all 363 paths to Henry as a replacement for Cromwell. More than this, there is minimal crossover between the post-Cromwell HTPs and the post-Cromwell HSPs: apart from the Privy Council, an entirely different set of nodes are used as intermediary by Henry as a source than to reach him as a target. The organisation of communication becomes increasingly more complicated without Cromwell, no longer reciprocally flowing through one node. Cromwell was not only crucial to the smooth running of court administration, but to Henry's personal ability to connect with the wider network as well.

There is not one actor who could replace Cromwell as intermediary for the king in the model, then, and Cromwell's counter-factual removal from this network drastically reduces the proficiency of communication between Henry and the remainder of the giant component. Whilst the model network demonstrates that court administration would be able to function without many of the most dominant members of court, it is remarkably less efficient without Cromwell, especially when considering paths to and from the king. Elton was correct, then, to suggest that Cromwell orchestrated court management through himself and his personal office, and that this personal control was unmatched by anyone else in the 1534-1540 network, though given the relative stability of bureaucracy in this period, Cromwell's removal would not have been a complete administrative failure. But by dominating the network in such a way and ensuring that such a large proportion of correspondents looked to the minister as an intermediary, Cromwell established a sense of reliance on his administrative skills and network contacts, cultivating influence and power.



By modelling Cromwell's removal from the network, his significance can be assessed not merely by what he did, but by quantifying the potential damage that could be done by his absence during the peak of his power. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates the possibilities of using computational measures to test qualitative hypotheses, offering a flipped framework to that traditionally used in historical narratives. Although Cromwell's betweenness ranking demonstrated in Chapter II evidences his prominence as an intermediary, Cromwell's position as a cut-point can be used to investigate this role further, and demonstrate that – to a great extent – Cromwell was unique in this period in what he could offer both the king and the wider administrative structure. Whilst this chapter has demonstrated in more detail the way acting as an intermediary may be a measure for assessing influence in the network, it is important to note that this was not a passive role. In fact, as the next chapter will now explore, Cromwell regularly used this position to manage not only his own power but that of others as well to elevate his influence at court and with the king.

## VI. The King's Gatekeeper

As demonstrated in the last chapter, Cromwell's role as intermediary produced greater efficiency in communication across the network and provided a nigh on irreplaceable service in linking Henry with the wider network. Cromwell was vital to the functioning of the network; but this position afforded the minister a number of advantages as well. As shown in the last chapter, Cromwell held one of the lowest clustering coefficient scores of the network, reflecting the extent to which he was able to manage interactions as an intermediary across the network. This chapter focuses on these benefits, framing the intermediary position as a deliberate and active role, one through which Cromwell used the network to manage access to the king to his own advantage. As intermediary to Henry in such a large capacity, Cromwell controlled information around and access to Henry, both valuable commodities at the Tudor court. Where Cromwell provided these, he was thanked and rewarded, but in refusing them, he could deny influence and power to those left at a disadvantage, a role openly acknowledged and reified by both Cromwell and his contemporaries at court, as demonstrated in Chapter I.

This chapter explores Cromwell's management of access to Henry by focusing on social network theories on triadic management and brokerage transactions by Roger Gould and Robert Fernandez to build on the depiction of Cromwell as not only an intermediary but a 'gatekeeper'. Once more, quantitative analysis offers a means of exploring and measuring traditional qualitative narratives and theories. This chapter also explicitly focuses on the period leading up to Cromwell's fall from power and arrest on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1540 for the first time in the thesis, critically engaging with political structures in a contentious period in Tudor history. In examining the epistolary network in the six months leading up to his fall from power, this chapter demonstrates Cromwell's control over access to the king in his final months, and the different modes of power this offered. By managing interactions with the king, Cromwell not only garnered vital and novel information to advance his own position, but also limited the progression of others around him, from lower-class patronage seekers to high-ranking members of court administration.

Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter II, whilst dominant in the network from 1533, by the start of 1540 Cromwell's position was becoming less secure. Though Cromwell was granted the title of Earl of Essex in April, signalling royal favour and the minister's highest rank yet, turbulent events at court including Henry's unsuccessful marriage to Anne of Cleves, failing negotiations for alliances with France and Spain, and growing concern at court about Cromwell's religious leanings appeared to be undermining his influence. Only three months after Cromwell's elevation to the earldom, he would be stripped of all his titles and executed. Much like centrality measures in

Chapter II, highlighting fractures in Cromwell's ability to act as the king's 'gatekeeper' offers early insights into shifts in his power and begins to build towards a picture of Cromwell's fall.

### *The King's Gatekeeper*

The concept of 'gatekeeper' explicitly builds on the intermediary role explored in the last chapter. Rather than merely linking people however, a gatekeeper actively managed and restricted interactions. The gatekeeper role was not uncommon in the early modern royal court and was in fact openly acknowledged by contemporaries as an opportunity for increased influence. Though initially designed to reduce the size of Henry's attendants, Wolsey's Eltham Ordinances (1525-1526) also formalised access to the Privy Chamber through the role of an 'usher', primarily to restrict Wolsey's enemies visiting the king.<sup>261</sup> Though the role was often held by the Groom of the Stool – ideally placed inside the household to petition the king and choose who or what was prioritised for attention – as Cromwell rose in Henry's favour, he used his proximity to the king to takeover this gatekeeper position. Indeed, Heywood's *Play of the Wether* commented on this as early as 1533: the play depicts the god Jupiter descending to earth to ask his mortal subjects for petitions for a new state of weather, appointing a new servant, Mery Report, to act as intermediary between the god and the petitioners.<sup>262</sup> Heywood used his interlude to criticise access to the king and the nature of royal counsel at the Tudor court, allegorising Cromwell as Mery Report and his attempts to manage access to his master.

As with all aspects of his work, Cromwell used letters as another means by which to manage this access to the king. Cromwell sought not to just control contact with the king but information about him as well, recognising it as a valuable commodity in the Tudor court. Such can be seen in a letter to Gardiner and Wallop regarding the fall of Anne Boleyn in 1536. For a letter intended to inform the French ambassadors of events in England, it lacks significant details. Though Cromwell gave the names of Anne's supposed suitors and suggested "the quenes abhomynacion both in incontynent lyving, and other offences towardes the kinges highnes was so rank and commen," the rest of the information is more vague, and Cromwell ends by claiming "I write noo particularities, the thinges be soo abhomynable, that I thinke the like was neuer harde."<sup>263</sup> The lack of details may reflect fear of interception, which Schneider argues was a key source of anxiety for many letter writers; yet given that the purpose of this letter was to provide public information for the French

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<sup>261</sup> *A collection of ordinances and regulations for the government of the royal household, made in divers reigns: from King Edward III to King William and Queen Mary, also receipts in ancient cookery*, (London: Printed for the Society of Antiquaries by John Nichols, sold by Messieurs White and Son, Robson, Leigh and Sotheby, Browne, and Egerton's, 1790), 146-147.

<sup>262</sup> All references are to *The Plays of John Heywood*, ed. Richard Axton and Peter Happé, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 183-215.

<sup>263</sup> *ibid.*

king and court, this seems improbable.<sup>264</sup> This subtlety may have attempted to preserve the king's dignity, but it is more likely that Cromwell played on his role in dispersing information to hinder his adversaries abroad. Though correspondence often employed linguistic and rhetorical devices to excuse or ignore anxieties caused by the physical separation evidenced by letter-writing, Cromwell's letter to Gardiner and Wallop contained no attempts to assuage these anxieties.<sup>265</sup> Rather, where Cromwell failed to divulge the full information of Anne's case, he played on the delays and flaws implicit in the letter-writing process and the implication of writing on behalf of the king to highlight the inconvenience of the ambassadors' absence and Cromwell's distinct proximity to Henry in contrast. Once more this shows the importance of "attendance at court, or at least a reliable channel of communication to the court."<sup>266</sup> Cromwell not only deprived the ambassadors of this 'reliable channel of communication', but in doing so he emphasised the significance of their isolation from court and what it meant for their positions. Though Cromwell did not lie to Gardiner and Wallop, he was able to manage the situation and dispersal of information to his advantage. That, as Steven Gunn argues, "those who won his friendship or inspired his confidence did better than those who did not" is evident from the wealth of information that the likes of Vaughan enjoyed in contrast to that of Gardiner and Wallop, with whom Cromwell had notoriously strained relationships.<sup>267</sup>

The contents of Cromwell's letters demonstrate the ways he was able to restrict or 'gatekeep' information surrounding the king. Cromwell went beyond merely limiting information, however, and regularly utilised his position in the network structure to prevent or at least manage access to the king. Once more, network analysis offers a means to quantify this role, and as such this chapter now looks to sociological theories on intermediary roles, and the ways they offer insight into Cromwell's gatekeeping in the Tudor court.

### *Networks and Brokerage*

As established in the last chapter, relationships in a network often hold value based on their placement in the wider context of the structure. Building on the theories surrounding triads put forward by Granovetter and Burt, Gould and Fernandez's paper 'Structures of Mediation' outlined different kinds of brokerage relationships, where "any brokered exchange can be thought of as a *relation* involving three actors, two of whom are the actual parties to the transaction and one of whom is the intermediary or broker", though the dynamics of these relations and, in particular, the

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<sup>264</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 22.

<sup>265</sup> Schneider, *Epistolarity*.

<sup>266</sup> Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 133.

<sup>267</sup> Gunn, *Early Tudor Government, 1485-1558*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 55; Chapter I, 49.

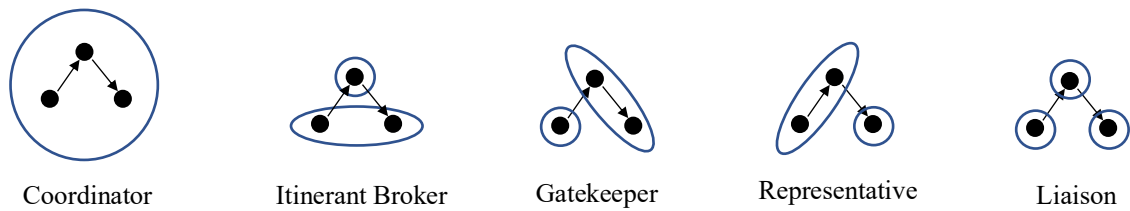


Figure 24 – As suggested by Gould and Fernandez, this is a “graphic representation of the five types of brokerage relation. Solid points are actors; ellipses correspond to subgroup boundaries. The top point of in each triad represents the broker.”<sup>268</sup>

role of the intermediary can differ significantly.<sup>269</sup> Figure 24 depicts the five different brokerage relations set out by Gould and Fernandez. In each diagram, the top point represents the intermediary of the scenario. The ellipses indicate different subgroups within each possible circumstance: for example, in a *Co-Ordinator* role, the intermediary and the other actors are all part of the same group; in contrast, in a *Liaison* example, everyone is a member of their own distinct subgroup, with individual interests and goals. In each scenario, the broker’s relationship with the other two people offers different intermediary strategies or advantages. As already indicated, this chapter focuses on the specific role of *Gatekeeper*, in which “an actor selectively grants outsiders access to members of his or her own group”.<sup>270</sup> Though gatekeepers could use their role to help others, they could also exploit it their own advantage. Gatekeepers are afforded power by the fact that they can grant or refuse access to the desired third party; they can invite petitions from this position, and benefit from outcomes occurring if or when they eventually provide access. Not only were they able to glean benefits from those they chose to let pass, but they were also able to manage the influence of others to whom they restricted access, as will be demonstrated below. This role could also be self-fulfilling, following again the pattern of preferential attachment introduced in Chapter II. In Cromwell’s case, the more he was used, or indeed presented himself, as the king’s gatekeeper, the more others in the network looked to him in this role, bolstering his position in the network and validating his role at court.

Gould and Fernandez’s brokerage relations build on the basic element of the triad introduced in the last chapter, offering a formal method of quantifying Cromwell’s role as gatekeeper in Henry’s court. Though contemporaries were quick to note Cromwell’s position, as in Heywood’s *Play of the Wether*, they had no concrete means of measuring it. As with the previous two chapters, this chapter employs custom-written code to formalise these observations, building on Gould and Fernandez’s theories and focusing on a reduced network from between January and

<sup>268</sup> Gould and Roberto M. Fernandez, ‘Structures of Mediation: A Formal Approach to Brokerage in Transaction Networks,’ *Sociological Methodology* 19 (1989): 93;

<sup>269</sup> *ibid*, 91.

<sup>270</sup> *ibid*, 92.

July 1540 originally containing 380 nodes and 449 edges.<sup>271</sup> This code extracted everyone in this reduced period holding an edge with Cromwell, Henry, or both, creating a smaller network containing 194 nodes and 261 edges. In this experiment, the surviving correspondence was also supplemented with manually added data – i.e., information not collected from the original archival database. This is because although an original letter might not have survived, the recipient referenced the receipt of a previous letter in their reply. As such, even if the document itself has not survived, there is evidence that a letter once existed.<sup>272</sup>

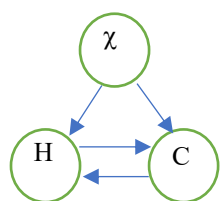
Having extracted this smaller set of interactions, the code sorted the letter-writers into different categories of triadic relationships. It cycled through each person in this subset and determined the relationship they held with Cromwell and Henry: whether it was with only one or both the king and his minister, and whether these connections were reciprocal or not. In contrast to the last chapter, these experiments are not concerned with other avenues to or connections with the king, but just those involving Henry and his chief minister. As shown in Figure 25, the code distinguished between unclosed triads (Types 6 and 7) and closed triads (Types 0-5), including variations based on the direction of links.

Most of this reduced network is formed of unclosed triads, making up 91% of all triadic interactions. Type 6 consists of those that communicated with Cromwell but had no existing link with Henry; Type 7, in contrast, depicts those that corresponded with Henry, and not with Cromwell. Given the volume of Cromwell's unshared contacts outlined in Chapter II and the number of 'lost' nodes in the last chapter, it is unsurprising that Type 6 dominates the network: in fact, nearly 79% (151) of the connections form unclosed triads with Cromwell. In contrast, only around 12% (23) communicated solely with the king in Type 7. Not only do these experiments once more demonstrate the significance of Cromwell's role in the network, but in narrowing down the data to the Cromwell-Henry triads, like Chapters IV and V these measures offer a means of considering the distribution and management of power between king and minister. Though both sets of unclosed triads will be explored in more depth shortly, there are two key outcomes of Cromwell's dominance of these triads that are important to acknowledge straight away. First, the overwhelming number of Type 6 triads implies that Cromwell's role as gatekeeper was not merely regular, but the status quo at court, the set norm for interacting with the king. Secondly, the

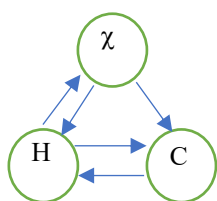
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<sup>271</sup> The custom-code for these experiments was written in collaboration with Dr Sebastian Ahnert (University of Cambridge).

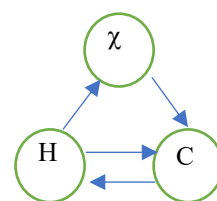
<sup>272</sup> Many early modern letter-writers used this technique to mention previous correspondence, often to directly highlight the continuity of a conversation and justify their writing in the context of a reply. Others used it to indicate when the letters arrived to excuse delays in responding. Working with a smaller subset of letter data takes full advantage of these textual features: although there is a smaller sample of correspondence, reflecting a more limited snapshot of relationships, this can be combined with a close reading of all letters to account for some of the archival 'silence' commented on in the introduction. Where a reference to missing letters appeared in the correspondence, a manual link has been added to the data and is labelled in Figure 26.



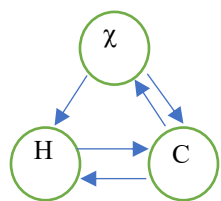
TYPE 0



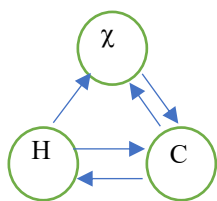
TYPE 1



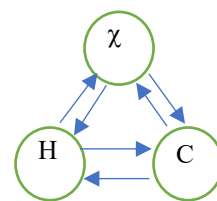
TYPE 2



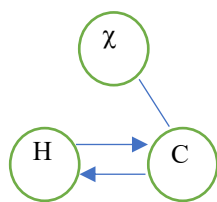
TYPE 3



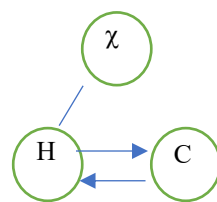
TYPE 4



TYPE 5



TYPE 6  
(UNCLOSED TRIAD)



TYPE 7  
(UNCLOSED TRIAD)

Figure 25 – Different forms of triadic closure in the network, January-July 1540. ‘H’ represents Henry VIII, ‘C’ Thomas Cromwell, and ‘χ’ any third member of a triad.

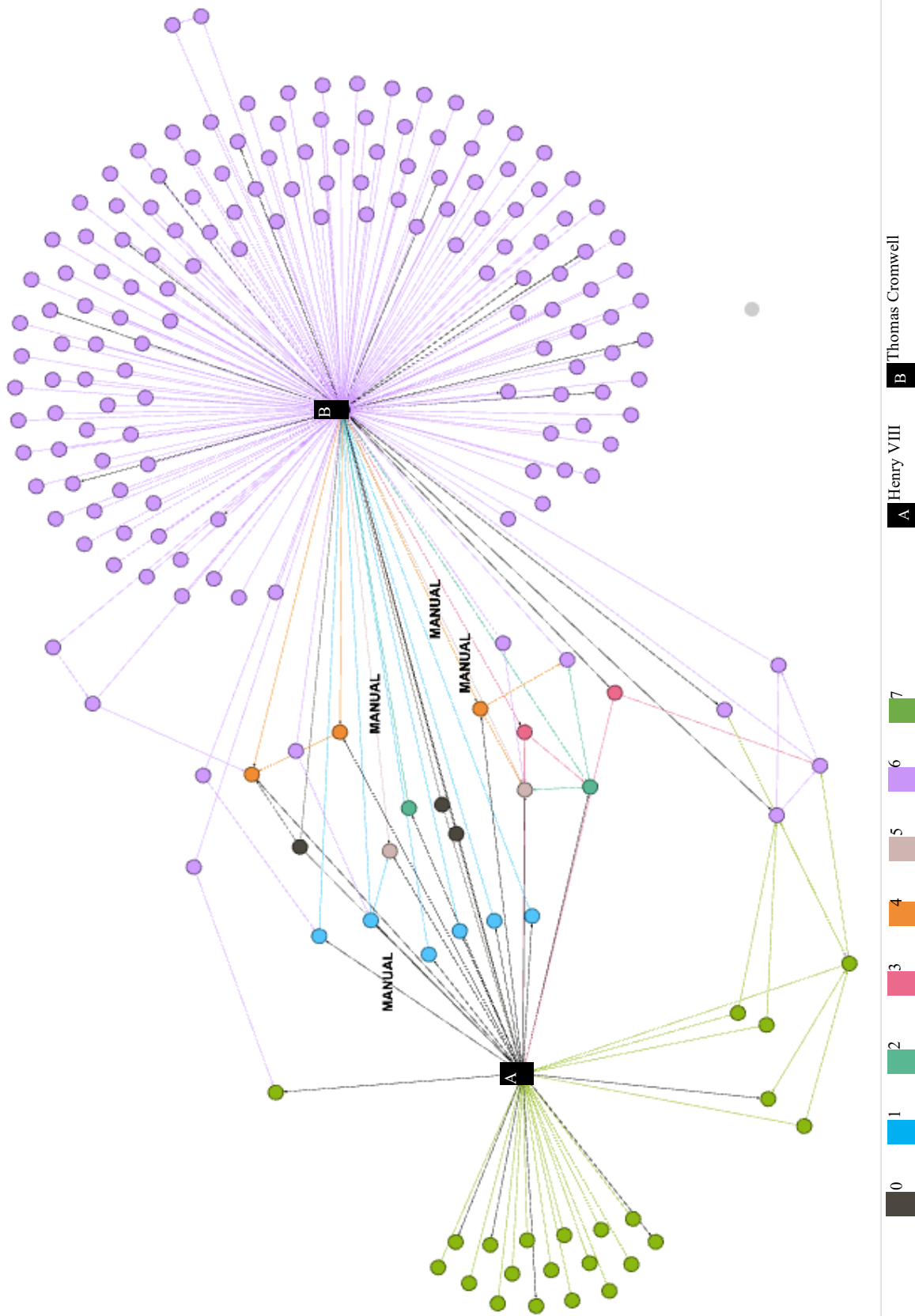


Figure 26 – Network graph of closed and unclosed triads between Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, January-July 1540, colour-coded according to the triad types outlined in Fig. 25.



difference in number of unclosed triads between king and minister demonstrates that Cromwell could offer more to Henry in terms of novel information than Henry offered Cromwell, mirroring the modelled changes in eigenvector in Chapter IV. Whilst Cromwell would primarily use the gatekeeper role to assert his own influence at court, it is once again important to remember that Cromwell could only fully utilise this position whilst doing so in service to his king.

The final 9% (18) of the network are the closed triads that existed between Henry, Cromwell, and another node. As in Figure 25, the ‘closed’ triads in these experiments denote several different relationships based on the direction of the edges. In fact, of these triads, there are only two nodes that operate in total reciprocity with the king and Cromwell (Type 5). On the other hand, there are three nodes that only close the triad by writing to both Henry and Cromwell without receiving replies, as in triangle Type 0. Whilst these are both types of closed triads, the position – and influence – of a node writing unreciprocated to both king and minister is vastly different to that of a node in mutual conversation with them both. Clearly, the direction of edges and nature of reciprocity are pivotal in understanding triadic closure in a network and much like Gould and Fernandez’s consideration of brokerage relations in open triads, more work needs to be done to explore the impact of differences in reciprocity in closed triads.

Having established the different possible triad formations, Figure 26 shows the reduced network, colour-coded to the different triad types. In this graph, Henry and Cromwell are the two main hubs (A and B respectively), and the remaining nodes are members of both closed and unclosed triads, illustrating interactions between all actors in this reduced network. It is worth briefly acknowledging the ‘readability’ of this network visualisation in comparison to that in Chapter II [Fig. 3]. Working with a smaller dataset not only allows us to interrogate individual sources more closely on a qualitative level, but also to more cleanly visualise the connections from this distant view, and use these graphs to explain the arguments being made quickly and easily. Whilst every connection in this network can be close read, this does not negate the possibilities of quantitative methodologies; as Daybell and Gordon have argued, “perhaps the best results [for epistolary networks] will be achieved on a very small scale.”<sup>273</sup> Despite the smaller size of the network, these methods can still offer fresh insights into the overarching structure. As in the introduction, the quantitative and qualitative should be used alongside one another, and this chapter actively deploys these ‘twin methods’ to explore Cromwell’s influence in this smaller timeframe.

### *Unclosed Triads*

Extracting these triadic relationships in the network is a means to quantify Cromwell’s position as ‘gatekeeper’ and provides an initial mode to select material for closer reading. As

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<sup>273</sup> Daybell and Gordon, ‘Introduction,’ 19.

shown, 151 correspondents exist in a Type 6 triad, coloured purple and dominating the graph in Figure 26, including 51 ‘lost nodes’ from the last chapter. Whilst the last chapter used these connections to assess Cromwell’s role in holding the network together, these unclosed triads were also Cromwell’s best opportunity to actively operate as Henry’s gatekeeper in the network. As before, Cromwell’s correspondence in this period was mostly made up of administrative work, intelligence reports – from abroad or English localities – and petitions for help or patronage. By considering this correspondence as opportunities to act as gatekeeper, these triads offer another means of assessing Cromwell’s power. Whilst, as explored, social norms often regulated communication from the lower echelons of society and even some more minor courtiers, preventing them from contacting Henry directly, Cromwell actively utilised these opportunities to manage access to the king – and importantly, his favour – to bolster his own position.

More importantly, however, Cromwell was also able to act as gatekeeper in this period between the king and those traditionally able to contact Henry directly. This included regular diplomats, such as Stephen Vaughan and Dr. Thomas Legh, as well as the Council of the North and the Council in Calais. As seen in Chapter I, many ambassadors and councils sent additional letters to a monarch’s advisor as well as the monarch themselves. Vogel has suggested that these ‘supplementary’ letters “often dealt with financial and practical problems and all those details with which an ambassador [or Council] would not want to trouble the king.”<sup>274</sup> With Cromwell as gatekeeper, however, reports that concerned more day-to-day administrative issues – as with the Councils of the North and Calais – were directed to the minister alone rather than in addition to the king. By managing access to the king, Cromwell placed himself in a position to control and relay important information, often using these reports and correspondence as an excuse to write to the king himself. In sending these ‘supplementary’ letters to Cromwell – rather than to another noble or advisor at court – ambassadors and Councils acknowledged and reified his position as Henry’s intermediary. These links afforded Cromwell power both in his status in the social hierarchy of the Tudor court and as an actor in the epistolary network.

Cromwell’s gatekeeping also extended to five members of court who formed part of the formalised Privy Council after 1540: Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall; Thomas Audley, Lord Chancellor; Richard Riche, Chancellor of Augmentations; and William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton. Though Loades suggests that “well-placed courtiers such as the Duke of Suffolk [...] had no need of [Cromwell’s] mediation,” Cromwell was in fact able to act as a gatekeeper between the king and his supposed best friend in the first six months of 1540.<sup>275</sup> In fact, by this time, as Gunn has argued, “when away from [the king] Suffolk needed Cromwell’s

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<sup>274</sup> Vogel, ‘Diplomatic Writing,’ 194.

<sup>275</sup> Loades, *Tudor Court*, 140.

help almost as much as he had needed Wolsey's."<sup>276</sup> Audley even acknowledged Cromwell's role as intermediary, noting that "on the receipt of your last by the King's messenger I have sent you the King's commission according to the tenor of your letters."<sup>277</sup> Cromwell not only managed aspects of court that were technically outside his purview, but even holders of some of the leading offices in the realm – such as Lord Chancellor – looked to Cromwell as gatekeeper to the king. Acting as gatekeeper not only bolstered Cromwell's own power and usefulness at court but limited the influence of others as well. As argued in Chapter II, power at court was directly linked to access to, favour with, and information about Henry. Where Cromwell was able to manage and gatekeep this access, he could control this distribution of power. This is evidenced by comparing centrality measurements in the network: though Suffolk ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in eigenvector overall between 1534 and 1540, in these six months with Cromwell acting as gatekeeper, the duke's ranking drops to 41<sup>st</sup> without his direct link to the king. Cromwell's role as gatekeeper was vital not only to his own conception of power, but others' as well. Whilst Cromwell would pass information along, there was an active acknowledgement that he was the only means by which to give the king these messages, and that Cromwell could refuse to mediate should he wish to. Gatekeeping was not just about refusing access, but actively managing it.

It is important to again acknowledge that the edges – and thus Cromwell's role as gatekeeper – could be bidirectional. Whilst this does not mean that Cromwell prevented Henry from accessing others in the network, Cromwell was able to use his own correspondence to gatekeep information coming *out* of court, as well as coming in, as seen with Gardiner and Wallop. Such can be seen with Sir Thomas Wharton, another member of a Type 6 triad. Writing in January 1540, Cromwell first affirmed receipt of letters addressed to him, which he "declared the ~~par~~ hole effects therof to the kings *Maieste*," actively advertising his gatekeeper position.<sup>278</sup> Cromwell goes on to advise Wharton of ongoing affairs with the Scottish court, instructing him to act according "to the iust proceeding of his highnes." As in Chapter IV, Cromwell utilised the king's name to validate both his position and the intelligence he passed along; in this instance, however, Cromwell singularly controlled the distribution of information. Though Cromwell would not always actively manipulate the presentation of information as he had with Gardiner and Wallop, by ensuring that members of the court could not get their information directly from Henry, the 'source', courtiers relied on Cromwell for this, offering the minister another token of power. In many ways, this mirrors conversations around authorship and control over Henry's letters in Chapter IV. Detecting

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<sup>276</sup> Gunn, *Charles Brandon: Henry VIII's Closest Friend*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2015), 177.

<sup>277</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 402.

<sup>278</sup> SP 1/157 f.10

Type 6 triads in the network are an alternate means of identifying these more explicit opportunities for information control, and another type of gatekeeping.

Cromwell's role as gatekeeper was clearly the norm for managing important information and access to the king in this period then. There remain however twenty-three correspondents who bypassed the chief minister entirely and wrote directly – and indeed only – to Henry as part of a Type 7 triad, coloured green in Figure 26. Much like the petitioners using Cromwell to reach the king, the minister was occasionally limited by his own social standing and unable to intercede with some of Henry's correspondents. Again, this was recognised by contemporaries: the only characters allowed past Heywood's Mery Report to petition Jupiter in person were the nobility. Though Mery Report attempts to intervene, their presence is demanded by the god himself, still suggesting an element of kingly control: "What so ever his mynde be, let hym appere." (250) When the two lists are compared – those who wrote to Cromwell and not the king, and those who wrote to the king and not Cromwell – there is a distinct difference. While Cromwell's list consisted, for the majority, of lower class or fellow courtiers from England, Henry's (as might be expected) was far more high ranking and cosmopolitan, including many monarchs and foreign leaders, such as James V of Scotland, Albert Duke of Prussia, and John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony.

It is important to again acknowledge, however, that the distinction between recipients would not have remained so explicit. As Principal Secretary, writing to the king inevitably meant writing to Cromwell, who would open his master's letters and often read them aloud to the king, either in full or as only a summary. The difference in official recipient was less about who ended up reading the missive and pertained far more to etiquette and formal procedure. As Tracey Sowerby has explored, letters were a means for royals to navigate status and international relationships.<sup>279</sup> Both epistolary and performative practices on delivery of the letter developed around these royal interactions and were a significant element of diplomatic ritual. Letters from European royals directly to Henry did not reflect his importance in the epistolary network then, but rather acknowledged his role as king. Again, Henry's interactions with others reflect the enacted hierarchy discussed in Chapter II which established his importance, rather than the emergent hierarchy reflected through the network: the power stemming from Henry's kingship superseded that afforded to him in the epistolary structure.

Though rare, edges that deviate from this pattern are therefore hugely significant to Cromwell's perceived influence. High-status individuals who communicated with Cromwell rather than Henry directly – including Pope Paul III; Philip Count Palatine and Duke of Bavaria; and, as seen in the last chapter, the king's daughter Mary – attest to the minister's importance in accessing

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<sup>279</sup> Tracey Sowerby, 'Negotiating with the Material Text: Royal Correspondence between England and the Wider World,' in *Cultures of Diplomacy*, 203-219.

the king, despite diplomatic etiquette. Cromwell's role as gatekeeper in these instances demonstrates that this apparent norm for lower-class courtiers was becoming practice across the social spectrum. In each case, by mediating access to the king through his own correspondence, Cromwell was able to manage power throughout the epistolary network, to both bolster and protect his own influence with the king.

### *Closed Triads*

Whilst unclosed triads make up most of this graph, it is important to examine the remaining 9% of the triadic network, writers who held a direct edge with both Henry and Cromwell. According to Gould and Fernandez's brokerage relationships which require an unclosed triad [Fig. 24], closed triads (Types 0-5) would block or negate Cromwell's ability to act as gatekeeper. Like the Type 7 triads discussed above, there was direct access between the king and the third member of the triad that did not require Cromwell to act as intermediary. Yet, as shown, even in these triads, Cromwell could use his position as Principal Secretary to mediate between Henry and his own contacts. Closed triads reflect a similarly less clear-cut means of gatekeeping, in which Cromwell maintained contact with the king's correspondents too. Demonstrating the ways Cromwell could gatekeep even in these closed triads again offers a means of considering Cromwell's power and control over interactions with the king.

As shown in the table in Figure 27 outlining the members of these closed triads, the majority are ambassadorial reports or news from Councils abroad. In contrast to unclosed triads with the Council of the North and the Council of Calais, these interactions reflect the more traditional reporting style suggested by Vogel, in which Cromwell received 'supplementary' letters in recognition of his role as chief minister and administrator for Henry. Given that Cromwell held 6.5 times as many unclosed triads as Henry in this period, however, it was actually more unusual that the *king* was included in these conversations than his minister. Like letters from other royals, Henry was sent reports and the triad was closed because of enacted influence, by which Henry was acknowledged and included because of his title as king, rather than because of his administrative importance as an individual or 'personality' in the epistolary structure. Closed triads focused on reports warrant further investigation therefore, and offer further insight into the balance of control between Cromwell and Henry.

The Council of Ireland provides an example of such an interaction. Part of a Type 1 triad, Henry and the Council were in a reciprocal conversation, whilst the Council wrote to Cromwell without a recorded response. Whilst letters to both Henry and Cromwell generally contained the

Name	Triad Type
Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London	0
Sir William Lord Sands	0
Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury	0
Christopher Mont (Mundt)	1
Commissioners at Calais	1
Council of Ireland	1
Lord Leonard Grey, Viscount Graney	1
Nicholas Wotton	1
Sir William Brereton, Lord Justice of Ireland	1
Anne de Montmorency, Duc de Montmorency	2
Lord Fitzwalter	2
Richard Pates (Pate), Bishop of Worcester	3
Sir Ralph Sadler	3
Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle	4
Sir John Gage	4
Sir John Wallop	4
Sir Thomas Wyatt (the elder)	5
Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	5

Figure 27. A table outlining who represents ‘ $\chi$ ’ in the different closed triad triangle types.

same information, in reality the Council of Ireland only wrote to Henry at all because of the ongoing Irish war effort, petitioning for more money and support and suggesting that “if the King intends, as he wrote, to send a main army, they think it their duty to advise what is necessary.”<sup>280</sup> In many ways this was a formality, recognising as Ives notes that war was not only a distinctly kingly prerogative, but that Henry was known to enjoy it.<sup>281</sup> In fact, though some individual members of the Council and Irish governance – Lord Leonard Grey and Sir William Brereton – also appear in a Type 1 triad, others including Anthony Sentleger, James Butler, Earl of Ormond and Ossory, and Sir William Brabazon, operated in an unclosed triad with Cromwell. Once more, this reflects Cromwell’s role with day-to-day management, but also acknowledged Cromwell’s authority and role as gatekeeper in the context of changes in Irish government during this time. Although Ellis argues that Cromwell’s intervention in Ireland was not wholly successful, it was a result of a need to match Irish governance to changing English politics, and “he understood better than most of Henry VIII’s ministers the extent of the problem and he laboured longer than any in trying to solve it.”<sup>282</sup> That the Council and its members wrote to Cromwell with issues regarding governance not only acknowledged his role as advisor to Henry, but the part he played in establishing the Council in the first place. More importantly, it demonstrates the effectiveness of Cromwell as gatekeeper.

<sup>280</sup> L&P, vol XV no. 82.

<sup>281</sup> Ives, ‘Henry VIII,’ 13.

<sup>282</sup> Ellis, ‘Thomas Cromwell and Ireland,’ 518.

Whilst the Council wrote to the king on royal matters, Cromwell monopolised administrative correspondence, affording him almost independent control over day-to-day issues. Though, as shown, Cromwell often excused his management of work “by my private *letteres*” so as not to “put *your* highnes in the payne to have writen”, this meant that the king often relied exclusively on the minister as a source of information about administrative affairs, as much as others looked to Cromwell for information about Henry.<sup>283</sup> Gatekeeping was not merely about managing access then but dominating interactions so that Cromwell was conceived as the prime point of contact for instructions and control.

Like reports from the Councils, ambassadorial correspondence with both Henry and Cromwell contained mostly the same contents, and all ambassadors fall into triads with an edge from  $\chi$  directed to both Cromwell and Henry (Type 0, Type 1, Type 3, and Type 5). In most instances, the letters to Henry were longer and more detailed, while the same to Cromwell were briefer, but often contained additional news. Many letters to Cromwell also referred to and included other reports or correspondence, highlighting the inherent intertextuality and materiality of early modern correspondence. As with Cromwell’s own letters to the king, longer reports to Henry indicated deference and supplication, whereas shorter, succinct correspondence was for more practical matters.<sup>284</sup> Nicholas Wotton wrote to both king and minister on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1540, the letter to Cromwell “a more concise report of his journey and its result.”<sup>285</sup> Wotton also informed the minister on additional issues not included in his letter to Henry, reporting that he had “Asked the Chancellor, and afterwards the Duke himself, if it was true that the Elector of Brandenburg had received the Gospel. Both said it was true without doubt, but they had no knowledge of his entering the Protestant league.”<sup>286</sup> Significantly, both Wotton and Christopher Mont, ambassador in Germany, wrote to Cromwell first to depict evangelical developments on the continent, rather than to the king directly. What is notable, however, is that in many of these letters, there was an open acknowledgement that to write to either Henry or Cromwell was to write to the other: as the Duke of Norfolk quipped in his letter of 17<sup>th</sup> February 1540, he “fears Cromwell will have much to do to read his letter in Honnyng’s hand [to the king] and more to read the other in his own.”<sup>287</sup> Though Cromwell could not necessarily act as gatekeeper and stop ambassadors from writing to the king, as Principal Secretary he could intercept these letters and manage which parts Henry heard, managing access in a number of ways.

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<sup>283</sup> BL, Cotton Titus B/I f.269.

<sup>284</sup> Chapter I, 52; Schneider, *Epistolarity*, 124.

<sup>285</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 243.

<sup>286</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 223.

Norfolk's letter places emphasis on Cromwell's reading of Henry's letters, but it is interesting to note that this process may have been mutual: in draft letters to Mont in April 1540 and Wotton in June, Henry indicated that he "has perused the letters [...] addressed to the earl of Essex, Lord Privy Seal," suggesting a greater involvement in correspondence than Henry is traditionally afforded.<sup>288</sup> Indeed, Sadler's letter to Cromwell in April of the same year suggests that Henry had not only read letters from Thomas Wyatt to the chief minister, but directed Cromwell "to answer in his own name, but to send the draft to the King before the post be despatched."<sup>289</sup> This was again considered common practice throughout Europe. As Vogel outlines in her study:

Even if the contents of those supplementary letters seemed more personal, however, they were not 'private' letters but would occasionally be read to the king, too. The ambassadors even expected the information they had omitted in their official dispatches to reach the king by way of his minister.<sup>290</sup>

Significantly though, Henry exerted an extensive amount of control over Cromwell's dispatches even after his resignation as Principal Secretary. Yet it is telling that Henry read letters from two of Cromwell's allies, involved in reporting on evangelical movements on the continent: Cromwell was still acting as gatekeeper then, but selectively allowing people access to the king through his own letters, and to his own advantage.<sup>291</sup>

Much like the complexity surrounding authorship discussed in Chapter IV, despite the acknowledgement of shared readership, Henry and Cromwell never shared a joint address; although in every other way it was recognised that the same information was shared with them both, propriety clearly dictated that these missives and their recipients must be kept separate. The clear and definitive impact this has on the network can be solely regarded as an impact of social hierarchy and early modern customs, and though this can make it difficult to assess whether Cromwell was successful as gatekeeper to the king, quantitative measures must again be grounded in a qualitative understanding of historical social customs and practical demonstrations of power, as in the rest of this thesis. Furthermore, it must be remembered that success did not have to mean keeping *everyone* out, but controlling who did have access, as with Mont, Wotton, and Wyatt. Cromwell's influence relied on an active acknowledgment that he had the *ability* to refuse access to or information about the king in his position as gatekeeper, even if he did not do this in every scenario. In most of these ambassadorial instances Cromwell was not necessarily employed as an intermediary, but his inclusion in the triad says much for his power. Many correspondents in fact maintained contact

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<sup>288</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 735.

<sup>289</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 469.

<sup>290</sup> Vogel, 'Diplomatic Writing,' 194.

<sup>291</sup> For more on the use of the term 'evangelical', see Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)



with Cromwell over these important matters *after* his resignation of Principal Secretary on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1540, reinforcing the fact that it was Cromwell, not his title, that held power. As such, Cromwell held influence outside of the expected duties of his office; though this connection formed owing to his proximity to the king – and the influence Henry allowed – it was a cyclical process. Again following the pattern of preferential attachment, the link formed because Cromwell was an influential actor, but in creating this link, the ambassadors verified and increased his power.

Finally, though these experiments consider triads as a static or continuous series of relationships, it is significant to note that some of these triads only closed after Cromwell's arrest and execution. Such is the case with William Lord Sands (Type 0), inspecting fortifications in Calais. Though his letter to Cromwell on 6<sup>th</sup> June from Dover promised the chief minister further updates once he arrived, the next letter on 16<sup>th</sup> June from France was to Henry himself, asking the king's pleasure. Without Cromwell, Sands' only option was to write to the king directly. In this instance, Cromwell's continued success as a gatekeeper in the run up to his death can clearly be seen, and he was competently dealing in these affairs without involving the king. After Cromwell's fall, however, Sands wrote to the king directly rather than another member of the court. This suggests a power vacuum in the absence of the chief minister or a structural hole that many had no option but to bridge themselves.<sup>292</sup> It is vital to remember the essentially dynamic nature of networks, and what the order of interactions in a triad can say about changes in power.

### *The French Connection*

While even in these closed triads Cromwell's role as the king's gatekeeper was an established norm, the minister could not always be successful in his efforts. Though it was rare, the deliberate undercutting and undermining of Cromwell's carefully cultivated structures was dangerous for his influence with the king, and in early 1540, these failures to gatekeep spelt the beginning of his eventual fall from power.

These 'failures' came in two distinct forms, and demonstrate the ways network analysis can explore epistolary structures in ways close reading cannot. The first of these failures was Gardiner, who, as displayed earlier in this chapter, Cromwell had been able to successfully gatekeep, restricting both access to and information about the king. As seen earlier, Gardiner was at his most prolific when away from court as ambassador; in stark contrast, there are no extant letters to or from him in the archives at the start of 1540. As suggested in Chapter IV when exploring the relationship between Cromwell and Henry in the network, the absence of an edge could indicate either zero contact, or fully in-person interactions. Gardiner's 'silence' in these critical six months is therefore deafening: the lack of evidence becomes almost certain proof that

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<sup>292</sup> Section III.

he held the king's ear in person. This 'silence' may also demonstrate a deliberate act of destruction. Though, without evidence, this must remain a hypothesis, a conspicuous lack of correspondence perhaps suggests subversive or damaging conversations.

This distant reading approach is also once more an iterative process, prompting a close reading of sources through this critical lens. Though, naturally, Gardiner's voice is missing from the network in the lead up to Cromwell's fall, it is instead glaringly present in the minister's Act of Attainder:

the particularities and specyalities of which saide abhomynable heresy errors & offenses commytted and done by the said Thomas Cromwell bene ouer tedious long and of to greate nombre here to be expressed declared or written [...] For the whiche his most detestable and abhomynable<sup>heresies and</sup> treasons and many other his like offences and treasons ouerlonge here to be rehersed and declared.<sup>293</sup>

Echoing Cromwell's own vagueness in his reports on the fall of Anne Boleyn to the bishop stationed in France in 1536 outlined above, Gardiner used these 'silences' to triumph over his adversary one final time. Missing from the epistolary network and repeating his own words back to him, Gardiner was not merely absent from Cromwell's established power structure but deliberately subverted it, refusing to play on the minister's own terms.

Whilst Gardiner's ability to circumvent Cromwell as gatekeeper in this period is paradoxically discernible by his absence from the network, the Duke of Norfolk's disruption of Cromwell's power management is more obvious as part of a closed triad. In March 1540, Cromwell wrote to the duke, requesting that he not attend court because one of his servants had fallen ill with the plague. Henry was notoriously anxious about catching contagious diseases, and frequently fled London in the summer when plague threatened. Cromwell clearly attempted to use Henry's hypochondria to keep his rival from court, but Norfolk's response made clear that Cromwell's plan would not work, declaring that

As my servant came not in my house at Kenynghale since a fortnight before Hallowmas, and once at Christmas for his wages, but lay in livery with my horses at Ludham and Framyngnam, where he died, and there were 6 children and 8 other persons in the house where he lay, and none of these have been sick, I think there can be no danger as I was 14 miles off. Pray show the King this; and if I may come to Court, I will be there on Saturday night.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 369; Act of Attainder.

<sup>294</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 442.

Though Cromwell attempted to impede Norfolk – here physically rather than through correspondence – the duke chose to ignore this and attended court anyway. In fact, this is the only correspondence from the duke whilst he was in England in this period; much like Gardiner, Norfolk wrote little whilst at home. For both men, their silence in this period implies that they spent more time at court in person with the king, where it was harder for Cromwell to act as gatekeeper and indicating a significant threat to his power.

Whilst these silences in the network may support traditional historiographical accounts that look to the role of Norfolk and Gardiner in Cromwell's fall, exploring the connection between Norfolk and Henry in the triad and – more importantly – its wider ramifications for network structures offers greater insight into motivations for changes in power. The first interactions with Norfolk in this period were in February 1540 whilst the duke was in France, having taken over from Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London as ambassador. In fact, Norfolk spent much of his time discrediting the bishop and promoting his own abilities instead, reporting to the king that

Castillon came to him and said he wished Norfolk had been here two months ago, saying my lord of London [Bonner] had done more good to the Emperor's affairs than he himself and all his agents here, but he doubted not Norfolk's coming would amend many things.<sup>295</sup>

Though distance normally presented a disadvantage to ambitious courtiers, Norfolk played on the fact that he was away from court, using this opportunity to construct an image of himself as a successful and valued diplomat. Having taken over from Bonner, Norfolk was himself replaced by a successor of his own choosing on his return to England, selecting Sir John Wallop, a fellow conservative. This represented a significant shift for Cromwell in the network: Bonner was widely acknowledged as an ally to Cromwell and was part of the chief minister's system of information management, in which he placed men loyal to him in varied roles and locations to maintain his own role as centre of the network. Bonner's return from France was not merely a loss to Cromwell's information network then, but where Norfolk's man eventually replaced Bonner, these information benefits transferred to the duke instead, indicating a significant shift in influence at court.

Norfolk's letters to the king about Bonner also speak to the duke's own play for power: in undermining others, he sought to sow conflict between Henry and his other ambassadors and advisors and reap the benefits for himself. Crucially, Norfolk extended his criticism to those traditionally considered his allies, including Gardiner. In complaining about Bonner, the duke told the king that "Bishops are bad ambassadors here, for Winchester [Gardiner] is little better favoured

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<sup>295</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 222.

than the other.”<sup>296</sup> Suggesting an ambassador was disliked by a foreign court was a serious affront: as Catherine Fletcher has argued, ambassadors were a physical representation of their monarch and his dignity, and it was their duty “to defend that honour through the assertion of their place in the order of precedence.”<sup>297</sup> For Norfolk to suggest that Gardiner was failing in these duties directly implied that Henry was being ill-personified at the court with which he most sought an alliance. Whilst this criticism suggests that Norfolk and Gardiner were not as closely aligned as traditionally thought, it also highlights the fragility and transitory nature of supposed ‘factions’ at court. Henry was obviously unphased by Norfolk’s tactics, however; replying to the duke on 21<sup>st</sup> February, Henry thanked him for “the discreet handling of the charge committed to him,” praising him for his work.<sup>298</sup> This was more than a mere formality from Henry to ambassador; in fact, this was the only instance in which the king thanked an ambassador – or indeed, anyone – for their work in this period.

Norfolk’s position as ambassador was significant in changes to his influence at court in this period; not merely because he was successfully acting as the king’s representative, but because he did so in France. It is important to explore the significance of this, and how shifting relationships and power dynamics impacted on Cromwell’s ability to act as gatekeeper in the network. While historians and contemporaries alike have highlighted Cromwell’s supposed aversion to an Anglo-French alliance, the Boleyn-Howard faction have regularly been framed as pro-French, mostly owing to the years Thomas Boleyn spent as French ambassador and Anne Boleyn’s infamous stay at the French court. Though this played a role in Cromwell’s leanings, his disinterest in France went beyond his infamous antagonism towards the Boleyn-Howard family. Cromwell’s lukewarm approach to a French alliance contained a practical element: well-versed in trade networks, Cromwell saw a Spanish alliance as far more advantageous. Indeed, Elton comments that “it is the mark of Cromwell’s ability that he managed to combine a pro-Spanish foreign policy in the interests of English trade with the destruction of everything that Spain wanted to see preserved in England.”<sup>299</sup> Francis I had also been openly hostile towards Cromwell from the onset of the English Reformation late in 1533, rejecting the religious changes across the channel and placing the blame for this squarely at the feet of the new minister. It is important not to forget that, amongst these seemingly personal motivations, Cromwell also sought to please his king: throughout his reign, Henry swung between promises of peace and brotherhood and a projected hostility towards France and a longing to reclaim English territory.<sup>300</sup> Cromwell’s pro-Imperial stance may also therefore

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<sup>296</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 223.

<sup>297</sup> Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 169.

<sup>298</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 233.

<sup>299</sup> Elton, *England*, 132.

<sup>300</sup> *ibid*, 193.

have been influenced by these desires. Yet however much Cromwell understood trade relations and even perhaps understood – as much as one could – this most unpredictable of English monarchs, he did not appear to understand the delicacies of foreign diplomacy, often to his own detriment.

Cromwell regularly promoted Imperialist connections at court, both to support his own position as well as England's role in wider Europe; but his overstepping into Anglo-European affairs were some of the few obvious errors the chief minister made in his time in power and had a serious impact on his relationship with the king. Most notably during the marriage negotiations of 1538, Cromwell sought to prevent a French alliance, rebuffing negotiations with Castillon, the French ambassador to the English court. When Castillon reported Cromwell's behaviour to Henry, however, the king

reprimanded my lord Privy Seal, saying he was [...] not fit to intermeddle in the affairs of kings [...] He then sent for Norfolk, whom the lord Privy Seal prevented, as much as possible, from coming to Court. The said Lord is so snubbed and so suspect for the affairs of France, that for the present his advice is not much asked.<sup>301</sup>

Not only does Castillon's report evidence another failed attempt by Cromwell to gatekeep Norfolk, it makes clear that this failure was explicitly linked to Cromwell overstepping in foreign policy. The power struggle between Cromwell and Norfolk can therefore be linked to the duke's French connections, and leading to what MacCulloch terms "Cromwell's lowest point in the King's esteem so far in seven years of service."<sup>302</sup>

In his role as ambassador, Norfolk was able to play on Cromwell's greatest weakness then, highlighting his own diplomatic skills whilst simultaneously pointing to the failings of his competitor. In early 1540, Norfolk not only looked to bypass Cromwell as gatekeeper in his triad with the minister and Henry, but to turn this relationship to his own advantage and promote conflict between the king and Cromwell.<sup>303</sup> Indeed, J. P. Coby considers Norfolk's role as French ambassador key in restoring the duke's favour at court in this period, arguing that the king was impressed with Norfolk's ability to problematise Franco-Imperial relations.<sup>304</sup> The duke was clearly popular with the French court, and this popularity placed him in good stead with his own king. The French king's letter to Norfolk on 11<sup>th</sup> June goes far to confirm the duke as Francis' man, thanking the duke for his present of four greyhounds and commends Wallop – Norfolk's man – as the new ambassador.

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<sup>301</sup> L&P, vol. XIII, pt. 1, no. 995.

<sup>302</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 445.

<sup>303</sup> See Burt's analysis of *tertius gaudens* in triads in Burt, *Structural Holes*, 42-43.

<sup>304</sup> Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 212.

Norfolk's change in favour is not merely reflected in but was explicitly a result of his position in the epistolary network in this period. Between January and July 1540, Norfolk was the only bridge between Henry and Francis I in the network; unlike many of the other European royals listed above as Henry's neighbours in the network, the English king had no direct link with his French or Imperial counterparts, nor did they utilise Cromwell as an intermediary.<sup>305</sup> Norfolk offered Henry a connection here that Cromwell could not and, most importantly, given his history with the French court, would never be able to. Given that with his failing marriage with Anne of Cleves, Henry was at this time leaning towards an alliance with France, Norfolk's position in the network offered his king far more than Cromwell's could, and it is likely that this was the leverage Norfolk needed to turn the king against his former favourite. This is not to say that Cromwell's downfall was merely a ploy to improve Anglo-French relations; though Guy and Elton argue that Norfolk returned from his embassy having promised Francis a restored friendship with the king should Cromwell be removed, there is no proof of this.<sup>306</sup> Norfolk's eagerness to improve relations with the French can be read however as an attempt to reduce Cromwell's importance in the network and emphasise the advantages he could bring in the minister's place. By creating an unclosed triad between Henry and Francis, Norfolk could himself benefit from the role of intermediary.

Understanding these changes to the network, and what the advisors could offer Henry, also therefore provides context to accusations in the Act of Attainder that Cromwell had been "vsurpyng vpon your kynglye estate power auctoritie and office *without* your graces commandement or assent." Cromwell's ascendancy and power – clear in the network from 1533 onwards – had not bothered Henry before; not least because, as demonstrated in this section, Cromwell's growing power primarily served to enhance Henry's own. By mid-1540, however, Cromwell's place – and more importantly, power – in the network structure was no longer of use to the king. As with many others at the Tudor court, including Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, and Anne Boleyn, Henry was quick to believe the worst of his closest advisors when they no longer served his purposes. Cromwell's downfall was less because his enemies at court had convinced Henry that he was a threat, as his attainder would suggest, but because they could finally provide the king with structural advantages in the network with Cromwell never had and never could.

The success of Norfolk's scheme was demonstrated almost immediately, and can be seen in letters from Richard Pates, ambassador to the Imperial court, written to the duke later in June demonstrating wider shifts in the network. Pates' first letter on the 16<sup>th</sup> acknowledging the news of Cromwell's arrest was addressed solely to Norfolk but was worded as if it was intended for the

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<sup>305</sup> Though Cardinal Reginald Pole also connected Henry VIII and Francis I in this period, this is only owing to one letter from Pole to Henry dated in the calendar between 1525 and 1540; both owing to this dating ambiguity and the open antagonism between king and cardinal, this edge is discounted when considering paths to Francis.

<sup>306</sup> Elton, *England*, 156; Guy, *Tudor England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 187.

entire Privy Council.<sup>307</sup> Like correspondence addressed to Suffolk during the Pilgrimage of Grace, Pates' letter recognised Norfolk as the head of the Council and as a new intermediary through which to communicate with the king. Significantly, Pates did not write to the king to acknowledge Cromwell's fate until the 27<sup>th</sup> June. In writing to Norfolk before he wrote to Henry – by a significant eleven days – to acknowledge the same news, Pates recognised Norfolk's position in the structure and his new role as Henry's intermediary. Pates, evidently Norfolk's ally, was perhaps quicker in the know about changes at court than Sands, who wrote directly to Henry without an intermediary after Cromwell's arrest, as shown above. As will be seen in Chapter VIII, tracing these types of dynamic changes in the network and recipient protocols at courts offers a means of assessing shifting power structures after, and as a response to, Cromwell's fall.

Considering relationships involving Cromwell and Henry in this period explicitly frames the network as a structure built on triads that Cromwell used to act as a gatekeeper, controlling both access to and information about the king. Given the power afforded by proximity to the king demonstrated in earlier chapters, Cromwell's ability to manage this access contributed heavily to his influence both in the network and at court. Not only could he deny access where he chose, but allowing it was a potential means to accrue favour, both from the king and from courtiers looking to the minister for his intermediary services. Access to the king in many ways became Cromwell's own form of patronage and understanding Cromwell as a gatekeeper within the network offers a fresh way of formalising contemporary perceptions of influence and to conceptualise power in the network, both in Cromwell's time and beyond. Yet where Cromwell was unable to effectively restrict this contact with the king, it reflects fundamental cracks in the minister's power. Though Cromwell's failures were arguably few and far between in his tenure as chief minister, the rare mistakes he did make were crippling to his influence with the king. Exploring the first six months of 1540 in the run up to Cromwell's arrest on 10<sup>th</sup> June not only creates another framework through which to conceive of and quantify Cromwell's power, it also demonstrates in closer detail shifting structures that pre-empted the minister's fall, once more marrying qualitative and quantitative approaches to give a fuller view of this period in history.

Having carefully constructed and explored structures of power through Cromwell's years as chief minister and demonstrated the ways this manifested in the epistolary network, the final section will now turn to apply these concepts to the years after Cromwell's fall. In doing so, it will use the last seven years of Henry's reign as one last lens through which to consider Cromwell's career and modes of power.

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<sup>307</sup> L&P, vol. XV, no. 794, fn. 19.

### SECTION III

#### POWER POST-CROMWELL, 1540-1547

After seven years as Henry's right hand, Cromwell's arrest on 10<sup>th</sup> June and eventual execution on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1540 spelt the end to one of the most impressive advisory eras of the Tudor reign. Shifts in centrality rankings from as early as 1539 and changes in Cromwell's ability to manage access to the king from the start of 1540 suggest a period of mounting fissures in the minister's power. Yet the final turn in Cromwell's fate was sudden, and as such epistolary networks only focused on his final day can contribute little more to historical narratives of the minister's fall than continued close reading of correspondence of this time. Instead, adopting a distant reading approach through network analysis offers a means to examine shifting structures not only before but after Cromwell's death to reflect more critically on the minister's change in fate, offering a new framework to consider these sudden switches in power.

Cromwell's fall caused a massive shift in politics at the court of Henry VIII, and indeed, in the epistolary network through which so many of these political manoeuvres have been witnessed. Many historians have attested to the ways Cromwell's death marked a distinct change in pace in the governance of the country, and the last seven years of Henry's reign have been considered "a period of frequent failures and few achievements," characterised by "vacillation, lack of direction, uncertainty in conception and action."<sup>308</sup> By comparing the network before and after Cromwell's fall, this section assesses traditional historiographical accounts of the last years of Henry's reign, considering the changes that occurred as a power vacuum appeared, and evaluating the minister's impact on the network both before and after his death.

These final two chapters expand historical explorations of Cromwell's impact on the political structures of the Tudor court by examining not only his life but his legacy as well. Re-using metrics and experiments established in Sections I and II, these chapters not only establish and examine the frameworks of power and influence between 1540 and 1547, but also consider how they compare with those of Cromwell's era. Having built a 'network profile' for Cromwell in the first two sections, this final section assesses the extent to which any new advisor (or node) could fill Cromwell's shoes at court, and what this in turn can say about the minister's lasting impact, as well as his final months in power. Whilst the power structures and epistolary network of the last seven years of Henry's reign assert the king's independent rule for one final time, this was not a reaction to or a celebration of the minister's fall from power, but the deliberate construction and lasting legacy of the king's most faithful servant.

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<sup>308</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 67.



## VII. The Post-Cromwell Network

In moving now to the ‘Post-Cromwell’ network after the minister’s death, this chapter not only establishes the key players at Henry’s court after July 1540, but also the political and epistolary structures through which they operated, and how this compared to governance and administration under Cromwell.<sup>309</sup> The Henrician court at this time was forced to adjust to Cromwell’s sudden – and, by many, unpredicted – departure, and undoubtedly found itself facing a power vacuum even more severe than that at the fall of Wolsey in 1529. Whilst Henry remained in power as king and used these final seven years to re-assert his autonomy, the emergent hierarchy of the Tudor court – relying on power earned by work and personality – now held a gaping vacancy at the top, and both political structures and the epistolary network had to shift to account for this. Having held the position of chief minister unrivalled for seven years, Cromwell’s absence made a considerable impact.

This chapter starts by assessing the overall epistolary network of 1540-1547, comparing these new structures to those in the previous period explored in earlier chapters and demonstrating that entire systems of communication (not merely the individuals involved with them) shifted in reaction to Cromwell’s death and the power vacuum it caused. As such, this chapter returns once more to centrality measurements as proxies for power to consider who attempted to fill this void and how. In offering an overview of the core actors and events of importance in the final years of Henry’s reign, this chapter focuses on Henry himself, the Privy Council and its members, and the Anglo-European wars of the 1540s. In doing so, it demonstrates that 1540-1547 represented Henry’s final attempt to confirm his place in history as a dominant and independent leader and, as a result, the changes in this network in comparison to the seven years before reflect a ‘pro-Henry’ power structure, rather than anything predominantly ‘anti-Cromwell’.

### *1530s and 1540s: A Network Comparison*

Visualising the different topologies of the networks pre- and post-Cromwell offers a snapshot overview of changes between these eras and demonstrates a visually striking difference. By again using force-directed layouts on both datasets, the shift in relationships between the two networks can be seen [Fig. 28]. As highlighted in earlier chapters, Cromwell is the most distinctive part of the 1534-1540 network [Fig. 28.a], acting as a hub in the top left corner of the graph and drawing on his large quantity of one-degree neighbours. In contrast there are no similarly distinct

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<sup>309</sup> Though this chapter refers to the networks as 1534-1540 and 1540-1547, data for 1540 are split between the two networks: January to the start of July is covered by the 1534-1540 network, as in Chapter VI, covering Cromwell’s final months; 1540-1547 includes July 1540 through to end of January 1547, covering the period between Cromwell and Henry’s deaths.

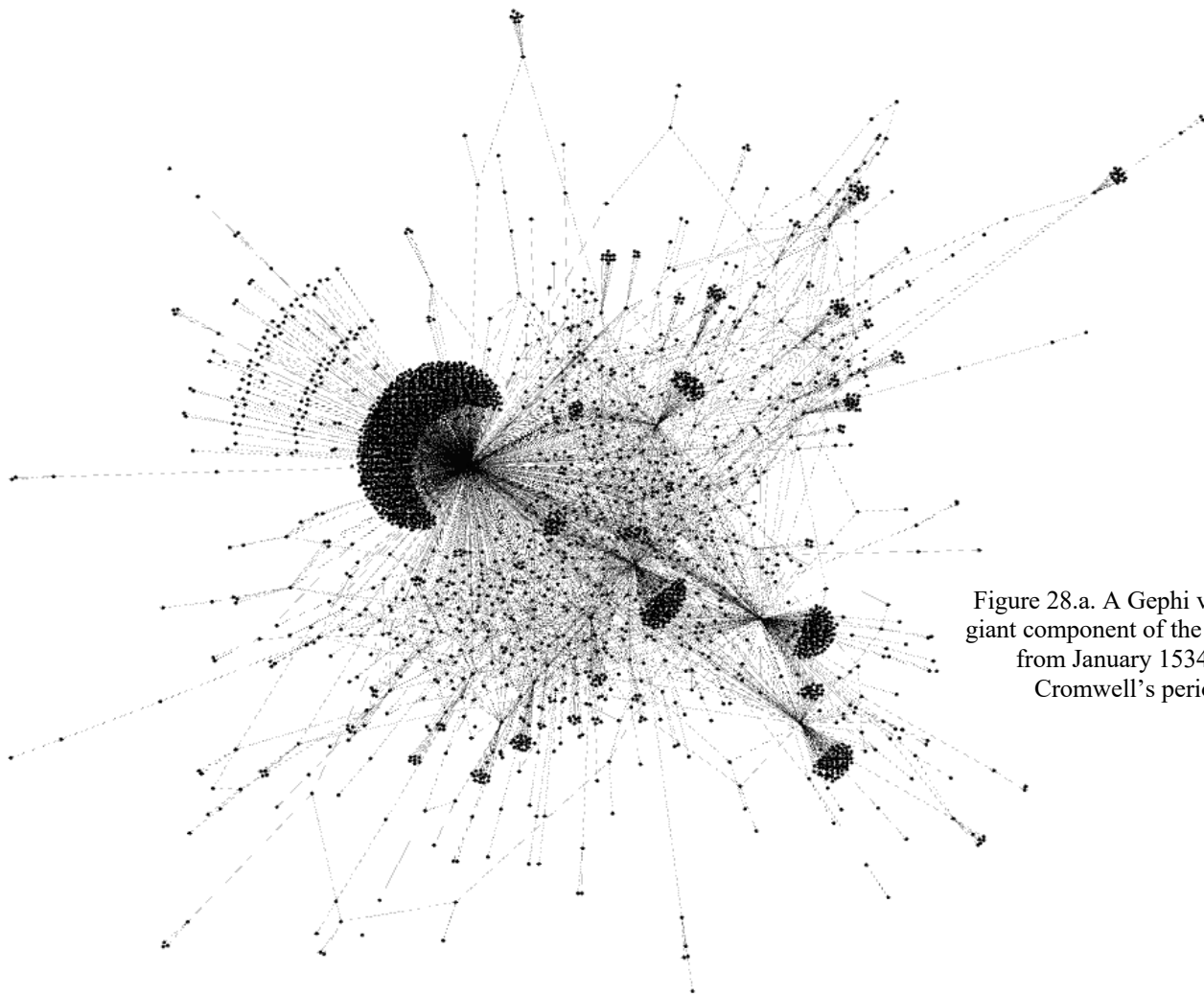


Figure 28.a. A Gephi visualisation of the giant component of the epistolary network from January 1534 to July 1540, Cromwell's period in power.



Figure 28.b. A Gephi visualisation of the giant component of the epistolary network from August 1540 to February 1547, the period between Cromwell's and Henry VIII's death.

<b>Measurement</b>	<b>1534-1540</b>	<b>1540-1547</b>
<b>No. of Nodes</b>	3,087	1,426
<b>No. of Edges</b>	4,549	2,715
	<b>Giant Component</b>	<b>Giant Component</b>
<b>Avg. Degree</b>	1.556	2.173
<b>Avg. Weighted Degree</b>	4.5	8.918
<b>Clustering Coefficient</b>	0.123	0.131

Figure 29. A table depicting overall network graph measurements in 1534-1540 and 1540-1547 for comparison.

hubs in 1540-1547 [Fig. 28.b], but rather several smaller hubs – Henry, the Privy Council, William Paget, George Brooke, Edward Seymour – who are also closely connected to one another at the centre of this new network. Rather than one actor filling the void left behind by Cromwell in the network graph, a grouping of less active nodes appears to have split the work between them. This reflects traditional historiographical arguments that the period after Cromwell’s fall saw no new dominant ‘chief’ minister, and workload and power was instead more evenly distributed across key players at court.<sup>310</sup>

Network metrics again offer further insight into the changes between the two periods [Fig. 29]. The most immediate and obvious difference between the network in 1540-1547 to that of the previous seven years is the dramatic reduction in size, cut from 3,087 actors and 4,549 edges to 1,426 and 2,715 respectively, a reduction of almost 50%. What is important to note, however, is this is not a static change. This is to say that the difference between the two networks is not simply the removal of 1,661 nodes and 1,834 edges while all else remains the same. Rather, only 30% (419) of the actors in the new network are carried over from 1534-1540; 70% (1,007) of the new network are nodes completely new to the dataset from 1540 onwards. Though the initial difference in size is itself dramatic, this downplays the actual loss of correspondents: 2,668 nodes writing before July 1540 are no longer in the archives after this date. Whilst some variation in network size is to be expected across time, as demonstrated in Chapter II, this radical decrease is undoubtedly predominantly caused by Cromwell’s removal from the network, something that will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Whilst this new network is smaller, and missing the distinctive Cromwellian hub, writers in this dataset are much more strongly connected to one another, as demonstrated by degree metrics [Fig. 29]. Considering just the giant component in 1534-1540, the average degree is 1.556 and the average weighted degree is 4.5. In contrast, in the giant component in 1540-1547, the average degree is 2.173 and the average weighted degree 8.918. The low average of the earlier network is partially skewed by the vast number of Cromwell’s one-degree, one-letter neighbours, most of whom are lost from the later network. But there is also a higher average in both weighted and unweighted degree scores in the later network because administrative work was being shared more

<sup>310</sup> J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 426.

evenly across a larger group of people, rather than being centred on one dominant node: each person regularly wrote to more people and more often than before. Clearly more co-operation and shared management was required between nodes in the wake of Cromwell's fall.

Finally, though it is only by a small amount, the clustering coefficient of the second network is larger than the first, rising from 0.123 to 0.131. This means that a person's neighbours were more likely to be writing to one another after July 1540 than before. Again, though the figure for the first network is affected by Cromwell's one-degree neighbours, it still illustrates that more triads were being closed in the second network, and there were more collaborative clusters. This higher measure perhaps also suggests there was no-one to act as effectively as a gatekeeper as Cromwell had. Most importantly, these measures demonstrate how the structure of the network itself changed in response to the power vacuum left by Cromwell. Rather than one single node moving to act as the overall hub, the structure contracted in on itself, the vacuum effectively sucking everyone in to form a more compact and interconnected network.

Whilst this distant reading picture demonstrates that power was more evenly distributed amongst several smaller hubs, ranking nodes again using the centrality measurements outlined in Chapter II offers a means to examine these actors of influence more closely. The top ten scoring nodes for degree, eigenvector, and betweenness are shown in the table in Figure 30. Interestingly, when compared to the top ten actors in 1534-1540 network, the new rankings suggest a significant change in the advisors and courtiers closest to Henry in his final years. Though some overlap with previous rankings remain (highlighted in bold in the table), the new network also witnesses the rise of new advisors ranking high in all three centralities, primarily William Paget, Edward Seymour, and George Brooke. These actors not only replace previously top ranked nodes that are no longer in the network – like Cromwell and Lisle – but also supplant those advisors at court who survived the chief minister's fall and may have thought to have overseen the post-Cromwell network. Whilst actors such as Norfolk and Wriothesley still retain a place in the top 10 for some measurements, they rank much lower than in 1534-1540, ceding their place to these newly high-ranking individuals. They still fare better than other once-influential actors such as Cranmer, however, who no longer appears in the top-ten ranking list at all. It is important to note, however, that whilst 60-70% of these centrality ranking lists are newly *important* nodes, they are not new to the archives; rather, all of them appear in the 1534-1540 network as well. In fact, despite the dominance of the 1,007 entirely new nodes in the makeup of the 1540-1547 network, these new actors do not occupy positions of significant structural influence. The highest new node is Edward VI in both betweenness (14<sup>th</sup>) and degree (24<sup>th</sup>), and the highest in eigenvector is the Council in London – a temporary offshoot of the Privy Council – at 15<sup>th</sup>. Though there are evident changes in influential

	Degree		Betweenness		Eigenvector
1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Henry VIII</b> ^ 1		<b>Henry VIII</b> ^ 1		<b>Henry VIII</b> ^ 2
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Privy Council		Privy Council		<b>Privy Council</b> ^ 8
3 <sup>rd</sup>	William Paget		William Paget		William Paget
4 <sup>th</sup>	Edward Seymour		Edward Seymour		Edward Seymour
5 <sup>th</sup>	George Brooke		Richard Southwell		George Brooke
6 <sup>th</sup>	Francis Talbot		<b>Charles V</b> ^ 3		<b>Thomas Wriothesley</b> v 2
7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Charles V</b> ^ 2		Anthony Bouchier		Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk
8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thomas Wriothesley</b> v 3		George Brooke		William Petre
9 <sup>th</sup>	Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk		John Gates		<b>Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk</b> v 3
10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk</b> v 4		<b>James V</b> v 5		Francis Talbot

Figure 30. A table depicting top ten ranking nodes for the three main centrality measurements in the 1540-1547 network. Nodes also ranking in the top ten in the same measurement in the 1534-1540 network are highlighted in bold, with arrows and numbers to indicate changes within these rankings from the last network.

figures at court and in the network, this stems from progression through the ranks and lower positions to become powerful, rather than any sudden appearance of new advisors.

As with 1534-1540, these network rankings offer a means to assess both actors and events of importance, and to consider traditional historiographical narratives of this period. Though many of the structural changes of the network can be attributed to Cromwell's absence from the network, these shifts along with the new network rankings closely reflect specific events of the 1540s as well. To reflect this, the ranking lists can (with a few exceptions) be split into three separate categories or groups of power: Henry VIII; the Privy Council and its members; and those involved with the French and Scottish wars of 1543-1546. Exploring these different categories and their roles in the network offers a means to consider shifting power structures and their function in the final years of Henry's reign. What is important to note, however, is that these events cannot be entirely separated from Cromwell's fall. Though they are not directly linked to the former chief minister's administration, the events of these seven years can be explicitly viewed as a result of Henry's reaction to Cromwell's absence. Specifically, then, these new structures allow for a study of Henry as a king without a chief minister and his explicit assertion of his own power in these years, where the Privy Council represents his desire for dispersed authority amongst his advisors, and the wars with France and Scotland reflect a final grasp for power on the European stage. As such, these final network rankings and the events they reflect should be considered not merely as occurring after Cromwell, but rather a longer consequence of his removal, starting with the role of the king himself as the highest-ranking node of the 1540-1547 network.

### *Henry VIII*

Though Henry at first appeared to be glad to be rid of his former chief minister, the death of Cromwell presented serious problems for the aging king. Recognising a lack of options amongst his remaining advisors, Henry "made a virtue out of necessity" and instead "was determined to rule

alone for the first time in his reign.”<sup>311</sup> Though Borman implies that Henry’s turn to independent leadership was prompted by the absence of any possible chief minister at court, Wooding instead suggests that these final years show “a still impressive and competent king.”<sup>312</sup> Whether Henry had chosen to rule alone or had simply been left without other options, the final years of Henry’s reign clearly demonstrate a period in which the king was, as Scarisbrick has argued, “the dominant policy-maker.”<sup>313</sup>

This shift to overtly kingly power is reflected in the network: from Cromwell’s death to the end of his reign, Henry was the most significant node, ranking top in all three centralities discussed. Though he had maintained a second or third place ranking in these centralities in 1534-1540, 1540 onwards presents the first time in this dataset that Henry himself held the highest scores for more than three consecutive years. As suggested in earlier chapters, Henry’s power was based on his kingship and entrenched within enacted hierarchical structures; rather than being explicitly managed or defined by the epistolary network, the king’s influence was merely reinforced by it. This is the first time, then, that the network matches enacted power hierarchies and reflects Henry’s social dominance. More importantly, where the network denotes administrative work and active governance, it also suggests that Henry’s influence in his last seven years came not just from the socially constructed power of the monarchy, but from the active work he was doing, implying a stronger hand in state decisions from the king himself.

Examining Henry’s measurements in the network in detail can provide further insight into governance in the last seven years of his reign [Fig 31]. Whilst the increase in his betweenness and eigenvector raw scores is potentially a result of graph size changes as discussed in Chapter II, the king’s degree actually decreases, from 418 neighbours to 341. Though the networks are different sizes, the time period covered by each dataset is the same: as such, this offers a fair comparison of the number of people Henry was in contact with across these two eras. This would suggest that Henry was not actually more influential in the network than he was while Cromwell was alive, but in the absence of his chief minister, Henry was simply the next most powerful remaining node. The king’s higher betweenness and eigenvector scores therefore reflect the absence of another influential node, rather than any significant increase in Henry’s role in the network, in many ways echoing Borman’s argument that Henry was obligated to take full control without another suitable option for chief minister after Cromwell’s death. However, Henry’s weighted degree is much higher in the second network: more than twice as many letters appeared in his correspondence after 1540 than in the six years beforehand. Whilst he had fewer connections in these later years, on

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<sup>311</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 366.

<sup>312</sup> Lucy Wooding, *Henry VIII*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 228.

<sup>313</sup> Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 426.

<b>Measurement</b>	<b>1534-1540</b>	<b>1540-1547</b>
Betweenness	0.07	0.15
Eigenvector	0.27	1
Degree	418	341
Weighted Degree	1152	2444
Weighted In-Degree	738	1946
Weighted Out-Degree	414	498
Avg. letters per edge	2.76	7.17

Figure 31. Raw score comparisons for Henry VIII across the two different networks.

average these sets of correspondences contained more than twice as many letters than in 1534-1540, mirroring the higher average in the wider network.

Examining this further, Henry's weighted in-degree in this period jumps from 738 to 1,946 letters, suggesting that court members and petitioners felt more comfortable writing to the king directly on a more regular basis, rather than via an intermediary, such as Cromwell or Wolsey, something that will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. Identifying who wrote the most letters to the king, and contributed to this inflated inbox, offers some insight into important events and, significantly, where Henry was most involved with the goings-on of his court and government, like experiments in Chapter III. The top four figures writing to Henry after 1540 were Ralph Sadler (128 letters), Nicholas Wotton (121 letters), Edward Seymour (112 letters), and Edmund Harvel (107 letters). Each of these reveals something different about events and their importance in the 1540s.

For most of this period, Ralph Sadler and Nicholas Wotton were foreign ambassadors, stationed in Scotland and Spain respectively. As established, it was not unusual for ambassadors to write in high quantities or directly to the king, but the increased correspondence from 1543 onwards from Sadler and Wotton to the king highlights not only the importance of information arriving from these countries, but Henry's direct involvement with these foreign affairs as well. Sadler was sent to Scotland after the death of James V to arrange a marriage contract between Henry's heir, Edward VI and the new infant Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, and remained after the start of the war between the two countries to continue reporting and help lead battles across the border.<sup>314</sup> Wotton in turn was stationed at the imperial court and led negotiations with Charles V for an alliance and a joint invasion of France, remaining and reporting from Spain throughout the French war.<sup>315</sup> These ambassadors represent the two most significant sets of diplomatic talks of the 1540s and required an even greater amount of correspondence. Directed straight to the king, these letters reflect

<sup>314</sup> Gervase Phillips, 'Sadler, Sir Ralph', *ODNB*, last updated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

<sup>315</sup> Michael Zell, 'Nicholas Wotton,' *ODNB*, last updated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

Henry's sincere interest and involvement in the conflicts and alliances of his final seven years. Though primarily operating from court with the king, Seymour, like Sadler, wrote most to his monarch while he was stationed in Scotland as a military leader, and his reports to Henry again display the king's interest in military affairs, and Henry's desire to hear about them whilst himself stationed on the front of another war in France. Indeed, that two of the four most frequent correspondents with the king were writing from Scotland, whilst none were from France, evidences not only Henry's location, but also his willingness to remain military commander of his whole army, despite fighting two wars simultaneously.

The final most frequent writer, Edmund Harvel, was a longstanding Venetian diplomat.<sup>316</sup> Importantly, Harvel was originally one of Cromwell's agents abroad, gathering diplomatic information to aid the minister at court. More than this, Harvel was in fact one of the 151 writers Cromwell was able to gatekeep in his final six months of power. It is significant then, that after Cromwell's death, Harvel not only wrote to Henry directly, but became one of the king's most regular incoming correspondents. This is perhaps the most effective demonstration of Henry taking power for himself in the network and at court: rather than filtering these reports through another intermediary, Henry took full control and received information directly himself.

In contrast to the rise in his incoming correspondence, Henry's weighted out-degree only increases a little, from 414 letters to 498. Whilst the significant difference between the increase in incoming and outgoing correspondence may indicate some archival loss in Henry's outgoing letters, it is more likely that there was a greater need for more incoming information to the king than outgoing instructions in this period. Most importantly, this lack of real change in the number of outgoing letters in this period offers a framework to engage with discussions around the use of the dry stamp to authorise the king's papers in his final years. The dry stamp was established in 1545 in response to Henry's growing infirmity and diminishing attention span for signing letters, warrants, and other documents. The dry stamp created an imprint on a document that could be filled in with ink, and monthly reports summarising the use of the dry stamp were presented to the king for actual signed approval.<sup>317</sup> For the most part, the reports describing the letters look like the summaries in the Calendar of State Papers available today. Despite Henry's assertions of personal control in these final years, historians have suggested that the introduction of the dry stamp meant a decreased capacity for Henry to control and oversee his own outgoing correspondence, and as such, opened up much more opportunity for courtiers to exploit the king's favour via letters and warrants which Henry never saw.<sup>318</sup> Instead, the king's relatively consistent outgoing

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<sup>316</sup> Jonathon Woolfson, 'Edmund Harvel,' *ODNB*, last updated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2004, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

<sup>317</sup> TNA SP 4; Ives, *Henry VIII*, 18.

<sup>318</sup> Guy, *Tudor England*, 197; Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 284; Borman, *Henry VIII*, 409-410.



correspondence suggests that this was not the case. In fact, when looking at the data year on year in this later network, 1545 and 1546 (the years the stamp was most widely used) are Henry's lowest weighted out-degree across the seven-year period. This is not to say that Henry had full control of the outgoing letters during this period, any more than he had in earlier years, but rather that it was not as abused to the extent some have suggested and was instead similar to the use of scribes and secretaries in earlier years in terms of output.

This is furthered when looking at the role in the network of Anthony Denny and his brother-in-law John Gates, courtiers charged with the possession of the dry stamp. Though the dry stamp was employed at the request of other ministers, such as William Paget, Edward Seymour, and Anthony Browne, Denny and Gates were the only ones in possession of the dry stamp and authorised to use it.<sup>319</sup> It may be expected therefore that, with effective control over dispersal of Henry's patronage and correspondence, they would hold influential roles in the network: indeed, Borman argues that Denny was one of Henry's closest advisors in the king's final years, and others at court could "use Denny's proximity to the king to influence policy."<sup>320</sup> Yet whilst Gates holds ninth highest betweenness, neither he nor Denny rank high in degree or eigenvector centrality, implying that they were not particularly busy or close to other nodes of power in the network, and therefore were unlikely to be considered powerful at court. Together with the minimal increase in the king's outgoing correspondence, the minimal influence of Denny and Gates in the network implies that the dry stamp did not take away as much authority or control from Henry as has been previously asserted. Though this thesis does not evaluate the impact of the use of the dry stamp on other documents (such as the king's will), these measures counter suggestions that Henry's advisors took advantage of the dry stamp for less regulated communication in the king's name.

Henry's role in the network, and the ways he interacted with other nodes, demonstrates a stronger assertion of his own individual control in the final seven years of his reign than, though in many ways this also directly reflected the absence of any dominant advisor in this period. Whilst Henry's position as king had consistently dictated which nodes held influence in the network in 1534-1540, this was heightened in later years as he held highest ranking measurements in the network to match his crown. Turning now to the other high-ranked nodes in the network, this chapter establishes the ways Henry's influence as the most dominant actor in the network impacted the wider structure.

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<sup>319</sup> TNA SP 4.

<sup>320</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 409-411.

### *The Privy Council*

The second most dominant node in the network, and in all three centrality measurements, is the Privy Council. Ranking behind Henry, the Privy Council was the most influential ‘advisory’ node in 1540-1547. Though the Privy Council has been present in this dataset since 1524, it held no significant role in the network until after 1540, only ranking as high as 12<sup>th</sup> in degree in 1536 when Cromwell used it as a front to manage the Pilgrimage of Grace, as seen in Chapter III. The swift and significant rise of the Privy Council to the second most dominant place in the network after 1540 in place of a single person supports the argument that Henry would not allow the pre-eminence of one minister again in his reign, relying instead on an institutionalised board of advisors. The establishment and formalisation of the Council in this context remains a complex element of Tudor administrative history and will be explored in more depth in the next chapter. For now, this chapter focuses explicitly on the Council’s role in the network, and the places of its individual members and their rankings in centrality measures.

Significantly, as with other regional Councils and governing groups (such as the High Commissioners in Ireland), the Privy Council is given a specific identity in the network *as an institution*, rather than broken down into its individual members. This designation is partly organic and contemporary, and partly a result of archival practices and decisions. Some letters, particularly those post-1540, refer to themselves as from ‘we the counsel’ and have no signatures in the sign-off. On the other hand, other letters – particularly during the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536-37 and the French war in the 1540s – are more explicitly multi-authored, with present Council members signing individually. Despite these different formats, however, all are listed in the State Papers archives (and therefore these epistolary networks) as the Privy Council. This in itself raises questions around assumed or assigned identities in data practice: as demonstrated in earlier chapters, the ways data are inputted or presented inevitably influence the outcome of experiments. As with the attribution of authorship in Chapter IV, inputting these letters as a single institution or a group of individuals may impact interpretations of the network. That is to say, by listing all the letters as ‘Privy Council’, the ranking of the Privy Council as a single node increases, rather than that of its individual members. In doing so, it directly supports arguments that Henry was balancing power and influence amongst his advisors, rather than having a chief minister. Yet the process of signing the letters as a whole – and thus their attribution in the epistolary network – is in itself a reflection of this denial of individual power and identity at court, and therefore represents contemporary conceptualisations of power and influence, which the network attempts to recreate. As explored in Chapter I with Cromwell’s letters, part of the authority of the physical letter came from the close association between the contents of the letter and the signature, the physical “re-

making of the writer.”<sup>321</sup> Those at court likely knew who the Privy Councillors were at the time, but without the signatures of each member present, there was no means of stamping individual identity, and therefore influence and authority, on each letter. Whilst this process is restrictive because powerful actors within the Privy Council cannot be identified without individually assigned letters, at the same time this was the entire purpose of the Privy Council: to introduce collaborative and cooperative governance in place of individual authority and power imbalances. If modern researchers are unable to discern those present from the letters alone, though there is much more historical distance, perhaps contemporary recipients faced this same obscurity. Though historians may wish to explore the individuals behind each letter and their respective power, the dominance of the Privy Council in the network and the communal identity therein ultimately reflects *perceived* power: one board with many contributing members, where what was said and what was achieved was more important than those behind it and their individual power. With this in mind, there are still means to consider both individual and group identity in the network and consider how both play into power and influence at court.

This chapter examines this by surveying the surviving Privy Council Registers. Though the 1731 Cotton Library fire destroyed some parts of the archive from this era, including significant portions of the Privy Council registers, records survive which cover the periods from 10<sup>th</sup> August 1540 (the inauguration of the Council’s register) to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1543 and 10<sup>th</sup> May 1545 to 28<sup>th</sup> January 1547 (Henry’s death).<sup>322</sup> In these, the clerk of the Privy Council took minutes of the meeting, including a list of those in attendance, where the meeting took place, and any matters or letters (both incoming and outgoing) discussed in each session.<sup>323</sup> These registers offer insight not only into what the Privy Council did, but *how* it functioned as well. Though, aside from death or retirement, official membership appears fairly stable in these registers, attendance fluctuated across the many meetings. The different meeting places indicate that the Council was also at least partially itinerant: half would remain in London, whilst the main body with the registers moved with the king on his progresses throughout the year. Elton has suggested this was simply an administrative choice for this period, indicating that registers instead stayed with the portion of the Council at Whitehall under James I.<sup>324</sup> This also reflects on the relationship between king and Council however: under Henry, it still primarily operated in an advisory function, and thus the main body – with the important registers, records, and bulk of administrative duties – remained at the king’s

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<sup>321</sup> Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 236.

<sup>322</sup> TNA PC 2/1; BL Add. MS 5476.

<sup>323</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>324</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 324.

## Privy Council Attendance

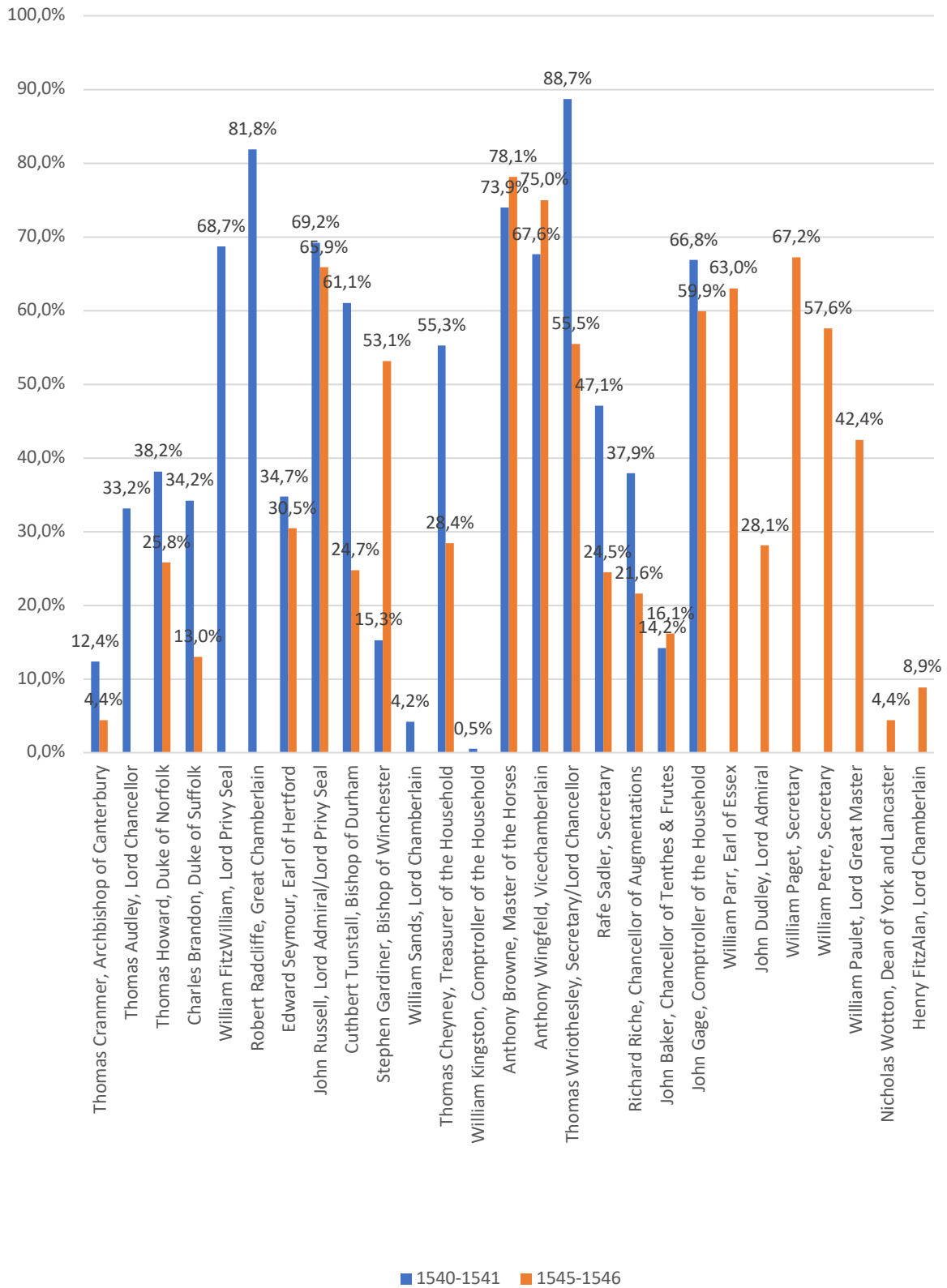


Figure 32. A bar chart showing the attendance of Privy Council members in meetings from August 1540 to December 1541 and May 1545 to December 1546.

side.<sup>325</sup> In later reigns, the Council would become a more independent governing institution. The registers contain a wealth of thus far underutilised insight into the integral workings of the Privy Council in the 1540s and although there is not the space to do fully do them justice in this thesis, this chapter considers ways the registers can supplement understandings of power in the epistolary network.

The registers detail the make-up of the Council and can be used to calculate who was most frequently in attendance at meetings and therefore most likely held *consistent* influence in the Council. Focusing on two separate snapshots from the available registers, I transcribed a sample of the attendance lists from August 1540 to December 1541 and May 1545 to December 1546, using them to calculate frequency of attendance for different members of the Council in different periods. The graph in Figure 32 shows the percentage of Privy Council meetings attended in the two different time periods by each member of the Council listed in the registers. This produces an immediate view of who attended the most meetings, but also how power and attendance shifted between the early and later parts of the 1540s. Frequency of council attendance could then be compared to activity and influence in the epistolary network.

In Figure 33 the degree for each member for the full period between 1540-1547 is plotted against their attendance, demonstrating how many contacts each individual member of the Council held, and whether or not this could be linked to their role in the Council. It is worth briefly noting that the scores for the network centrality measurements used so far generally correlate: this is to say that the higher one of the measurements is, the higher other centralities are likely to be. This is demonstrated by the similarity in the high-ranking lists for all three centralities measurements. Those outside of this general correlation tend to have specific roles in the network, such as ambassadors or spies and agents.<sup>326</sup> The overall correlation between these proxy-power measurements implies that having power in one form normally draws influence in others, in a self-fulfilling and socially self-reinforcing manner. In a similar vein, it may be expected that those in most attendance on the Council – and therefore holding a great influence over day-to-day business and measurements – would hold high rankings in the network. Even if the inverse were true – that those in most attendance have the smallest individual role in the network – it would offer evidence that their own power was subsumed by the Privy Council, and that they had little need for individual influence in the network as theirs was enacted by this group identity.

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<sup>325</sup> Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 426; David Potter, *Henry VIII and Francis I: The Final Conflict, 1540-47*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 12.

<sup>326</sup> Ahnert and Ahnert, 'Metadata, Surveillance and the Tudor State,' *History Workshop Journal*, 87 (Spring 2019): 27-51.

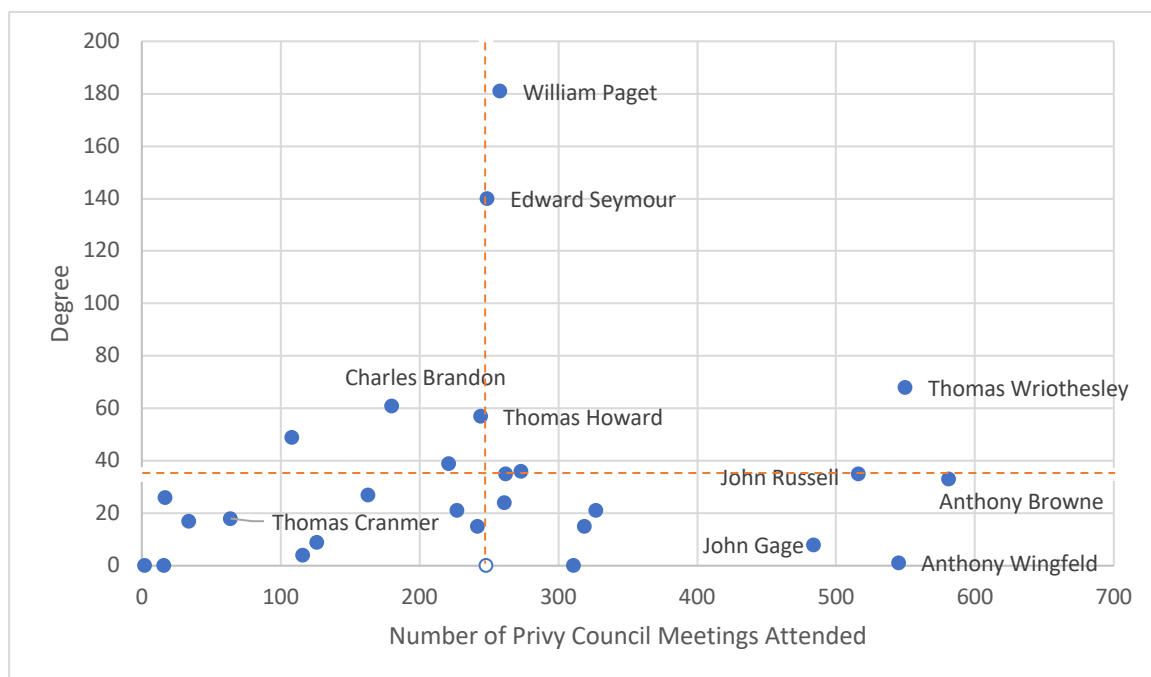


Figure 33. Total number of meetings attended by individual Privy Councillors from August 1540 to December 1541 and May 1545 to December 1546 plotted against degree centrality score in the network; nodes labelled where discussed in text. The average degree score and average attendance have been marked.

Yet Figure 33 indicates that an actor's work in the Council did not directly increase or decrease their personal influence in the network. Rather, degree scores vary between 0 and 181 whether a member attended none of the meetings or nearly all of them. In fact, only five of the twenty-seven standing members of the Privy Council from 1540-1547 attended more than two-thirds of all meetings. In many ways, this once again reflects the 'shared identity' mentality of the Privy Council: though a few members of the Council were clearly in attendance much more regularly than others, this was apparently not relevant to the wider epistolary network.

There remain a number of interesting observations to make about Councillors' attendance and roles in the network, then. As outlined, only five Councillors attended more than 400 meetings, of which three – Thomas Wriothesley, Anthony Browne, and John Russell – have an average or above average degree score within the Privy Council, with Wriothesley's the third highest degree of all Councillors in the network. In contrast, the remaining two nodes, John Gage and Anthony Wingfeld, have a distinctly lower number of correspondents, only eight and one respectively; despite having some of the highest attendances of the Council, Gage and Wingfeld have an almost non-existent presence in the network. Their influence over governance was offered entirely by their membership and participation in the Council but was not recognised beyond this.

There are also nodes with much higher degrees but lower attendance, such as William Paget and Edward Seymour, with degrees of 181 and 140 respectively. Paget's lower attendance is in part because he only became an official member of the Council after his appointment to secretary in 1543, though was employed as a scribe in earlier years. For the registers transcribed for these

experiments during his time in the Council, he had an attendance rate of 67%, the impact of which will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. The same cannot be said for Seymour however: despite acting as a Privy Councillor since August 1540, he was only present at just over 30% of all meetings. Seymour's high degree but low attendance suggests that, despite not contributing in large part to Council matters, he was still influential independently in the network, and potentially perceived as influential in the Council. Some nodes that hold a higher degree ranking presence in the network, such as Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, do so because of their involvement in Henry's French and Scottish wars rather than business related specifically to the Privy Council. As explored further below, this was war rather than peacetime, and there are far more anomalies in comparison to other earlier networks as a result. Whilst it is significant that some of Henry's highest-ranking military officials were also Privy Councillors, their rankings in the network may have been closer to other Privy Councillors had the wars not occurred.

Of final note is those nodes that hold both a low degree and a low attendance: those that hold no influence in the network by themselves or by virtue of their position in the Council. Some of these may be explained by early deaths of Council members. William Lord Sands attended only sixteen Council meetings and holds a degree of zero and William Kingston attended two meetings and also had zero correspondence; however, both had died before the end of 1540. On the other hand, despite surviving Henry's reign, Cranmer held minimal influence in these final years, holding a degree of only 18 and attending only 64 meetings.

The attendance lists themselves also offer a qualitative means of ranking power, rather than just a source for quantitative abstraction. An act in 1539 designed to determine an order of importance in Parliament for the household offices extended into Council meetings as well, offering a formal mode of enforcing newly organised hierarchies at court.<sup>327</sup> In each register entry, the present Councillors were listed in order of their seniority according to this recent act and as such also offer a means to compare expected or assigned authority with actual influence in the network, in similar ways to the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster. For the most part, however, the order found in the registers does not correlate with either attendance in the Council or degree in the network, exemplified by Cranmer himself, who, as Archbishop of Canterbury, held the highest-ranking title in the Privy Council. Perhaps the most interesting example of this is Wriothesley, whose attendance in the Council and degree both *decrease* when promoted from Principal Secretary to Lord Chancellor in 1544. The nature of the Principal Secretary perhaps explains the change in degree; not only was it heavily entrenched in epistolary communication, but since Cromwell's tenure it had also become a significantly larger role managing more work. The Lord Chancellor

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<sup>327</sup> Starkey, 'Introduction: Rivals in Power,' in *Rivals in Power*, 16.

was still looked to as the second most senior member of the Council, however, and therefore would perhaps be expected to have a much higher attendance rate than Wriothesley's 55.5% in 1545-1546.

Comparing the enacted hierarchy presented in the registers' order with the attendance of members and their influence in the network is a means to explore the ways perception and expectations of power were evolving under Henry, and the ways these traditional social hierarchies were being challenged by new ministers and expectations of government offices. This conflict between competing hierarchies and the power structures they represented was most explicitly played out in the foreign wars with France and Scotland which dominated the final years of Henry's reign, and to which this chapter now turns.

### *The Scottish and French Wars*

The last group of high-ranking individuals reflect issues specific to the last years of Henry's rule, rather than the 'norms' of day-to-day politics consistently seen through the 1530s and 1540s. The extent to which these nodes dominate the centrality rankings for 1540-1547 reflects the significance of the French and Scottish wars in this period and the ways correspondence of this nature contributed heavily to the archives for this time.<sup>328</sup> The first of these skirmishes, known as the 'Rough Wooing', was an attack on the Scottish borders ordered by Henry in December 1543 to undermine the 'Auld Alliance' between Scotland and France, and as a response to the rejected marriage alliance he had proposed between his son Edward VI and Mary, Queen of Scots. Determined to forcefully persuade the Scottish Government to unite the two families, Henry began a war with his northern neighbours that would last until English defeat at the Battle of Ancrum Moor in February 1545 and the signing of the Treaty of Camp in June 1546. Having already engaged the Scottish and offered an alliance by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, Henry also launched an invasion of France with the Sieges of Boulogne from July to September 1544, which would not see a peace treaty and withdrawal of English troops from French land until June 1546, coinciding with the end of English military efforts in Scotland. 1543-1546 was therefore the largest and most prolonged period of war for England since Henry's early skirmishes with the French in 1512-1514 and 1522-1526, and events in both Scotland and France offered opportunities for promotion at court and in the network.

The 'warmongers' in this period are made up of two prominent groupings. The first is a resurgence of those remaining key members of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster discussed in Chapter

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<sup>328</sup> In contrast, the dominance of local authorities and officials in the 1534-1540 network reflects the influx of domestic affairs in this earlier period. Identifying nodes and their roles at the time can indicate broad topics of importance without necessitating a close reading of letters.



III, including once more the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and John Russell, who resigned from his post as Lord Admiral to become Lord Privy Seal in 1542. Whilst these men were also members of the Privy Council, their contribution to the network – at least between 1543 and 1546 – correlates to their role in the wars at this time, and Henry’s reliance on them as military officers. Despite their increasing age and infirmities (Norfolk was 70 by the start of the Rough Wooing, and John Russell was the youngest of the three at around 58), Henry looked to them and their demonstrable experience at his side to lead his final war efforts. The second group of warmongers were new men, and new war powers, such as Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford; John Dudley, the new Lord Lisle and Russell’s successor to the Lord Admiralty; and Francis Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, son to George Talbot of the Pilgrimage of Grace cluster discussed before. Though these men were new in their importance in the network and in their service to Henry – and, aside from Seymour, were not Privy Councillors either – they were not members of newly important families. Rather, they were from old and prominent gentry families, and were most often the heirs to the close group of men promoted by Henry VII.<sup>329</sup> In many ways, they reflect the trend of new nodes in the centrality rankings who are not new to court or the network but merely new to positions of power and influence. Their prominent lineage also asserts the remaining elements of an enacted hierarchy in this period; despite their untried military service, their family connections and positions in the social structure promoted them to positions of influence within the military and, in this period, within the network. Together with the older veterans of the Pilgrimage of Grace and earlier European wars, these men would lead Henry’s troops in Scotland and France.

What impact did these wars have on the shape of the network from 1540-1547 then? As already established, the network of 1540-1547 represents a much closer knit and clustered community than that of 1534-1540. In many ways this is the result of the constant and collaborative communication during the war, which operated as a larger version of the information network in place during the Pilgrimage of Grace. In fact, the military response to the religious revolts in 1536 examined in Chapter III are the closest comparisons to the 1540-1547 network. There was a clear distinction between peacetime and wartime (or military) administrations, and this must be borne in mind when comparing the network from 1534-1540 to the seven years afterwards. Furthermore, as has been shown, the response to the war clearly dictated which nodes were influential in the network at the time: in fact, as can be seen from the centrality rankings [Fig. 30], though the Council itself was the most influential advisory node in the network, courtiers involved with the wars but *not* a member of the Council are more likely to rank higher than Privy Councillors not directly

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<sup>329</sup> Gunn argues that the families of Henry VII’s inner circle “stuck together as one generation succeeded the next”, operating in similar positions for the new king, predominantly in these military conflicts; Gunn, *Henry VII’s New Men and the Making of Tudor England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 300.

involved in leading the war efforts. The network post-1540, as explored, had no chief minister, and power and influence were undoubtedly more evenly distributed post-Cromwell. The conflicts with Scotland and France might not have changed the overall structure of the network, in the same way the Pilgrimage of Grace made only minor changes to the overall peacetime structures of the pre-1540 network, but the wars did influence who featured significantly on that said structure. Importantly however, the French and Scottish skirmishes hold sway over network rankings in this period not merely as a series of events, but because they were a result of distinct shifts in leading ideologies at court in the 1540s. Understanding the network and the rankings therein in such a way is significant for wider historiographical arguments about Henry's court and is worth examining in more detail.

### *The Return of Chivalry*

The prominence of figures involved in the war effort in this period, and therefore the importance of the wars themselves, offers insight not only into political structures in 1540-1547, but more specifically into Henry as an 'unsupervised' sovereign; that is to say, as a leader for the first time without the aid and guidance of either of his two chief ministers, Wolsey or Cromwell. The wars with Scotland and France have often been contextualised against Henry's ill-fated marriage to his fifth wife, Katherine Howard.<sup>330</sup> Married from July 1540 – on the same day as Cromwell's execution – until November 1541, Katherine Howard was tried for treason for adultery, and executed in February 1542. Despite quickly marrying again in July 1543, this time to his sixth and final wife Catherine Parr, the French and Scottish wars are commonly considered Henry's desperate attempt to reassert his masculinity on the global stage after yet another embarrassing failed marriage: "his shattering experience with Catherine Howard left his manhood in tatters, and it had to be salvaged with vengeful fury."<sup>331</sup> Rather than considering the wars just as part of this spurned-lover narrative however, they should be seen as part of Henry's post-Cromwell independence and his determination to pursue his own policies at court. By exploring this concept in more detail, network analysis can be used to explore political *ideas* as well as political structures and actors.

It is worth diverging briefly therefore to explore two prevailing philosophies at court, and their influence on Henry as a king and leader: the ongoing culture of chivalry, and the new ideas of humanism and the Renaissance. Where historiography has consistently looked to the middle years of Henry's reign as a battleground for an ongoing class war – the emergent versus enacted

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<sup>330</sup> Loades, *Henry VIII: Court, Church and Conflict*, (Kew: The National Archives, 2007), 201; John Matusiak, *Henry VIII: The Life and Rule of England's Nero*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), 258.

<sup>331</sup> Loades, *Henry VIII*, 201.

hierarchy played out amongst the king's advisors – the final part of Henry's reign witnessed more of a conflict of ideals within the king himself. In understanding these ideals, their impact on political structures and the ways Henry's preference for one over the other is reflected in network rankings, historical narrative can also move away from the noble versus 'common-man' dichotomy that has dominated discussions around Henry's rule and, in particular, Cromwell's fall from power, to frame the presence of nobility in the top centrality rankings in a more considered way. Whilst Loades and Borman have both emphasised the role of the nobility in orchestrating Cromwell's fall from power, echoing passages from Cromwell's attainder condemning him for having "had youre nobles of youre Realme in greate disdayne derysion and detestacion", the number of noblemen ranking highly in the 1540-1547 network [Fig. 30] should not merely be read as the renewed favour of this enacted hierarchy because the king had rejected the common-born status of his chief minister.<sup>332</sup> Rather the return of the nobility in the 1540s simply shows them doing "what they were supposed to do best: fight[ing] the king's wars."<sup>333</sup>

Humanist and chivalric ideals were intrinsically linked to different hierarchical systems and the different types of power they enabled, but changes in rankings reflect Henry's choice in political governance style, rather than one faction at court winning over another. Examining these systems establishes how Henry's personal ideologies influenced power structures in the network, building on the idea that influence was directly connected to the king's favour. Much like enacted and emergent hierarchies, Henry's decisions did not just impact power on an individual level, but across wider systems as well. Once again it is vital to ground network analysis in contemporary contexts: like the thought experiments in Section II, it is important to fully understand historical debates to evaluate network rankings and use them to weigh in on ongoing discourse on conceptions of power in this period. Exploring the relationship between chivalry and humanism is not merely about understanding the network, but once more using the network to understand contemporary structures, marrying the qualitative and quantitative together. Finally, using distant reading to explore political changes across Henry's reign once more frames Cromwell's influence, his fall from power, and how the network can reflect on this.

Exploring the ideals of chivalry and humanism in relation to Henry and the 1540s wars once more frames the rankings in this period as 'pro-Henry' rather than 'anti-Cromwell', an important distinction. Chivalry, romanticised by popular Arthurian myth, was in more practical terms a set of governing practices based around aristocratic and martial ideals and designed to fit enacted hierarchies in the Middle Ages.<sup>334</sup> Though chivalric ideals were at their most prevalent in

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<sup>332</sup> Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 214; Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 355; Act of Attainder.

<sup>333</sup> MacCulloch, 'War and Glory under a Young King: The Howards,' in *Rivals in Power*, 37.

<sup>334</sup> For more on chivalry in practical and lived experiences see the introductions to Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry: Studies in the Decline and Transformation of Chivalric Idealism*, (Durham, North

the medieval era (of which the start of Henry VII's rule is commonly considered the end), Arthur Ferguson has argued that chivalry had an 'Indian Summer' in the Tudor period, and whilst Joseph Levine suggests that it had "lost almost all real connection with practical life" by Henry VIII's reign, "there was still too much continuity with the Middle Ages – in society and politics and culture – for this emancipation to be complete."<sup>335</sup> Henry himself was certainly invested in the idea of chivalric romance and entertainment: much of his early reign was spent hosting or partaking in tournaments and staging re-enactments of historical or mythical battles, and he regularly modelled himself after medieval kings famed for their war skills.

Despite the king's personal interest in chivalric culture, the early 1500s also witnessed the progression of humanism in England, led by scholars and prominent advisors such as Thomas More, Thomas Elyot, and John Colet. Evolving first in Italy, humanism returned to classical culture in Greek and Roman literature for new ideals and modes of political thought, preferring skills formed in education, debate, and literature than those formed on the battlefield. Most importantly for English politics, humanism also sought a separation from aristocratic hierarchies, promoting ability over ancestry. Despite his chivalric leanings, Henry also engaged with this humanist learning, regularly reading the works of and corresponding with Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus, and even attempting his own humanistic dialogues.<sup>336</sup> Henry's promotion of 'upstart' new men at court, like Cromwell, Cranmer, Audley, and Wriothesley, with little to no noble heritage, and their high-ranking positions in the network, reflected the king's willingness to see change in the governing classes, as in Chapter II.

The ideals – and practical concerns – of chivalry and humanism were in contention throughout Henry's reign and played into many aspects of courtly favour at the time, and in particular the rise of a variety of courtiers. In the peacetime network of 1534-1540 explored in the first two sections of this thesis, these promotions and humanist influences led to a focus on a 'modernised' administrative system and governing ideals. The top rankings in this earlier network reflect a court that, for the most part, was focused on new learning, reform, and (relatively) peaceful diplomacy. In contrast, after Cromwell's death when Henry assumed full control himself, English politics witnessed not only a return to war, but also an almost immediate restoration of Henry's old

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Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960), ix-xviii; and Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1-17.

<sup>335</sup> Ferguson, *Indian Summer*; Joseph M. Levine, 'Thomas More and the English Renaissance: History and fiction in *Utopia*,' in *The historical imagination in early modern Britain: History, rhetoric, and fiction, 1500-1800*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks, (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1997), 79-80.

<sup>336</sup> Henry's *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (Defense of the Seven Sacraments) was an important theological tract that earned him the title of 'Defender of the Faith'. Though it is still contended whether Henry wrote this himself, or whether More wrote it on his behalf, it remains an important indication of Henry's engagement with (Christian) humanism.

war counsel or their heirs, and a critical change in governance and administration. The balance – or, more accurately, swinging pendulum – between chivalric and humanistic ideals in Henry was played out on a wider scale in the network, as nodes of influence changed to match the changing events and mentalities at court.<sup>337</sup> Whilst Henry was willing to entertain and engage with both these approaches, network rankings show a clear distinction between who held power and influence in war- and peacetime.

Though Henry understood and employed the governing power of humanism, he also enjoyed the grandeur and performative nature of romanticised chivalry at his court, and the opportunities that this offered to present himself as a strong and dominant leader. Left without his qualified and humanist ‘new’ men – such as Wolsey, More, Cromwell – Henry fell back on these ideals, and it is in this light that the 1540s wars should be viewed as one last opportunity for chivalric honour, and the high rankings of the nobility in the network as a consequence of this shift in mentality. Blissfully unaware that his legacy would eventually come to centre around his wives and fragmented religious reforms, Henry sought to confirm his place in history as a chivalric military hero. As Gunn has asserted, Henry was a remarkably backward-looking monarch, who sought to model himself on the great kings of English history such as Edward III and, in particular, Henry V, whose greatest triumph was over France at Agincourt.<sup>338</sup> For Henry, overly competitive with his European counterparts and determined to regain some sense of lost English honour, France was the ultimate goal, be it by friendship or invasion. With negotiations for an alliance failing in the late 1530s, the conflict with Scotland already underway, and no chief minister to advise or persuade him otherwise, invading France became the ideal demonstration of strength and honour for a king grown obese and infirm and desperate to reclaim the games of his youth.

The wars with France and Scotland demonstrate not just an absence of a chief minister, but Henry having explicitly taken charge, and to a great extent the high scores of the ‘warmongers’ are merely an extension of Henry’s own top ranking in the network after 1540. Though power in the 1530s was still limited by what Henry allowed, as shown in Sections I and II, the rankings post-1540 are a more active demonstration of Henry’s decisions and control. This can be further understood by considering the ways the wars were framed in explicitly chivalric rhetoric and imagery, done not merely to reinforce Henry’s post-1540 ideologies but to bolster his independent authority and justify the wars as “the *raison d’être* of kings.”<sup>339</sup> The ‘Rough Wooing’ was a direct

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<sup>337</sup> Though there is not the space to do the debate justice here, it is this ongoing sway between ideals, and the changes occurring during Henry’s reign, that offers Henry VIII as the last medieval king, or at least suggests that his reign is where the debate for the medieval crossing over into the early modern should focus, by virtue of things done during his reign by others like Cromwell or More, if not by the king himself.

<sup>338</sup> Gunn, ‘Chivalry and the Politics of the Early Tudor Court,’ in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. Sydney Anglo, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990), 108.

<sup>339</sup> Glenn Richardson, *The Field of Cloth of Gold*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 3.

result of his attempt to link Scotland and England, but Henry also relied on the precedent of a shared lineage with the famed King Arthur to assert English dominance.<sup>340</sup> Though it is an oversimplification to consider Arthur as synonymous with chivalry in late medieval and early modern studies, the influence that the Arthurian myth held for Henry's romanticised and dramatized performance of chivalry was significant.

The presentation of these wars as acts of chivalry is furthered by the imagery surrounding the invasion of France in 1544. Though depicting the peace conference between Henry and Francis I in 1520, *The Field of Cloth of Gold* [Fig. 34] was commissioned by Henry and completed c.1545. The painting therefore was finished after the Sieges of Boulogne as English troops occupied French land, and as such, many elements of the iconic image take on double meanings. Pictured towards the bottom left of the painting, the retinue of Englishmen arriving for the meeting can also be seen as a conquering army, with Henry prominently at its head, leading into an – ambiguously – smoking castle. The smaller, distant French troops towards the background may have been designed to emphasise the grandeur of the English party at the 1520 conference, but in a 1545 context these same French troops appear diminutive and retreating from Henry's invasion. Francis himself has no notable presence in the image beyond appearing as a spectator at a jousting tourney in the top right corner, presented as a juxtaposition – both metaphorically and physically in the layout of the painting – to Henry, who is left as the only visible king on the field. Finally, whilst the red dragon in the top left corner pays homage to the kite filled with fireworks at the end of the 1520 meeting (designed to link the imagery of Francis' salamander and the Tudor dragon), it once more implements the Arthurian myth, the Pendragon emblem asserting Henry's right to rule shared territory and united lands. With it, Henry invokes a heritage of chivalric warrior kings, from Arthur and Henry V to his own father Henry VII, who flew the Welsh dragon on his return to England to claim the crown in 1485. Drawing explicit links with the lavish Field of Cloth of Gold conference in 1520 allowed the French war of 1544-46 to act as a parallel – if simultaneously paradoxical – act of chivalric pageantry. Though David Potter suggests that this period saw “the gradual displacement of the military heavyweights of the earlier reign,” it is telling that the more youthful courtiers with military abilities, like Edward Seymour and John Dudley, were sent to manage the

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<sup>340</sup> Cromwell also commissioned John Heywood's (now lost) 'Masque of Arthur's Knights' in 1538 during the Europe-wide marriage negotiations for the newly widowed Henry. Though we cannot know exactly what the play contained, it may have potentially been used to inspire connections between countries with visiting ambassadors and marriage negotiators.



Figure 34. The Field of Cloth of Gold, by Unknown artist. c.1545. Oil on canvas, 168.9 x 347.3 cm, (Royal Collection Trust, Hampton Court Palace)  
source of image, WikiCommons

battles against the Scottish, whilst Henry sought his old war partners and boyhood tournament friends, like Norfolk and Suffolk, to accompany him against his old rival in France.<sup>341</sup> That the early peace tournament was borne out of *humanist* anti-war discourse from some of his early advisors was an irony apparently lost on the aging Henry.<sup>342</sup>

The wars of the 1540s then, when categorically framed as chivalric endeavours, were another means for Henry to display and enact his kingly power. Where the 1530s had seen Henry use humanism and, more specifically, Cromwell's position in the epistolary network to bolster his power, the now 'unsupervised' king returned to chivalric ideals to assert his dominance. In this way then, the high-ranking warmongers post-1540 are not merely another feature of Henry's final years, but explicitly reflect his autonomous power and top-ranking position in the network in this period. The conflicts were both a product of the absence of any chief minister and an explicit demonstration of Henry's full control, using wars as a chivalric construct to augment his own kingly authority.

Understanding the connections between chivalry, the nobility, and Henry's war with France prompts questions about power and the network of 1540-1547 once more. By envisioning these wars as an overtly chivalric act (in terms of Henry's performative, romanticised ideals, as opposed to the actual governing principles of chivalry in the original sense), they can be set up in direct opposition to humanist ideals, and therefore be explicitly explored as a reaction to the absence of the 'new men' and a chief minister, primarily Cromwell. The difference in high ranking and influential courtiers before and after 1540 reflects Henry's beliefs that the new men raised to power in the 1530s were not made for wartime efforts; as able as they were in domestic affairs and administrative duties, they could not offer the support that Henry required in his European conflicts. The same had occurred during the Pilgrimage of Grace: as argued in Chapter III, despite assertions at Cromwell's fall that he was building arms against the king, the minister was critically unable to offer support to the king's troops sent to put down the revolt in the northern counties. It was a fundamental weakness for Cromwell and highlighted the flaws in the new men and their humanist vision in an era that still utilised and relied on military prowess. The resurgence of the nobility like Norfolk, Suffolk, and Hertford after 1540 was not merely a purely enacted hierarchy after Cromwell's fall, but directly correlated to their ability to support the king in his military efforts and echo his chivalric ideals. When looking to the network after Cromwell's death for insight into the minister's fall, it is important that the rise in rankings of Cromwell's noble rivals are not read as evidence of their role his demise. Their rise in the network supported Henry's final resurgence of chivalric honour, fitting the king's changed needs *after* the fall of Cromwell. The clash occurring

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<sup>341</sup> Potter, *Final Conflict*, 209.

<sup>342</sup> Richardson, *Field of Cloth of Gold*, 4.



at the court of Henry VIII, encouraged by the king's own changing favour, was not as simple as between the old nobility and the newly promoted 'common' men. Rather it was based in the conflicting ideals and expectations of chivalry and humanism, that at its most fundamental was being borne out in Henry himself.

### *Foreign Relations and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell*

The war with France and Scotland not only demonstrates the impact of Henry's personal ideologies on the network, then, but once again the role foreign relations hold in the network, and the ways ministers used their connections to offer access or aid to Henry to promote their own interests. Considering these relationships in the post-1540 network offers another means of reflecting on Cromwell's fall, and the ways new structures might offer insight into his sudden departure from power.

By early 1540, as shown in Chapter VI, Norfolk was once again growing in influence at court and Cromwell was no longer able to act as gatekeeper between the duke and the king, either in person or in the epistolary network. More than this, Norfolk was able to offer Henry a path to Francis I in this period, a significant relationship that, crucially, Cromwell himself could not facilitate. Historians have often considered Norfolk and his allies' increasing favour with the king in 1540 as fatal to Cromwell's control, with those such as Loades, Guy, and Elton considering Norfolk's relationship with the French court and the benefits this could offer Henry to be the final straw for the king turning on his erstwhile chief minister. Letters and structures in the month immediately after Cromwell's arrest point to Norfolk's increased power and indicate that he was poised to be the next most powerful advisor at Henry's court. Yet in the full 1540-1547 network, this picture is drastically different: Norfolk's ranking in the key centrality measurements drop in comparison to the 1534-1540 network, and though he ranked high in the hierarchy of the Privy Council, he was only 14<sup>th</sup> in Council attendance, present at 32% of all meetings, minimising his influence over Council decisions governing day-to-day affairs. Though Henry still relied on the aging duke for his military prowess, Norfolk still ranks lower in centrality measurements than other key officers like Seymour, Brooke, and Suffolk. Despite building his profile in the network in the lead up to Cromwell's fall and attempting to use the minister's death to his advantage, Norfolk actually held a diminished role in the 1540-1547 structure.

Though Norfolk had inevitably sought to fill Cromwell's role as chief advisor and had "served Henry faithfully enough as a minister at home and ambassador aboard," as Elton argues, Norfolk's "was never more than a second-rate brain, incapable of living up to the high place in the state to which he believed his ancestry and dukedom entitled him."<sup>343</sup> Norfolk was also hampered

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<sup>343</sup> Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall,' *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 10, no. 2 (1951): 153.

by his own problems in this period, affecting his influence with the king and therefore position in the epistolary network. The duke was uncle to the disgraced queen, Katherine Howard, and whilst not among the family members imprisoned alongside her, and instead quick to denounce her himself, he was undeniably tainted by the affair. Norfolk's son Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, also caused problems at court for the aging duke. Having already made reckless decisions in Boulogne, Surrey was imprisoned alongside his father in late 1546 and executed in January 1547; Norfolk himself only escaped execution because of the king's own death.<sup>344</sup>

It is clear, however, that failing relations with the French were disastrous for Norfolk, epitomised by the absence of the edge between the duke and Francis in these later years that had been fundamental to Norfolk's structural importance in the first six months of 1540. It must be acknowledged that in working from the *English State Papers*, there may be some missing material from other early modern European archives that may contribute further to this picture. Correspondence with the French and Spanish courts primarily appear in English collections where they were received by English nationals, were outgoing missives copied into letters books, or were intercepted and copied and kept. Archives formed around the English government and crown cannot account fully for all correspondence with foreign courts; but it is still important that, overall, Francis and other French officials hold a reduced role in the network in 1540-1547 compared to 1534-1540. Clearly growing tensions and the eventual skirmishes in the Sieges of Boulogne had broken down friendly ventures and diminished Anglo-French connections in the epistolary network. Having utilised his positive relationship with the French court to leverage his position at home with Henry, Norfolk was forced to watch alliances between the two nations falter and descend into war, and with it his own ambitions. In the end, he could offer no more to Henry in terms of French relations than Cromwell had.

What insight can Norfolk's position in the network in the last years of Henry's reign give into Cromwell's own fate in June 1540 then? It would be hasty to suggest that Norfolk's diminished role in the network and failed relations with the French meant that he did not influence Cromwell's removal from power. Just because interactions between the two countries eventually soured does not mean that Norfolk's position beforehand was not influential in the minister's demise. Rather, it suggests that Henry had not been quick to reward those historically held responsible for Cromwell's downfall. Though Loades argues that Henry "chose eventually to trust men such as the Earl of Hertford, Lord Lisle and Sir William Paget, rather than the Duke of Norfolk, the Bishop of Winchester or Sir Thomas Wriothesley, [... because of] his vision of his own authority," it is no coincidence that those who appeared to lose out on Henry's favour were those whom historians

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<sup>344</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 412; 421.

have suggested ultimately bested the former chief minister.<sup>345</sup> In fact, those who did gain the most in the network after Cromwell's death were Henry himself, the Privy Council – as an institution, not as individuals – and men new to power and not strongly affiliated with either Cromwell or Norfolk and his allies. It was not Henry's 'vision of his own authority' alone that caused him to elevate this new group of courtiers, but a desire to distance himself from the conflict of the 1530s.

The network after 1540, then, is not able to offer much insight into whose changing fortunes may indicate a role in Cromwell's fall from favour, reflecting instead a court that bore no more chief ministers in Henry's reign. Neither does it imply any underlying cause for Cromwell's removal suggested in traditional historiography, other than Norfolk's ultimately unfruitful French connection. Much like the Privy Council itself, the top-ranking nodes in the network are religiously ambiguous, and men such as Paget, Wriothesley, and Suffolk maintained a policy of neutrality between the religious extremes that divided the English court of the 1530s. Though the nobility appears to dominate the network, as demonstrated this was a result of Henry's reliance on their military backing for the French and Scottish wars and reflected a final resurgence of Henry's chivalric ideals, rather than a demonstration of some triumph in any class war against the 'common' men that so regularly dominates the historical narratives of Cromwell's fall from power.

This is not to say that none of these actors or causes were ultimately responsible for Cromwell's fall, but that the network does not indicate any significant corresponding rise in influence or power as a result. However, the network clearly supports suggestions that Henry took full control in the final years of his reign after Cromwell's death. Furthermore, the *absence* of increased influence for anyone at court – be they Cromwell's allies or enemies – supports Borman's argument that "Henry clearly hoped that Cromwell's death would put an end to the vicious sniping and backbiting between the rival factions at court."<sup>346</sup> Though Borman and Elton have argued that Henry sought to promote (or at least allow) infighting amongst his advisors in an attempt to prevent them from turning on the king himself, this latest conflict, which Henry complained had "made him put to death the most faithful servant he ever had," caused him to re-evaluate the usefulness of factions.<sup>347</sup> The absence of another chief minister and dominant node in the 1540-1547 network reflects not only Henry's desire for primacy at court, but his refusal to reward or promote one faction over another and continue fuelling the strife.

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<sup>345</sup> Loades, *Henry VIII*, 204.

<sup>346</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 362.

<sup>347</sup> *ibid.*, 208; Elton, 'Presidential Address. Tudor Government: The Points of Contact. III. The Court,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976): 224; L&P, Vol XVI, no. 590.

## VIII. Cromwell's Legacy

The dramatic shifts in power structures and ideologies of the 1540s were undeniably caused by Cromwell's fall, reflecting the outcomes of a king left to govern without his dominant chief minister. The network after Cromwell's death not only frames Henry's power, however, but offers another mode to conceptualise the minister's as well. This final chapter, therefore, returns to Cromwell's role in the network and his relationship with the king by once more utilising the experiments developed in Chapter V and comparing Cromwell to advisors in the post-1540 network. As demonstrated, 'model' networks offer a unique way to engage with sources, testing hypotheses and counterfactual histories. As explained, however, in 1540, Cromwell's removal from the network changed from a 'what-if' to a reality. The network created in Chapter V is not merely a hypothetical model, then, but a prediction of the 1540s. As Ahnert et al have argued, "the predictive power of networks is a new horizon for cultural studies. In general, we tend to study artefacts or practices that are already in existence."<sup>348</sup> This chapter offers a means of considering the value of using model or predicted networks in a humanities practice, and what this process in itself offers historical studies. In comparing the prediction to the 'real' network after Cromwell's death and, most importantly, establishing what the predicted model did and did not get right, the model network can be used as a lens to highlight and explore changes and consistencies further, building on the comparisons of the last chapter. In doing so, this chapter explores more specifically who was best positioned to act as Cromwell's 'replacement' in the network and particularly in accessing Henry from 1540 to 1547, returning to the idea established throughout this thesis that power relied on proximity to and influence over Henry himself. Re-using the experiments that demonstrate and quantify this form of power allows for a more explicit comparison between modes of control used by Cromwell and those competing for influence after his death, exploring how his fall impacted both concepts of power at court and, once again, wider structural changes in the network.

Where experiments in Section II established a 'profile' for Cromwell in the network, re-using these methodologies also offer a means to consider his 'successor' as chief minister and closest advisor to Henry. In using the term successor here, this chapter seeks to move away from the idea that Cromwell's replacement in the network was either a passive response to his absence or demonstrative of someone having overthrown the former minister and profiting from his fall. As seen in the last chapter, Henry was unwilling to reward those traditionally held responsible for Cromwell's demise. More than this however, the structures that existed and those that held power in the 1540s were a direct result of active planning by Cromwell throughout his time in power. As

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<sup>348</sup> Ahnert et al, *Network Turn*, 31.

such, the latter half of this chapter focuses on the last years of Henry's reign as part of Cromwell's legacy, explicitly framing this period as not merely 'after-Cromwell' but rather the extension and manifestation of the minister's administrative design. Using new frameworks created by network analysis and returning to the sources and structures themselves rather than pre-existing arguments, this chapter aims to reinvigorate conversations around Cromwell's legacy, and in doing so offer one last means of assessing Cromwell's power and influence at court. This final chapter therefore brings together experiments and methodologies employed throughout this thesis to support the argument that Cromwell's influence in the network and at court was a result of his personality and individuality, rather than any by-product of an administrative office or structural role.

### *Testing the Model*

Chapter V established the members of the network which looked to Cromwell as an intermediary on paths to and from the king, and it is worth briefly recapping the results of these experiments.<sup>349</sup> Having calculated all the shortest paths in the network directed towards Henry (HTPs) and those from Henry (HSPs), these could be narrowed down to demonstrate the number of paths that relied on Cromwell as an intermediary. Removing Cromwell from the path in a model network then calculated the number of writers which were expected to still be able to reach or be reached by the king without Cromwell acting as an intermediary. Between 1534-1540, there are 1,577 HTPs and 168 HSPs which used Cromwell, and after Cromwell's removal only 360 (23%) of these HTPs and 84 (50%) HSPs are predicted as still able to function without the chief minister in a model network.<sup>350</sup>

Having established the original Cromwell paths and those expected to remain after modelling Cromwell's removal, the 'predicted network' can be compared to the reality of the 1540-1547 network after the minister's death. Using the same code from Chapter V, new experiments established which of the actors that originally used Cromwell as an intermediary still held a path to or from the king after 1540 and to what extent this matched the predicted model. The reality of the real 1540-1547 graph is much more drastic: only 131 (8%) of the nodes originally using Cromwell to reach the king and 22 (13%) of those on paths from the king using Cromwell still hold a connection after 1540 [Fig. 35]. An extra 71 HSPs and 295 HTPs are unexpectedly cut off from Henry after 1540 in comparison to the predicted model network.

Exploring this difference between the model and the actual network after Cromwell's death offers insight into other structural changes from 1540 as well. The number of lost nodes is

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<sup>349</sup> Chapter V, 136.

<sup>350</sup> *ibid.*

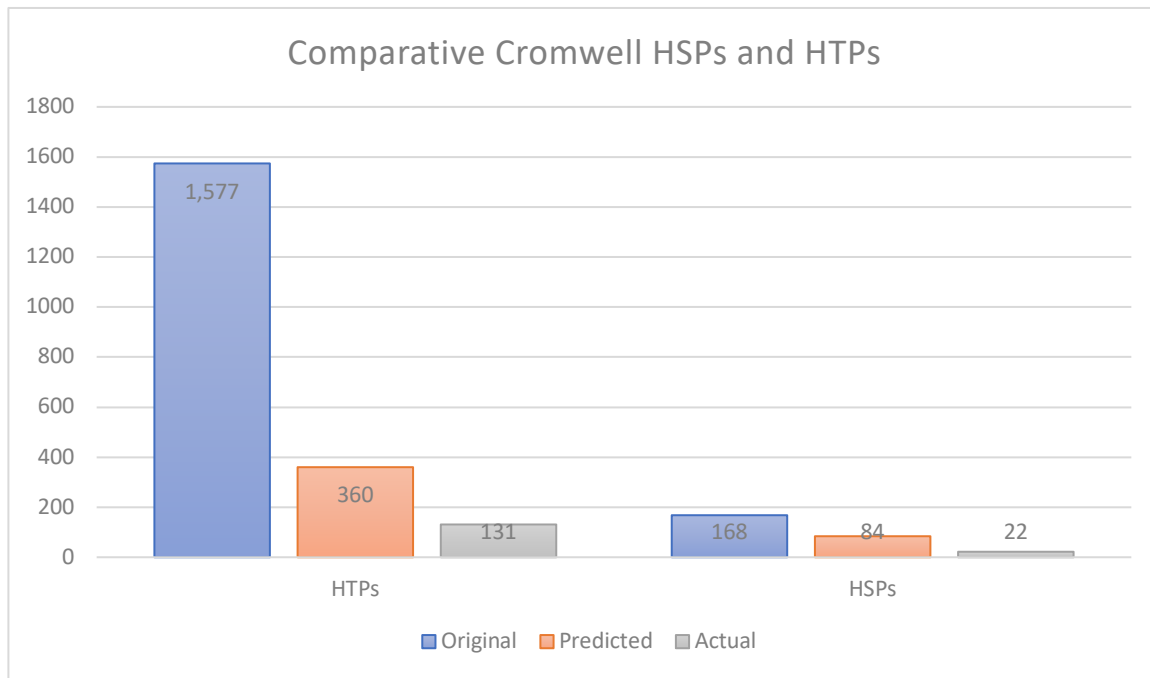


Figure 35. A graph showing Cromwell HSPs and HTPs in 1534-1540, the predicted model and 1540-1547.

higher than predicted largely owing to other significant nodes falling from power and leaving the network and the archives at the same time as Cromwell. Experiments in Chapter V indicated that Anne de Montmorency stood to take over the largest proportion of Cromwell HSPs in the model network and Lord Lisle was predicted to take over the largest amount of surviving HTPs. Yet in May 1540 Lisle was arrested on suspicion of treason (by Cromwell no less) and remained in the Tower of London until his death in 1542. Montmorency's failed diplomatic ventures with the Spanish court on behalf of his master, Francis I, left him out of favour, leading to his retirement from court and disappearance from the State Papers in 1541. Their loss from the epistolary network around the same time as Cromwell results in this additional unpredicted loss in comparison to the model network from Chapter V. 24 of the 71 unpredicted lost HSPs looked to Montmorency as an alternative intermediary, and 122 of the 295 unpredicted lost HTPs looked to Lisle. Their absence from the new network not only impacted their own contacts, but where Montmorency and Lisle were looked to as alternative intermediaries to the king instead of Cromwell, their removal from the network has additional ramifications on Cromwell's connections as well.

Many paths using Cromwell as an intermediary are lost from the new network after his fall, then; but this still leaves 131 writers on HTPs and 22 writers on HSPs that once used Cromwell as an intermediary that were still able to reach or be reached by the king. Examining these surviving connections in more detail offers insight into those who took over or maintained Cromwell's contacts in comparison to the predicted model, and therefore who offered the most to Henry as a replacement for the fallen minister. Of these, only six HSPs and eight HTPs exist in the 1540-1547

network. Of these fourteen paths, eleven use Charles V, James V, or Francis I as their intermediary. Unsurprisingly, monarchs held a more consistent group of correspondents across time and were a more reliable long-term intermediary across the network. As with Henry, these monarchs held certain edges and positions in the network because of their place in their respective national enacted hierarchies. In many ways, social etiquette in international relations regulated and offered consistency to interactions, especially where the source or target of the path was also a monarch or significant leader. Two of the predicted HSPs are to Pope Paul III, via James V or Charles, and three of the HTPs are *from* the Pope, via Charles V, James V, or Francis I. Though Henry did not have his own direct edge with the Pope in the epistolary network, likely owing to the break with Rome in the 1530s, the other monarchs demonstrate an ongoing cluster of European leaders in this period.

In contrast, 66 HTPs and 9 HSPs are ‘surprise survivals’, nodes that in the model network were cut off from the king, but nevertheless have a path with Henry after 1540. This suggests that although they relied solely on Cromwell to access the king in 1534-1540, they found alternative intermediaries after the minister’s death. These ‘surprises’ looking to reach the king most used the Privy Council (19 paths), Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (10 paths), Richard Southwell (7 paths), Francis Talbot (6 paths) and William Paget (6 paths). For Henry looking to reach others, the Privy Council again stepped in the most often, taking over four paths of those expected to be lost.

This leaves 64 HTPs and 7 HSPs that Chapter V expected would still have a path to or from the king without Cromwell, but used a different intermediary to maintain contact with Henry after 1540 from that predicted by the modelled network. The model was therefore correct in predicting that they would survive, but not how. Exploring how these have changed highlights not only who has *gained* power in the new network, but who has *lost* influence as well. These changes produce two categories of nodes: the ‘gainers’, those who have a greater takeover of Cromwell’s paths than predicted, often at the expense of the influence of other nodes; and the ‘losers’, those who have lost their place as intermediary on a path to another node, or whose paths have disappeared altogether.

The table in Figure 36 highlights the differences between top used intermediaries on HTPs and HSPs previously using Cromwell in the predicted and actual network. The changes in HSPs are fairly predictable: Anne de Montmorency and Henry Lord Montague are no longer in the network (by demotion and death, respectively), and are replaced in the top five by nodes holding similar positions in the network allowing Henry access to foreign nations (Charles V and David Betoun).<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> It is worth noting that, whilst holding similar positions in the network, they do so for different countries, moving from France to Spain, reflecting the changed European political landscape discussed in the last chapter.

<b>PREDICTED TAKEOVER OF CROMWELL HSPs</b>	<b>ACTUAL TAKEOVER OF CROMWELL HSPs</b>
1 = Anne de Montmorency (28 paths; 16.7%)	1. Henry VIII (7 paths; 4.2%)
1 = Francis I (28 paths; 16.7%)	2 = Charles V (4 paths; 2.4%)
3 = Privy Council (27 paths; 16.1%)	2 = Privy Council (4 paths; 2.4%)
3 = Henry Lord Montague (27 paths; 16.1%)	2 = David Betoun (4 paths; 2.4%)
3 = Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall (27 paths; 16.1%)	5 = Francis I (3 paths; 1.9%)
	5 = Mary of Guise (3 paths; 1.9%)
<b>PREDICTED TAKEOVER OF CROMWELL HTPs</b>	<b>ACTUAL TAKEOVER OF CROMWELL HTPs</b>
1. Lord Lisle (152 paths; 9.6%)	1. Henry VIII (35 paths; 2.2%)
2. Thomas Wriothesley (103 paths; 6.5%)	2. Privy Council (30 paths; 1.9%)
3. Privy Council (24 paths; 1.5%)	3. Edward Seymour (12 paths; 0.8%)
4. Bishop Roland Lee (20 paths; 1.3%)	4. Richard Southwell (9 paths; 0.6%)
5. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (17 paths; 1.1%)	5 = George Brooke (8 paths; 0.5%)
	5 = Thomas Wriothesley (8 paths; 0.5%)
	5 = Francis Talbot (8 paths; 0.5%)
	5 = William Paget (8 paths; 0.5%)

Figure 36. A table comparing predicted top takeover nodes for Cromwell's HSPs and HTPs and actual takeover nodes in the 1540-1547 network.

The difference in HTPs provide a more interesting insight into who was considered an appropriate replacement for accessing Henry after Cromwell's fall in the network. Considering the unpredicted takeover of Cromwell paths by the 'gainers', they mainly correlate with the dominant nodes in the network established in the last chapter. Henry himself is the most dominant of the 'gainers' in the new network, taking over seven Cromwell HSPs and thirty-five Cromwell HTPs. This means that where Cromwell once acted as an intermediary for the king, the path became a direct edge between Henry and the other node, as with Sands at the end of Chapter VI. In many ways, this reflects Henry's increased degree scores explored in the last chapter. Though Henry has already been established as the dominant node in the network, it is important to consider this in terms of replacing Cromwell. This once more supports arguments that Henry himself was taking back more control for himself rather than utilising a chief minister as an intermediary, but it is worth again questioning whether this was Henry's choice or simply because there was no other alternative intermediary in the network structure. The increased number of direct HSPs implies more of a direct engagement from the king, though only represents a small takeover given the minimal changes in Henry's total outgoing degree in this period. In contrast, the substantial number of Cromwell's HTPs that become direct edges from 1540 onwards once more displays the absence of a dominant alternate intermediary, suggesting changes in accessibility around the king. In many ways, this also demonstrates Cromwell's success as a gatekeeper before his death. The other significant 'gainer' is the Privy Council, who adopts 30 HTPs rather than the 24 predicted. Here, the collaborative efforts of the Council and its administrative duties outlined in the last chapter serve to make it the most successful intermediary to replace Cromwell.



Of the possible takeover intermediaries that survive, the most substantial ‘loser’ from the predicted model is Thomas Wriothesley. In the 1534-1540 model network, Wriothesley could act as an alternative to Cromwell on 103 paths to Henry and was primed to act as successor to Cromwell in the network, as confirmed by his appointment to Principal Secretary in April 1540. In reality however, Wriothesley was only intermediary to Henry on eight of these paths once held by Cromwell after 1540, none of which correlate with Wriothesley’s paths predicted in the modelled network. Of the 103 HTPs predicted to use Wriothesley, 84 of these nodes no longer have a path to Henry after 1540; despite having an alternative to Cromwell before the minister’s death, they cannot reach the king afterwards. This leaves a further eighteen nodes that had a path to Henry after 1540 but chose someone other than Wriothesley as a means of reaching the king. In contrast to Henry and the Privy Council, Wriothesley’s diminished intermediary role reflects a decreased importance in the wider network. Although the model suggests that Wriothesley was primed before 1540 to take over from Cromwell in the network, bolstered by his promotion to Principal Secretary, Wriothesley’s inability to carry this through after Cromwell’s fall not only suggests that the new secretary was administratively inferior, but also that Cromwell’s influence in the network rested upon him as a *person* not as a *Principal Secretary*, as will once more be explored further later in this chapter. Though as with all experiments throughout this thesis, it is important to be wary of the ways archival survival – or lack thereof – impacts these metrics of power, changes to perceptions of Wriothesley’s value in the network more likely reflects the shifting political landscape explored in the previous chapter. Furthermore, changing archival processes themselves, as with Cromwell, may offer insight into changing importance of both people and positions.

For the most part, then, the modelled network from Chapter V predicting the outcome of Cromwell’s removal fails to calculate the reality of 1540 to 1547. But why? The first problem is that the model assumes that the network is static and will remain entirely the same bar Cromwell’s removal. It is unable to account for the new nodes that enter the dataset, which as demonstrated make up 70% of the new network, though as Constantinos and Christos Tsirogiannis have argued, the inability to predict new actors or new links is a recurring problem in social network analysis.<sup>352</sup> More importantly, the model cannot predict nodes of new importance, such as William Paget, Edward Seymour, and George Brooke. Neither can the model account for the ‘death’ of other nodes, whether this be actual death, as with Thomas Audley, William Fitzwilliam, or William Sands; removal from the network because of imprisonment, like Lisle; or their own fall from favour, as with Montmorency. The model also assumes that the network will continue to function in exactly the same way and cannot account for the fact that 1534-1540 was primarily a network

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<sup>352</sup> Constantinos Tsirogiannis and Christos Tsirogiannis, ‘Uncovering the Hidden Routes: Algorithms for Identifying Paths and Missing Links in Trade Networks,’ in *Connected Past*, 115.

formed on peacetime interactions, whereas 1540-1547 was dominated by wartime governance, impacting the nodes in positions of power and influence.

Most importantly, the model is also unable to predict how Cromwell's fall would affect other nodes in the network *outside of explicitly structural changes*. This is to say that whilst actors should still have been an active presence in the network – and indeed, are alive throughout this period – they are notably quiet compared to their previous contributions to the archives. Such can be seen especially with Richard Cromwell, Cromwell's adopted nephew, and Thomas Cranmer, both erstwhile allies of the fallen minister. Richard Cromwell, much like Ralph Sadler, openly mourned the chief minister after his fall and execution. Though Richard Cromwell was in certain respects pardoned by the king and given new titles, he disappears entirely from the network after 1540, a change that must be linked to his proximity to his uncle.<sup>353</sup> Cranmer similarly retreats from the network, despite being the highest-ranking clergy member in England and, supposedly, one of the most powerful individuals at court. In the 1534-1540 network, Henry used Cranmer as an intermediary on 38 paths, 4.1% of all HSPs and the seventh most used option. After the fall of Cromwell, Cranmer has a degree of only 18 and acts as a possible intermediary on only 16 HSPs (2.3%). As seen in the last chapter, Cranmer did not use his executive position as Archbishop of Canterbury to operate through the Privy Council either, dominating the network neither as an individual nor as a member of the more active Council. The model's failure can potentially show more than its successes: as Fotis Jannidis has shown, “comparing models to reality, one will always find some difference which can be seen as a deficiency, but this usually neglects the functional aspects of models.”<sup>354</sup> By exploring the disparity between prediction and reality, these experiments can be used to assess the wider ramifications of Cromwell's fall from power and what parts of the network have only changed because of the *way* he left the network.

### *Post-1540 Intermediaries*

Ultimately there was no one node in the 1540-1547 network who could offer Henry *exactly* what Cromwell could from 1534-1540. Though some of this is because of the natural dynamism of the network and other extra changes that would have removed some writers regardless of Cromwell's fate, it also demonstrates why Cromwell was so powerful in the network: the minister really did offer the king services that no-one else could. It is still possible, however, to consider who played the most *similar* role to Cromwell after 1540; that is to say, not replaced him in providing access to and from the king for *specific* nodes, but who overall sat on the most HSPs

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<sup>353</sup> S. T. Bindoff, 'CROMWELL, alias WILLIAMS, Richard (by 1512-44), of London; Stepney, Mdx. and Hinchinbroke, Hunts,' *The History of Parliament Online*.

<sup>354</sup> Fotis Jannidis, 'Modelling in the Digital Humanities: a Research Program?' *Historical Social Research: Supplement* 31 (2018): 97.

<b>1534-1540 HSPs (926 paths)</b>	<b>1540-1547 HSPs (698 paths)</b>
1. Henry VIII (176 paths, 19%)	1. Henry VIII (132 paths, 18.9%)
2. Thomas Cromwell (168 paths, 18.1%)	2. Privy Council (90 paths, 12.9%)
3. James V (65 paths, 7%)	3. Charles V (45 paths, 6.4%)
4. Lord Lisle (39 paths, 4.2%)	4. James V (28 paths, 4%)
5. Charles V (38 paths, 4.1%)	5. William Paget (23 paths, 3.3%)
6. Anne de Montmorency (38 paths, 4.1%)	6. Richard Riche (22 paths, 3.2%)
7. Thomas Cranmer (38 paths, 4.1%)	7. David Betoun (22 paths, 3.2%)
8. Francis I (37 paths, 4%)	8. Francis I (20 paths, 2.9%)
9. Privy Council (32 paths, 3.5%)	9. Eustace Chapuys (18 paths, 2.6%)
10. Cuthbert Tunstall (28 paths, 3%)	10. Mary of Guise (18 paths, 2.6%)
<b>1534-1540 HTPs (2,910 paths)</b>	<b>1540-1547 HTPs (1,208 paths)</b>
1. Thomas Cromwell (1,577 paths, 54.2%)	1. Henry VIII (209 paths, 17.3%)
2. Lord Lisle (386 paths, 13.3%)	2. Privy Council (98 paths, 8.1%)
3. Henry VIII (242 paths, 8.3%)	3. William Paget (80 paths, 6.6%)
4. Thomas Wriothesley (140 paths, 4.8%)	4. Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (80 paths, 6.6%)
5. Thomas Thirlby (90 paths, 3%)	5. Charles V (58 paths, 4.8%)
6. Charles V (34 paths, 1.2%)	6. Richard Southwell (57 paths, 4.7%)
7. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (30 paths, 1%)	7. John Gates (53 paths, 4.3%)
8. Reginald Pole (29 paths, 1%)	8. Francis I (42 paths, 3.5%)
9. Thomas Starkey (23 paths, 0.8%)	9. Francis Talbot (42 paths, 3.5%)
10. Thomas Darcy (21 paths, 0.7%)	10. George Brooke (41 paths, 3.4%)

Figure 37. A table depicting the top 10 most used nodes on all HSPs and all HTPs in 1534-1540 and 1540-1547. and HTPs in the last seven years of Henry's reign. Considering this new network as a whole also shows who acted as intermediaries for the 70% of the network that are new post-Cromwell's fall. Including these with the pre-existing nodes from 1534-1540, it is possible to see who sat on the most paths after Cromwell's fall and therefore who was most well-placed to be useful to Henry on HSPs, or act as intermediary – or even a gatekeeper as in Chapter VI – on HTPs. Repeating the same code from Chapter V on the new network, the table in Figure 37 outlines the top ten nodes used on all HSPs and HTPs for both 1534-1540 and 1540-1547 for comparison. Though the raw number of paths are included for each intermediary node, comparing the percentages provided accounts for the different network sizes and total number of paths available. This table also includes direct edges with Henry: by including these, these experiments can also ascertain changes to Henry's use of intermediaries versus independent and direct contact.

Much like 1534-1540, most (six out of nine) nodes Henry used as an intermediary on HSPs in the 1540-1547 network were ambassadors or foreign royals: Charles V, James V, David Betoun, Francis I, Eustace Chapuys, and Mary of Guise. This suggests that though Henry directly contacted nodes based in England with ease, he required more aid in reaching nodes based in foreign locations. This also reflects the increased volume of foreign affairs ongoing in the last seven years of Henry's reign, and therefore the increased amount of this type of material in the archives.

The HTPs present a more substantial shift and show more about whom patronage-seekers and other less influential courtiers perceived as powerful and close to the king. In contrast to the 1534-1540 network, Henry takes the highest number of HTPs in the new network, almost doubling the percentage of all HTPs that are direct edges. This mirrors the takeover of Cromwell HTPs but more importantly demonstrates that this trend also extended to new nodes entering the network. It was not only nodes that had once used an intermediary that now communicated directly with the king, but 89 new nodes who established a direct edge with the king from their appearance in the network as well.

Again, the Privy Council is the second most important intermediary on 8.1% of all HTPs in 1540-1547. Interestingly, although the Privy Council as an institution was used, the third and fourth most used intermediaries on HTPs were individual members of the Council: William Paget and Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford. Though other members of the Council rank highly on the centrality measurements explored in the last chapter, Paget and Hertford's places as intermediaries on HTPs suggests that they were who the network perceived as the most influential members of the Privy Council who were able to access the king most easily. This offers an interesting contrast to the Privy Council registers in the last chapter: whilst ranking low on Privy Council attendance, both Paget and Hertford appear to be perceived as independently influential with Henry. Their higher-than-average degree ranking relates to their independent ability to access the king then, rather than their ability to reach the Council.

Another interesting actor on this list is John Gates: whilst only ranking 9<sup>th</sup> in betweenness in the overall network, he acted on 53 paths reaching the king. This partly reflected Gates' role in holding the dry stamp authorising Henry's letters, warrants and other means of patronage after 1545, as explored in the last chapter. Clearly Gates was perceived as a key means of accessing Henry's patronage and favour, despite not being an administrative powerhouse sitting at the centre of the network. The last nodes worth mentioning are Richard Southwell, Francis Talbot, and George Brooke. All were involved with Henry's military efforts of the 1540s, either in France or Scotland, and hold high measurements in the network's centrality measurements. Yet despite holding junior roles in these wars – and under-studied in traditional historical scholarship – they were regular options as intermediaries for those seeking to reach the king. Furthermore, in comparison to other high-ranking officials involved in the wars – such as Norfolk, Suffolk, and Wriothesley – who are *not* in the top ten HTP intermediary list, Southwell, Talbot, and Brooke were not members of the Privy Council.

This suggests two things: first, that unless they were externally perceived as leading members of the Council, like Paget and Hertford (despite their limited attendance), the network would look to the Privy Council *as an institution* as an intermediary rather than to its individual

members, despite how quantitatively central to the network those individuals may have been. Second, it suggests that Wriothesley, Suffolk, and Norfolk's high degree centrality rankings – 8th, 9th, and 10th in the network respectively – stemmed from a clustered inner network of nodes who were not only connected to each other but to the king directly as well. As such, although they were highly connected, and therefore gained influence in the network, they were not required as intermediary to the king. They were also unable to access novel information, the primary advantage to Cromwell's vast one-degree, weak-tie personal network. Though Suffolk's centrality rankings are still an improvement on his position in the 1534-1540 network, for Wriothesley and Norfolk the changes in intermediary use present a significant demotion. Despite assertions in historiography that these two men were firm favourites and influential figures at court until near the very end of Henry's reign, the network in fact implies that they were far less significant and useful than has been previously suggested.

Most importantly, none of these new possible intermediaries were able to dominate the network surrounding Henry as well as Cromwell, who single-handedly sat on 1,577 (54.2%) HTPs in 1534-1540. The distribution of paths is more even in 1540-1547, resulting in a higher average percentage of paths held across the top ten HTP intermediaries. Again, this supports the distinct absence of another chief minister. Importantly, this also meant that there were no substantial opportunities to act as gatekeeper to the king in this later network in the same way Cromwell had. As such, all the benefits of the gatekeeper position outlined in Chapter VI – garnering novel information, preventing others from accessing the king, and leveraging brokerage potential – were also lost. Oddly, this may be one of the only things the model from Chapter V predicted correctly: the intermediary role would be shared more evenly between nodes, but would not amount to the total number or percentage of paths Cromwell offered.

It is important to once again frame this in the context of the network as dominated by Henry in these final seven years. Though Henry utilised fewer intermediaries in the later network than before Cromwell's death, like the king's changed degree rankings, this reflects the absence of another dominant node rather than any significant uptake in Henry's own output. Though Henry inevitably decided he was unwilling to allow another advisor to have as much influence as Cromwell, it is significant that the network structure itself altered to prevent the need for another dominant advisor. Rather than merely considering this a result of Henry's preferences for distributed power at court, the remainder of this chapter argues that this change in structure was in fact an element of Cromwell's legacy, designed before his fall from favour and implemented beyond his death.

### *The Post-Cromwell Principal Secretary*

Perhaps the most obvious part of Cromwell's legacy was the role of Principal Secretary, undeniably redefined during his tenure in the office as he used the position and his predilection for letters to expand the role to become chief minister. Though Goldberg marks Gardiner as the first great Principal Secretary, as Elton has demonstrated it was not until the 1530s and Cromwell's tenure that the office became the powerhouse of the Tudor court.<sup>355</sup> Indeed, whilst Stewart argues that "quite often during the early modern period, the burden was so great that two secretaries occupied the post simultaneously", it is imperative to acknowledge that Cromwell himself instigated this change.<sup>356</sup> Having expanded the duties of the office to an unprecedented level, Cromwell split the position in two on his resignation in 1540, sharing the job between Ralph Sadler and Thomas Wriothesley. This in itself should have changed the network structure: much like other procedures introduced by Cromwell, the aim was to formalise communication and organisation at court. Though some regard this resignation as an early indication of Cromwell's fall in favour, the changes in fact allowed Cromwell more control over delegated power, using Wriothesley and Sadler as extensions of his own administrative influence.<sup>357</sup> In those final months between the change in secretary in April 1540 and Cromwell's arrest in June, Wriothesley remained primarily with Cromwell himself, whilst Sadler operated mainly from within the king's household.<sup>358</sup>

After Cromwell's fall, Wriothesley moved to become a dedicated secretary for the Privy Council, leading Stewart to suggest that the split was initially designed to place one secretary exclusively with the king, and the other with the Privy Council.<sup>359</sup> This explanation is, however, rather too simplistic, ignoring Wriothesley's initial placement with Cromwell rather than the Council. In fact, as Elton has suggested, the promotion of Wriothesley and Sadler to Principal Secretary actually meant little changed in the workings of the court, merely formalising the pre-existing channels of communication between Wriothesley and Sadler acting as secretaries to Cromwell and Henry respectively.<sup>360</sup> Furthermore, there was much more of an overlap between responsibilities, and both Principal Secretaries would regularly act from both the Privy Council offices and the king's personal household. Rather than defining the secretaries by their primary placement or office, this thesis adopts Samuel Rhea Gammon's terms 'senior' and 'junior'

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<sup>355</sup> Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 264; Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 32.

<sup>356</sup> Stewart, 'Familiar Letters,' 56.

<sup>357</sup> Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 339-340; Schofield, *Thomas Cromwell*, 374-375; MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 519; Robert Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008), 222.

<sup>358</sup> Starkey, 'Court and Government,' in *Revolution Reassessed*, 54; Elton, *England*, 181.

<sup>359</sup> Stewart, 'Familiar Letters', 56.

<sup>360</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 314.

secretaries.<sup>361</sup> These terms recognise that rather than there being anything inherently different between the two roles and the jobs they managed, there was a distinction more in *perception* of the secretaries and therefore the responsibilities assigned to them, as reflected by measurements in the network. The senior secretary was primarily associated with the Privy Council not because this was their designated ‘office’, but because the Privy Council managed most of the administrative work and required the more experienced and senior administrator. Henry required more of the basic responsibilities of a secretary, and as such this was more suited to the abilities of the junior role. Again however, this was a fluid arrangement and duties rested more on the administrative abilities required rather than an assigned office. Both the Privy Council registers and letters to and from the king evidence that work was shared between both secretaries in office at any time in these final seven years.

But what was the actual impact of the Principal Secretaries on the network in 1540-1547 and how does this suggest some sense of Cromwell’s legacy? Sadler only held a small role in the network post-1540, though it is important to note that this was not a substantial change from before Cromwell’s fall. As one of Cromwell’s most loyal agents, Sadler openly mourned his fallen master and was briefly imprisoned in January 1541, likely a result of this close friendship and his reformist religious tendencies.<sup>362</sup> Though Sadler remained a Principal Secretary until 1543, he was most active in the network as residential ambassador to Scotland, as seen in the last chapter. This relative inactivity in the 1540-1547 network also suggests that Sadler was the ‘junior’ secretary whilst sharing the office with Wriothesley, a trend that can also be seen with later Principal Secretary partnerships. In the three years with Sadler and Wriothesley as secretaries together, the archive contains eleven outgoing letters and fifteen incoming for Sadler, in comparison to twenty-three outgoing and sixty-six incoming for Wriothesley. Though the difference in outgoing letters is not very large, the distinction between incoming missives suggests Wriothesley’s perceived seniority in the office. Yet, as already seen from the predicted model versus the reality of the post-1540 network, Wriothesley had the largest drop in influence of surviving nodes in the network. This may in itself reflect the changed and *shared* responsibilities of the Principal Secretaries. Like Sadler, however, Wriothesley’s reduced influence in the network may reflect his relationship with the fallen Cromwell. Though Wriothesley turned on his former master in his final weeks, even drafting the official statement for Cromwell’s arrest, Wriothesley may have burned his own bridges in this betrayal and limited the extent to which others at court trusted the new secretary.<sup>363</sup> As with

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<sup>361</sup> Samuel Rhea Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William, First Lord Paget, Tudor Minister*, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), 58.

<sup>362</sup> Phillips, ‘Sadler,’ *ODNB*.

<sup>363</sup> Borman, *Henry VIII*, 364.

Norfolk's rankings after 1540, Henry appeared unwilling to reward those traditionally considered responsible for Cromwell's removal.

*William Paget, Principal Secretary*

The initial repercussions of Cromwell's fall may have impacted the role of the new Principal Secretaries in the network, then, and it can be hard to distinguish what was a result of the changed requirements of the role and what was a result of Sadler and Wriothesley's relationship with the former minister. To understand this further, it is more helpful to look at the role of the Principal Secretaries in the structure beyond Sadler and Wriothesley's tenure in the office. In considering this, this chapter now turns to the final major player in the 1540-1547 network: William Paget. In this period, Paget ranks third in all three main centrality measurements used in this thesis – betweenness, eigenvector, and degree – behind Henry and the Privy Council, and was fifth and third as intermediary in HSPs and HTPs respectively. Paget was therefore the highest-ranking individual servant in the network, and the closest Henry came to a dominant advisor after Cromwell's death.

Paget has been critically under-served in traditional historical literature, with only one extended biographical study by Gammon, published in 1973, and the 2004 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry by Sybil M. Jack. It may be that Paget's role from Henry's reign through to Elizabeth I's means he does not conveniently sit within any specific period, or that, as Ives suggests, historians have looked to the final years of Henry's reign as unexciting and undeserving of the critical attention given to the years that witnessed the rise of Wolsey and Cromwell.<sup>364</sup> Though Paget may not have held the significance or supremacy in Henry's reign of these two former chief ministers, he remains an important and interesting aspect of the post-Cromwell network. Investigating Paget's position in the network not only offers insight into power structures in these final years of Henry's reign, but also presents a means of exploring the changing role of the Principal Secretaries as part of Cromwell's lasting legacy.

Paget began his career under Stephen Gardiner, becoming clerk of the signet in 1531 whilst his master was Principal Secretary.<sup>365</sup> Paget remained as part of the Secretary office under Cromwell until 1542, transferring his allegiance between incoming ministers; indeed, it is likely that Paget's ability to survive so long under Henry owed itself to his tendency to change patrons when the political climate at court shifted. Whilst maintaining this role in the secretarial office, Paget also extended his expertise in ambassadorial business and, as Gammon termed it, "plunged

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<sup>364</sup> Ives, 'Henry VIII', 28

<sup>365</sup> Gammon, *Statesman*, 19-20.



into the field of diplomatic skulduggery.”<sup>366</sup> Between 1531 and 1535, Paget was sent on a variety of diplomatic ventures, including to France, Prussia, Poland, and the German princes, the latter of which became key in later years, initiating an important relationship between Paget and Anglo-German diplomat Christopher Mont.<sup>367</sup> Paget’s performance in negotiations abroad raised his reputation at court with both king and Cromwell, and Paget went on to be stationed as personal secretary to Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard whilst each were queen. After Cromwell’s fall in 1540, Paget was appointed clerk of the Privy Council, responsible for maintaining the Privy Council registers and attendant on (if not contributing to) every meeting. Given his surviving patronage links at court, his secretarial experience, and his inside knowledge of government ongoings from his diplomatic missions and his role in the Privy Council, it is unsurprising that Paget was quickly promoted to Principal Secretary in April 1543. Paget became the ‘senior’ secretary after Wriothesley’s appointment to Lord Chancellor in 1544 and would remain as such until the end of Henry’s reign, while William Petre was promoted to serve alongside him as ‘junior’ secretary. Despite only making a significant appearance in centrality rankings after becoming the ‘senior’ Principal Secretary, Paget has some of the highest measurements of the network in 1540-1547. Despite his recurring roles at court and abroad, however, Paget is *only* relevant to the network when appointed as senior Principal Secretary. Though he may have earned the role because of his experience and expertise, unlike Cromwell, Paget’s influence directly correlated to his time and role as Principal Secretary. Whereas Cromwell made the Principal Secretary role a significant entity in the network, for the others it would be the Secretary office that made them significant as individuals.

It is worth considering exactly what Paget did as Principal Secretary, how his duties and responsibilities in this role contributed to his position in the network, and, in particular, how the role had changed since Cromwell held it. Of primary importance was the continued use of the Principal Secretary office to dispense information and instructions on the king’s behalf and in the king’s name. In many ways, Paget’s letters mirrored Cromwell’s, conveying instructions and using the king’s name to verify the validity of the message. Writing to Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, Paget informed him that “I haue receyved *your* sundry *pacquettes* of *Letteres* and shewed all the same to the kinges *Maieste* [...] And to such part of the same as requyrith answer hath willed me to signifie his *Maiestes* pleasur.”<sup>368</sup> Paget also detailed his efforts to forward Hertford’s private matters with the king: “As toching *your* own affayres I haue moved the kinges *Maieste* in such sort

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<sup>366</sup> *ibid*, 22.

<sup>367</sup> Sybil M. Jack, ‘Paget, William, first Baron Paget, 1505/6-1563’, *ODNB*, accessed 30th June 2021, last updated 3rd January 2008.

<sup>368</sup> TNA, SP 1/205 f.218.

as *your seruant Master Thynne* will declare.”<sup>369</sup> Much like Cromwell had before, Paget advertised his position as intermediary to the king; and yet, Paget’s own assertions were not enough, and he relied on the word of others as well to support his roles at court.

Paget’s missives also demonstrate an overt display of shared readership, a common trend in letters containing the king’s instructions. To John Dudley, the new Lord Lisle, Paget wrote “that the kinges *maieste* hath harde the contentes of your *letteres* aswell those to me as thothers to his highnes.”<sup>370</sup> When writing to diplomats Bucler and Mont, Paget explained that “The kinges *Maieste* hath receyved *your letteres* and lykewise sene *your pryvate letteres* addressed to me.”<sup>371</sup> Finally, when writing to Norfolk, Paget indicated “that the kinges *Maieste* hath seen aswell your *Letteres* addressed vnto me and thothers vnto thole counsail.”<sup>372</sup> This letter suggests a vast amount of shared readership, and demonstrates Paget’s role in sharing the Council’s incoming correspondence with the king as well. Despite demonstrating a similar practice of shared communication, however, this is framed differently from Cromwell’s letters. Cromwell regularly referenced *his* reading of *Henry’s* letters and in doing so, advertised his own proximity to the king and intimated the amount of knowledge he had access to. Though Henry also appeared to have seen reports sent to Cromwell as well, as in Chapter VI, this does not appear to have been a rigorous practice, and Cromwell for the most part was trusted by his king to communicate and make decisions on his own. In contrast, Paget’s letters advertise the extent to which *Henry* was reading letters to *Paget*. The difference is significant: in many ways, it demonstrates Henry’s own developed involvement in affairs, and his active engagement with letters addressed to other members of court, be it Paget or the Privy Council. The role of the secretary was to make information directly available to the king, and to pass on the responses. Cromwell used this to position himself as intermediary and the most knowledgeable entity at court; in contrast, Paget’s efforts were primarily to support Henry in this premier position in government.

As suggested, the senior secretary also often took on the bulk of the work with the Privy Council, acknowledging its dominant administrative duties. As well as dispersing information on behalf of the king, Paget was often the scribe for the Council and managed their incoming and outgoing correspondence. Gammon suggests that the Privy Council’s correspondence – and therefore the Council’s position in the network – should be ascribed to Paget during his tenure as Principal Secretary, arguing that “the appearance from time to time of the words ‘me the secretary’ in the Council’s letters clearly indicate [Paget was] the composer. The Privy Council, like all

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<sup>369</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> TNA, SP 1/216 f.98.

<sup>371</sup> TNA, SP 1/102 f.202.

<sup>372</sup> TNA, SP 1/202 f.161.

committees, was inclined to say ‘let the secretary do it.’”<sup>373</sup> When other Council letters are considered however, this appears as an over-simplification. Paget’s first-person interruptions in letters were not distinctive of his writing alone, and Petre similarly referred to his own experiences and correspondence when writing as the Privy Council.<sup>374</sup> Furthermore, the rest of the Council letters were consistently written in the plural first-person, speaking as a ‘we’ and referring to ‘our’ decisions. In some instances, letters would even be corrected from the singular, changed from ‘my’ to “*our* most hartly comendacions”.<sup>375</sup> This is the most effective linguistic demonstration of the shared influence and power in the post-1540 network. Though Paget was the scribe for the Council – as both Wriothesley and Sadler had been before him – this is not to say that he had ultimate control over the contents of its letters, managed and overseen as correspondence was by the rest of the Council. When compared with the authorial scenarios in Chapter IV, Paget’s input represents a distinct contrast to the privileges that Cromwell was able to enjoy whilst operating in the same role.<sup>376</sup>

In this senior position, Paget was also often used as the link between Privy Council and the king, despite the Council holding its own epistolary edge with Henry in the network. Though this may appear similar to Cromwell’s gatekeeping attempts, Paget acted more as a representative of the Council to the king, helping to pass along messages and decisions between the two bodies.<sup>377</sup> The practical elements of acting as a secretary and the lack of clear distinction between Principal Secretary to the Privy Council or to the king makes this intermediary role unsurprising and a natural development of the secretary, rather than anything relating to Paget as a person or any brokerage power that he himself held. Indeed, as outlined earlier in this chapter, there was no distinctive or dominant gatekeeper in this network as there had been in 1534-1540 with Cromwell. Gammon argues that “Paget’s increasingly firm hold on Henry’s favour and confidence led him to assume this intermediary role to the near exclusion of other members,” but immediately continues on to suggest that “it was not that the others had no access to the king [...] but it was natural for them to refer questions for decision by the hand of one who was in constant and favoured daily contact.”<sup>378</sup> Again then, Paget’s role as intermediary relied explicitly on his position as Principal Secretary. This is not to say that Paget was not favoured by the king or enjoyed privileged access, but that he could not utilise this beyond his role as Principal Secretary to garner wider control as Cromwell had.

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<sup>373</sup> Gammon, *Statesman*, 68.

<sup>374</sup> TNA, SP 1/217 f.166.

<sup>375</sup> TNA, SP 1/217 f. 125.

<sup>376</sup> Chapter IV, 118.

<sup>377</sup> Chapter VI, 149.

<sup>378</sup> Gammon, *Statesman*, 69.

In these respects, Paget does not differ much from his predecessors Sadler and Wriothesley, fulfilling the basic secretarial duties envisaged by Cromwell when redefining the position. Paget's role and dominance of the network is bolstered however by his involvement in foreign affairs, and his previous diplomatic experience meant that he was regularly abroad during his tenure as Principal Secretary, mirroring Gardiner's experience in the role far more than Cromwell's. In fact, it is likely that Paget was appointed to secretary in 1543 directly because of this ambassadorial experience and the changing relations with France explored in the last chapter, which required his familiarity with the country and more complex diplomatic negotiations. As a result, he took on more of the foreign relations responsibilities that came to be expected of the Principal Secretary or Secretary of State, focusing less on domestic affairs as Cromwell had. Though it is not within the scope of this thesis to model further 'what-if' scenarios, it may be suggested that Paget would be as non-descript in the network as the other post-Cromwell Henrician Principal Secretaries had the war in France not required a Principal Secretary well-versed in French diplomacy. Without the war, Paget would have only had domestic affairs to manage, which was both of lesser interest to him than to his predecessor and was far more the collective responsibility of the Privy Council. In this – and with all the comparisons between the 1534-1540 and the 1540-1547 networks – it must be remembered that war- and peacetime networks are being compared and the impacts of Cromwell's fall and legacy and the impact of the war between France and England cannot be easily distinguished. It is clear however, that Paget's dominance of the network relates to this element of the Principal Secretary role, rather than any other administrative tasks expected in 'normal' times.

Despite these limitations, Paget was still one of the most significant nodes in the network, owing to a combination of his administrative duties and foreign diplomatic ventures. By 1546, Paget overtakes the Privy Council in both degree and eigenvector centrality to rank second behind Henry [Fig. 38]. Both Gammon and Jack have suggested that the king relied increasingly on his senior Principal Secretary as his health declined, and perhaps this was the closest Henry came to having a final chief minister in his reign. From 1545 to 1546, Paget's in-degree jumps from 53 neighbours to 81: clearly more and more writers looked to the new Principal Secretary as an influential member of the king's court. In fact, in the overall network depicting 1540-1547, Paget's incoming correspondence is greater than the Privy Council's, amounting to 1,390 letters to the Privy Council's 1,187. Though again this is partly because of Paget's ambassadorial efforts abroad in this period, it is also a distinctive network trait of those holding offices perceived as influential and close to the king. Looking at these changes in ranking and influence in 1546, it could be suggested that Paget may have achieved the network supremacy of Cromwell or Wolsey had the king lived longer and Paget had continued to grow in influence and favour with the king. But

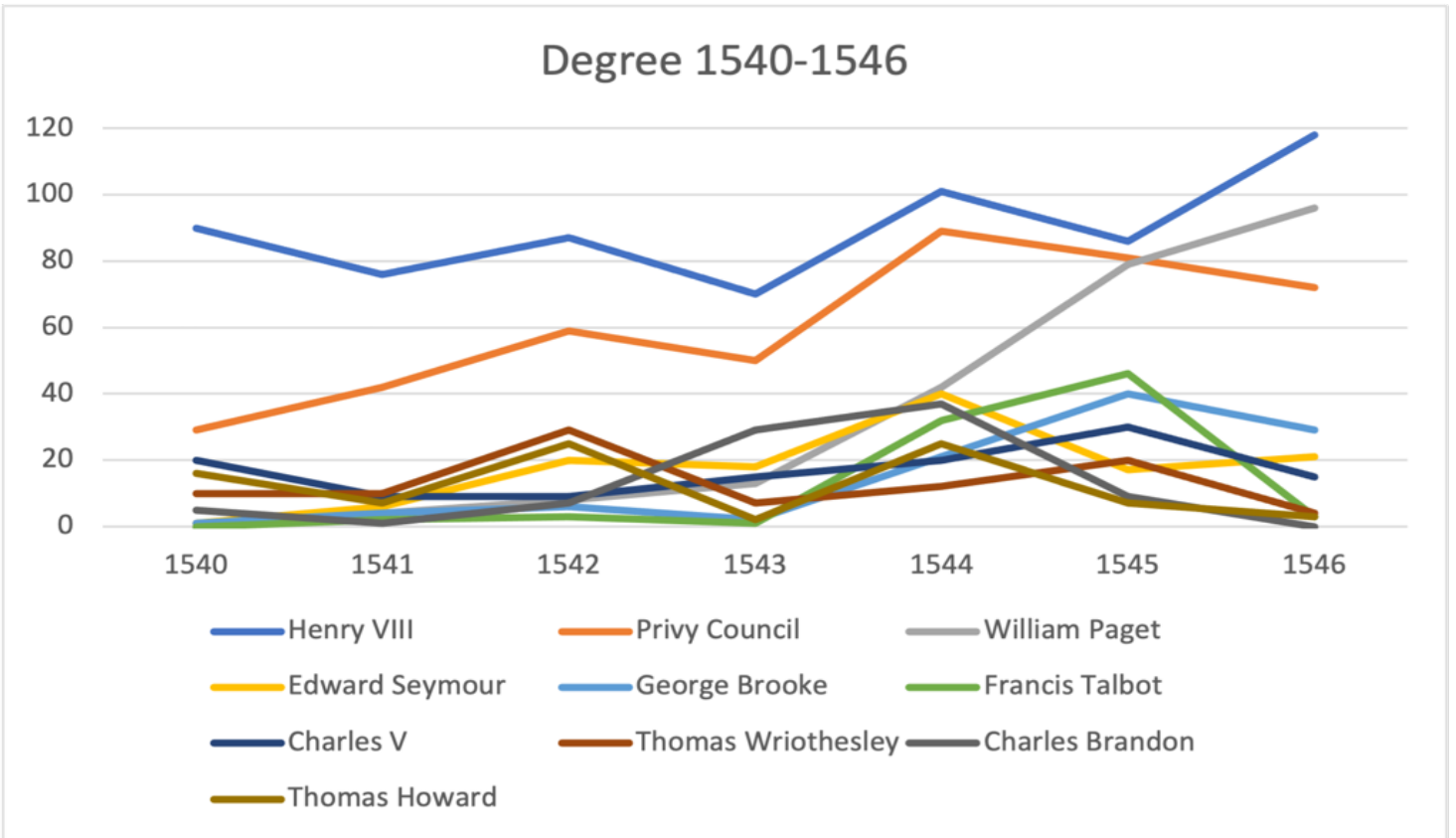
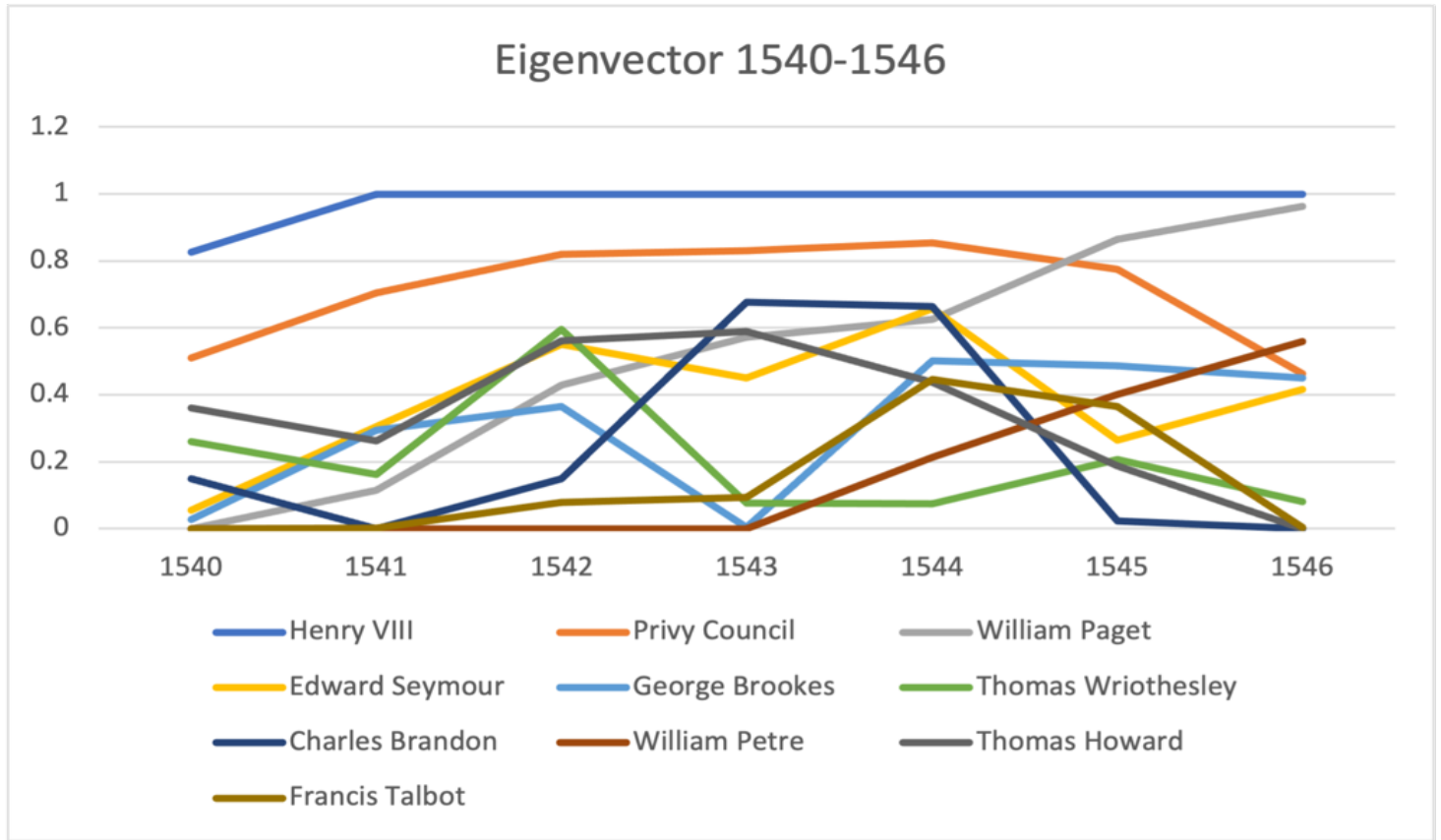


Figure 38. Eigenvector and degree centrality scores for the top ten nodes plotted between 1540-1546, as in Chapter II.

Paget's ascendancy in the network in this last year was dependent on Henry's infirmity: the more ill the king became, the more he withdrew from larger social circles and Council meetings, relying instead on a smaller selection of individuals to manage business, of which Paget was the most utilised. Had the king lived longer – and healthier – it is perhaps unlikely that he would have ceded such power to one individual again, and Paget would instead have continued in the reduced influence of the other secretaries, like Sadler, Wriothesley, and Petre. Paget's dominance of the network was tied to Henry's bad health and therefore, like the king himself, inevitably had a time limit.

Despite becoming the most significant secretary in the network since Cromwell, then, Paget was still unable to hold Cromwell's administrative prowess and dominance of the epistolary structure. To some extent the volume of Cromwell's correspondence is abnormal compared to the rest of the archives for this period; to liken number of letters or neighbours between the two Principal Secretaries is potentially not a fair mode of comparison. It is important to therefore account for the significant differences in network sizes between Cromwell's tenure and Paget's, as outlined above. Comparing their engagement with their own network as context is the more effective way to consider roles and dominance in the structures. As seen when mapping the makeup of the archives in Chapter II, Cromwell dominated a large portion of his network. In Cromwell's most active year in 1536, the individual year in which he held the largest percentage of network edges, he accounted for 44.6% of the connections in the giant component. When this is compared to Paget's most active year, 1546, the new Principal Secretary only holds 16.5% of the giant component. Even Henry, also at his most active in 1546, only holds 20% of the giant component. Comparing the most active Principal Secretary in Henry's last seven years to Cromwell himself contends with suggestions that Cromwell only wrote so many letters and managed his business through correspondence because he was a secretary: clearly, this was not the case for the rest of those holding the role in this period.

Of course, this may in part be because of the split in the role. The division of responsibilities did not merely mean outgoing letters, but all 'incoming' duties as well. As seen in Chapter VI, regional Councils and ambassadors abroad wrote additional letters to Cromwell alongside reports addressed to the king to ensure that important information was received and acted upon. In the network post-1540, much like the rest of the measurements in the network, this was not a position in the structure held by one node. Rather, the same Councils and ambassadorial posts once writing to Cromwell instead addressed a variety of Councillors and courtiers alongside Henry. In fact, as can be seen from Figure 39, detailing the distribution of reports from regional Councils and ambassadors, there was a distinct difference in recipients between the correspondence from the Councils and the ambassadors. Overall, the volume of correspondence from the Councils was much

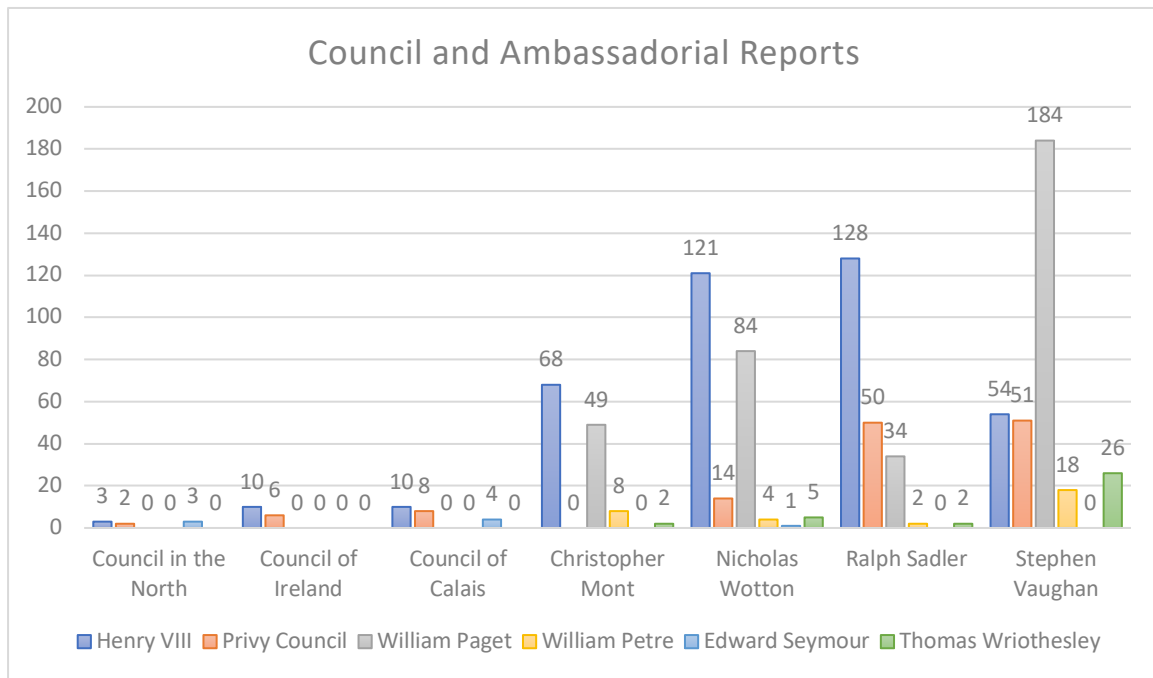


Figure 39. A graph depicting distribution of ambassadorial and regional Council reports to ministers at court.

smaller than that from ambassadors operating abroad, reflecting again the focus on and problems with foreign diplomacy rather than domestic affairs in these last seven years. There was also some distinction in who reports were sent to at court. Though few in number, the reports from regional Councils were addressed primarily to the Privy Council, with some also to Edward Seymour. In many respects, writing to the Council was the most effective option, using the smallest number of letters needed to reach a wide audience of advisors at once, read aloud in one meeting. Though Paget was one of these advisors – and writing to the Privy Council inevitably meant writing to the secretary – it diminished his personal role in the network, and removed a sense of individual influence, subsumed as he was by collective discussion and decision. It also speaks to domestic affairs being the priority of the Council rather than the Principal Secretary as suggested above. Clearly this diminished responsibility in receiving reports cannot be attributed to the splitting of the secretary role alone, but rather the changed expectations of advice and governance at court. By contrast, the ambassadors wrote primarily to Paget with secondary additional reports, again reflecting the expected responsibilities of the Principal Secretary to manage foreign affairs.

Despite expectations for the Principal Secretary’s role, there was still a distribution of these reports amongst other nodes as well. Although, aside from Sadler’s reports, Paget was still the leading recipient after Henry, these ambassadors still made sure that information was not merely sent to one intermediary node, sending reports to the Privy Council, William Petre, and Thomas Wriothesley (both during and beyond his tenure as Principal Secretary). Of these ambassadors, only Vaughan prioritised Paget above the king as a contact at court. However, as Ian Blanchard

points out, Vaughan's high volume of letters to the secretary in this period were filled with pleas for Paget to find him a new wife, rather than any diplomatic affairs.<sup>379</sup> Paget was unable to dominate incoming information in the same way that Cromwell had. Whilst this has regularly been attributed to Cromwell's role as Principal Secretary, the lack of continuity in this procedure after his fall from power makes clear that it was his dominance of the network – and of the king's ear – that led to his inclusion in this information process, rather than his place as secretary.

More importantly, in a number of instances, Paget also used this multi-recipient approach himself to make sure information reached the king, regularly sending additional letters to his partner Petre to help garner the king's attention and receive responses whilst the senior secretary was on diplomatic missions abroad and writing to Henry in England. On 23rd April 1546, having sent a report to Henry himself the same day, Paget also wrote to Petre asking him to learn "the *kinges majesties* pleasur *with* diligence for thanswer to my *letteres* to his *majestie*".<sup>380</sup> In December of the same year, Paget wrote to Petre to "signifie vnto *you* to be declared to the *kinges majestie*" the result of his conversation with Duke Phillip, and asking again that Petre reply "with such answer as shall lyke his *majestie* to make."<sup>381</sup> Despite assertions by Gammon and Jack that Paget was closest to the king in these final years, he still required aid in having his letters reach the ears of the king. Though Cromwell did not have the diplomatic missions that Paget did, and remained physically much closer to the king throughout his tenure as Principal Secretary, even when the king and his chief minister were separated Cromwell wrote directly and *only* to the king. Such can be seen during the king's visitations to coastal defences and Cromwell's illness in 1539; though it is likely that Cromwell would have used a trusted agent (such as Ralph Sadler) to physically pass the letters to the king, in many ways this direct communication with the king was another form of gatekeeping. By refusing to use additional letters to include other members of the court in ongoing business or Cromwell's communication with the king, the minister maintained an almost private link with the king. By contrast, Paget's use of Petre to send messages to and from the king not only suggests that Paget's personal link with the king was not as strong as that between Henry and Cromwell, but also implies that Paget was unable to act as gatekeeper to information in the same way as his predecessor could. This is further evidence that power and responsibility was more widely distributed and balanced in the post-Cromwell network than beforehand.

Though the co-operation between Paget and Petre was perhaps expected from those splitting the duties of one office, this collaborative information sharing and dispersal extended beyond the secretaries. On 29th December 1545, the Privy Council wrote to Paget in France that

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<sup>379</sup> Blanchard, 'Vaughan,' *ODNB*.

<sup>380</sup> TNA, SP 1/217 f.72.

<sup>381</sup> TNA, SP 1/227 f.17.



“the kinges *maiestie* [has] seen *your letters* addressed to mr *secretary* William petre” and that on the king’s orders Paget and his colleagues should “as soon as ye can return to his *Maiestie*.”<sup>382</sup> A similar process can be seen with Thomas Wriothesley as Lord Chancellor in August 1545. Writing directly to the king, Wriothesley stated “that according to *your commandment* I haue travailed *with* the rest of *your highneses* counsail here to knowe what hathe been receyved & what hathe been paid sithens my *departure* from London.”<sup>383</sup> The implication here is that, having received private instructions from the king, Wriothesley was still working and sharing information with the Privy Council as a whole. He went on to forward to Paget a summary of his “brief declaracion to the kinges *Maiestie*.”<sup>384</sup> Addressed to Paget as “Master Secretary”, Wriothesley acknowledged Paget’s position as secretary to both king and Council.<sup>385</sup>

What this close reading examination of information dispersal demonstrates is that whilst Paget held an important position in the post-1540 network, he was unable to monopolise interaction structures at court in the same way Cromwell had. Unlike Cromwell therefore, arguments which refer to Paget as the “linchpin both of Henry’s diplomatic correspondence and the national intelligence network” are exaggerated.<sup>386</sup> In fact the network from 1540-1547 is stable enough that, despite Paget’s pre-eminence in centrality measurement rankings, most of the network could survive without him. If Paget’s removal is modelled in the same way as Cromwell’s in Chapter V, the giant component retains 95.9% of the nodes (1,103 of 1,150) and 92.6% of the edges (2,314 of 2,499) present before removing the new Principal Secretary. Though as demonstrated from comparing the model of Cromwell’s removal to the reality, these experiments cannot always predict structurally unexpected impacts of a node’s departure from the network, it still demonstrates that Paget was not integral to the robustness of the network. Instead, an effective and secure administrative framework was in place to protect the network from crumbling should another node of importance be suddenly removed. Alongside the development of the Principal Secretary role, this administrative framework was another part of Cromwell’s legacy plan.

Comparing Cromwell in the network with those that succeeded him as Principal Secretary is an important means of contextualising the chief minister. But it must be remembered that Cromwell’s plans for the Principal Secretary role were not simply for his successor to be *him*, another node to dominate the network and take over all administrative responsibilities. In fact, Cromwell had ensured this would not happen by splitting the duties of the Secretary while he was still alive. It is plausible to suggest that Cromwell had been formulating this plan for a while,

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<sup>382</sup> TNA, SP 1/212 f.141.

<sup>383</sup> TNA, SP 1/206 f.159.

<sup>384</sup> TNA, SP 1/206 f.161.

<sup>385</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> Jack, ‘Paget’, *ODNB*; Borman, *Henry VIII*, 384.

potentially since his debilitating illness in the March of 1539. It is difficult to imagine that an illness as significant as a “fytt of the ague [that] casted me downe and held me in a grete hete a bouthe a x howres” could not have impressed on Cromwell a sense of his own mortality.<sup>387</sup> Though he would not have expected the drastic departure from power he eventually suffered, it is clear that Cromwell was aware that no-one else possessed his governing and administrative prowess, and he needed to create a legacy or succession plan that could adapt and survive without him. His legacy, then, was the introduction of an administratively sound framework that relied on *positions* not *personalities*: this is why the 1540-47 network presents a structure without hubs but with a higher average weight on its edges. Though Cromwell himself defied Burt’s assertions that personality or individuality is irrelevant in creating change or power in a network structure, the minister designed a legacy that exemplified this network theory.

### *Elton Reconsidered: The Privy Council*

Whilst the Principal Secretaries were not *de facto* replacements for Cromwell, there was a successor to the chief minister in the network, in the form of the Privy Council. As outlined in the last chapter, the Privy Council was the most dominant advisory node in the network, scoring second across all three centrality measurements. More than this, as can be seen by calculating the paths to and from Henry in the network, the Council was the most used intermediary in both directions, second only in frequency to direct edges with the king himself. Not only was the Council one of the most dominant actors in the final years of Henry’s reign, it also held the most similar structural role to Cromwell as was possible in this period. The Council should not merely be considered the successor to Cromwell however, but by taking a longer view of its role in the network and considering its formation and development as an institution, the Council can be considered more specifically in terms of a Cromwellian legacy. The debate around the creation and organisation of the Privy Council is an ongoing contention in Tudor historiography and a cornerstone of Elton’s canonical work *The Tudor Revolution in Government* in 1953; but despite a large volume of contributions to the conversation since, historians have yet to reach a consensus.<sup>388</sup> Though it is beyond the remit of this thesis to fully unpack this debate, post-1540 network metrics can be used to briefly assess the evolution of the Privy Council and its relationship with Cromwell.

For Elton, the changes to the Privy Council through the 1530s were part and parcel of the wider administrative ‘revolution’ that frames the rest of his work, and Cromwell’s hand can be

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<sup>387</sup> BL, Cotton Nero B/VI f.5.

<sup>388</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*. For contributions to the debate see Wernham, review of *Tudor Revolution*; Bernard, *Power and Politics*; Guy, ‘The Privy Council: Revolution or Evolution?’ in *Revolution Reassessed*, 59-85 and ‘Reform of Henrician Government’, 35-57; Loades, *Power in Tudor England*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997); and Coleman, ‘Introduction,’ 1-11.

seen in this development as much as any other governmental changes of this period. The Privy Council proper was distinguished from Henry's informal personal councillors by what Elton himself describes as mostly superficial and fluid differences, which leads in part to this ongoing difficulty in precisely determining the Council's origins. Elton suggests that Cromwell built on this informal inner ring and some of Wolsey's early ideas, who also looked to reform this concept of Council, but the changes made were mostly of Cromwell's own design. The Privy Council was created and formalised during Cromwell's tenure – as Elton proposes, between 1534 and 1536 – and Cromwell saw himself as chief and leader of the Council but did not allow it to challenge his own personal authority in government and with the king. Unlike Wolsey, Cromwell did not merely dismiss the Council but rather used it as another arm of the administrative structure he used to control business, demonstrated in earlier chapters of this thesis.

John Guy has instead suggested that the Privy Council was not officially formed until 1537, formalised from the emergency Council created specifically in response to the Pilgrimage of Grace revolts starting in 1536.<sup>389</sup> Though Guy argues Cromwell's inability to take control of the new Council eventually led to his downfall, he also suggests (somewhat conflictingly) that Cromwell offered no official structure or bureaucracy to the Council, preferring instead his own personal governance and meaning that the Council saw no real ascendancy or formal organization until after the chief minister's death in 1540.<sup>390</sup> Starkey goes further to suggest that "the Council temporarily elbowed [Cromwell] aside" as a response to the Pilgrimage of Grace, and the Council was definitively not "the crowning achievement of the great minister's endless search for efficiency and tidiness," but rather established in opposition to and as a restraint on Cromwell's own power.<sup>391</sup> In these arguments, the supremacy of the Privy Council after Cromwell's death not only 'proves' that the Council was not of his design, but demonstrates that the Council had finally 'won' in its competition with Cromwell in 1540.

To a great extent, the measures demonstrated in these final chapters agree with Elton's assertions and adjusting the methodological framework in such a way prompts a critical reconsideration of his arguments. Though the changes to the Privy Council were not quite a 'revolution' (a term Elton himself came to reconsider), neither were they the result of a natural and agentless evolution as those such as Guy would suggest.<sup>392</sup> Elton suggests that the Privy Council was formalised between 1534-1536, though this is not to say that there was not any form of Council before this – references to a 'king's Privy Council' are scattered throughout the State Papers and Cromwell's own writings prior to this, and despite assertions that no version of the Council existed

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<sup>389</sup> Guy, 'Privy Council,' 85.

<sup>390</sup> *ibid*; Guy, *Tudor England*, 164.

<sup>391</sup> Starkey, 'After the Revolution,' in *Revolution Reassessed*, 200; 207.

<sup>392</sup> Guy, 'Privy Council,' 70.

before the 1530s, the network shows early communication with some kind of Council from as early as 1524 in the dataset for this thesis.<sup>393</sup> Though these may be mistakenly addressed to a non-existent or informal entity (or reflects retroactive authorial attribution by archivists), it still implies an awareness of *some* type of Council to the king operating before 1534. Cromwell's remembrance for the creation of a Council is not to say that nothing existed beforehand, but that Cromwell sought to propose the establishment of a formalised and organised Privy Council, building on the processes already in place. The timing of these proposals also fits other administrative alterations implemented by Cromwell at the same time, such as the *Acte conceryng Clerkes of the signet and Privie Seale* in 1535 explored earlier, created to formalise the process between the different seal offices for authenticating warrants.<sup>394</sup> More importantly, a 1534-1536 window for the formalisation of the Privy Council correlates with other regional Councils established by Cromwell. Though the Council in the North is most often – and to a great extent correctly – envisaged as a response to the Pilgrimage of Grace, Cromwell's remembrances in April 1533 already detailed plans for the creation of the regional Council in the West. The troubles in the North may have hurried Cromwell's revival of the northern regional authority, but it was evidently part of a pre-existing plan for devolved governance and heightened administrative efficiency.

The changes to the Privy Council in this period should be thought of alongside these other Council developments instead of apart from them, then, envisaging the Privy Council as another 'hub' for administrative business and control. That it was designed to operate along the same lines as these other Councils is clear from when Henry joined the front lines of his French war, and the Council split, forming smaller itinerant and regional Councils to help manage missives and governance. Formatted and functioning the same, it is surprising that so much traditional historiography seeks to so drastically distinguish these regional Councils and the Privy Council from one another, simply to serve an argument that Cromwell created one and not the other. Indeed, it can be argued that the distinct absence of these Councils from Guy's discussion on local authorities is because acknowledging the similarities between the regional Councils and the Privy Council would fundamentally undermine his argument that moves the evolution of the Privy Council away from Cromwell's influence.<sup>395</sup> Though the Privy Council was certainly senior, rather than equal, to its regional counterparts, it followed a similar pattern of conciliar governance reporting back to the king and Cromwell, as can consistently be seen in the epistolary network.

To accept a pre-existing plan for Councils across the country also refutes the idea that the Privy Council was an impulse reaction to the northern uprisings. Rather, the speed at which the

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<sup>393</sup> L&P add. 944.

<sup>394</sup> 'Chapter XI', 542-543.

<sup>395</sup> Guy, 'Reform of Henrician Government,' 35-57.

Privy Council was able to – or at least appeared to – take control during the Pilgrimage of Grace, jumping from eight letters in 1535 to thirty-six in 1536, suggests that a formal organised structure was already in place and ready to be used. As established in Chapter III, Cromwell’s quietness in the network in this period was not indicative of a loss of power but, for fear of intercepted letters and increased ire amongst the rebels, Cromwell governed through the administrative arm of the Privy Council instead. The Privy Council was an alternate means of control for Cromwell, rather than something created and functioning in opposition to his individual authority as chief minister, and its return to a reduced presence in the network after the revolts consolidates this. The speed and efficiency with which the Privy Council was able to operate in 1536 was a glimpse into the future and the ways the Council could takeover in 1540 after Cromwell’s death.

The lack of surviving records or indeed Council letters perhaps complicates arguments for any organised institution in the mid-1530s; but by this same logic there can conceivably be no formal Privy Council until the inauguration of the registers in August 1540 or changes in letter signatures outlined in the last chapter. The absence of documents can again be attributed to archival losses, and undoubtedly this accounts at least in part for some missing correspondence. More significantly however, just like the rest of the administrative governance of Henry’s court, it is likely that these documents do not exist as formal Council records because it was managed through Cromwell’s private correspondence and business records instead. The absence of documents is not only indicative of a Council lacking demonstrative and independent power, but one explicitly subsumed by Cromwell’s administrative control. Indeed, as early as May 1533, Cromwell was writing “Remembrances to be put into my book for things done in the Council,” alongside heavily annotated and corrected memoranda in his own hand in December of the same year, and regular letters from Cromwell himself detailing and managing Council business.<sup>396</sup> Historians such as Wernham, Bernard, and Guy have suggested that Cromwell’s personal management of business undermines Elton’s suggestions that the minister created formal and organised administrative processes.<sup>397</sup> But this view not only fundamentally misunderstands Elton’s arguments but Cromwell’s administrative dominance as well. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, Cromwell created structures for others that he himself ignored: he recognised that others required these processes to remain efficient, but he himself could act outside of them, capable of much more work than other administrators of Henry’s court and, at the same time, in charge of them. Historians consistently highlight this as an argument *against* Elton, not realising that this was in fact his own view:

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<sup>396</sup> L&P, vol. VI, no. 551; 1487.

<sup>397</sup> Wernham, ‘Review,’ 94; Bernard, *Power and Politics*, 129; and Guy, ‘Reform of Henrician Government,’ 49.

Though [Cromwell] gave ample proof of his desire to see the secretarial offices and the seals more thoroughly organized, he was ready to cut across the organization because his personal control obviated the need for more formal control. Though he preferred a board of government to a loose group of leading Councillors, he made no bones about his own outstanding on that board.<sup>398</sup>

Understanding Cromwell's role in the formalising of the Privy Council, and the ways it relates to other administrative changes instigated by the chief minister offers a means to consider the Council as another aspect of Cromwell's legacy. The dominance of the Privy Council post-1540 was not the drastic rise of a competing entity, operating in ways completely different to Cromwell's administration; rather, as Loades as highlighted, "when [Cromwell] fell in 1540 the reformed Council continued to function along the lines which he had laid down and kept a formal written record of its business."<sup>399</sup> The rejection of this idea stems primarily from wider issues in historiography of the Tudor period introduced earlier that seek to frame power or changes in influence as a binary or conflict. This has already been seen with the king versus minister and factional debates discussed in Chapter IV, and it extends to cover the formalisation of advice in the 1540s as well: the Privy Council cannot be conceived as Cromwell's design within this binary construct because it 'wins' after the minister's death. Yet the epistemological shift performed throughout this thesis has sought to reduce (if not remove) this element of contention in power balances, considering them instead as co-operative and transitory, as in Chapter IV. Removing this explicitly antagonistic framing of power and influence in the Tudor reign means the Privy Council can be comfortably viewed not only as Cromwell's creation but his selected successor in the network and at court. Though this would likely be more obvious had Cromwell enjoyed a more gradual denouement of his power (rather than the quick removal of his head), the formalisation and power of the Privy Council should be considered part and parcel of the same administrative plan that split the Principal Secretaries and entrenched seal processes in the 1530s, reflecting the wider trend of Cromwell's goal to distribute and stabilise power at court.

### *Cromwell's Legacy*

Assessing Cromwell's involvement in changes to and formalisation of roles and institutions during his lifetime offers a means of considering his legacy; but considering the impact this had on the network after his death establishes the final years of Henry's reign as not merely 'after Cromwell' but as a distinct continuation of his administrative plans. Using the comparisons between Cromwell and dominant nodes in the later network established in this chapter, this final

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<sup>398</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 416.

<sup>399</sup> Loades, *Tudor England*, 178.

section demonstrates the ways network metrics illustrate the longevity and success of Cromwell's plans.

In some ways, the diminished role of the Principal Secretaries in the network after 1540 can be seen as a failure of Cromwell to establish a legacy in the network, not again returning as a continued powerhouse until the likes of the Cecils and Francis Walsingham under Elizabeth I. The role Cromwell had spent seven years developing into the most significant minister at court was once again much less influential in the network after his death, except for Paget for the other reasons already outlined. As Elton has argued,

The consequence often is that the rule of the great man's successors turns out to be particularly ineffective because his hand, so necessary in the smooth running of his system, cannot be replaced. Something of the sort happened when Thomas Cromwell fell, and he must certainly bear some blame for the weaknesses of the twenty years after his death.<sup>400</sup>

Basing the success of Cromwell's legacy solely on the dominance of the Principal Secretaries in the network is problematic, however, for two key reasons. Firstly, it underestimates the role of individual personality in the success or failure of a particular role. So much of Cromwell's administrative prowess and network dominance stemmed from him as a person rather than any named office that he held. Secondly, it presumes that Cromwell's administrative changes were driven by the dominance of the Principal Secretary office. In fact, Cromwell's aim was not to make the Principal Secretary supreme except as an avenue for his own power; his goal instead was for a balanced, secure, and maintainable power structure and administrative framework, beyond the ascendancy of one or even two individuals. The Privy Council was the more effective demonstration of Cromwell's ideas, bearing all the hallmarks of Cromwell's administrative dominance both in its processes and its entire reformed existence.

Understanding Cromwell's role in the network in 1534-1540, as in Sections I and II, creates a baseline 'profile' by which to establish a comparable successor to Cromwell in the years after his death.<sup>401</sup> Though, as above, Paget appears to 'fail' in matching this profile, the Privy Council (whilst still not perfect) more successfully fulfils the criteria. As demonstrated in the last chapter, the Privy Council was second only to Henry in rankings for the three main centrality measurements used throughout this thesis. Though Cromwell superseded even Henry in these measurements in 1534-1540, the Privy Council was the top scoring advisory node in these last seven years. As seen above in discussing the modelled network and paths to and from the king in the new graph, the Privy Council not only took Cromwell's role as most used intermediary on HSPs and HTPs, but it

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<sup>400</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 416.

<sup>401</sup> For more on using network profiles for finding similar nodes see Ahnert and Ahnert, 'Metadata,' 27-51.

also shared many paths with Cromwell *before* his death, suggesting that it was built to take over as a successor in the same way Wriothesley was. Unlike the new Principal Secretary however, the Privy Council was much more successful in maintaining and utilising these paths, less reliant as it was on individual identity and influence. Ambassadorial and regional Council reports can again be looked to as perceptions of contemporary power. Whilst Paget received a large volume of reports from ambassadors abroad, the Privy Council was the only node to receive consistent additional reports from both Councils at home and agents away [Fig. 39]. This suggests that, amongst these diplomatic officials after Cromwell's fall, the best means of ensuring intelligence reached the king and was acted upon was to also send it to the Privy Council, acknowledging it as the second most influential node in the network after Henry himself. Even the senior secretary operating primarily for the Council is indicative of its role as successor to Cromwell. The senior secretary, as suggested above, was not serving the Council because of design or because of any inherent function of the Privy Council and Principal Secretary dynamic, but because the Privy Council was the successor to Cromwell in the network, just as Wriothesley had originally worked for Cromwell in those final few months in 1540. If a new *individual* successor to Cromwell had appeared it is likely that the senior secretary would work with or for them as the basis of most administrative work; but it was the Privy Council that was deliberately envisaged by Cromwell as his successor. In many ways, the Council as an entity even took over some of Cromwell's classic 'secretarial' duties, sharing readings of the king's letters and dispersing the king's instructions and managing his business through its own correspondence. Much more work needs to be done on the establishment of the Council, Cromwell's involvement in this, and its developing management of the network, but comparing its profile to Cromwell's profile as chief minister is one means of determining its place as part of Cromwell's legacy.

It is vital to acknowledge in these comparisons therefore that Cromwell's network 'profile' cannot be reduced to that of a Principal Secretary, but was instead that of a chief minister, or even a distinctly Cromwellian chief minister. Too much historical literature has become entrenched in the idea that Cromwell and the title of Principal Secretary are synonymous, and that his duties in this role were the defining features of his administration. This was not the case during his life nor in his legacy. As this thesis has striven to emphasise, Cromwell's influence lay in his unique identity and personal power which he gave to the Principal Secretary office, not the other way round, and distinctions *must* be made between Cromwell as secretary and Cromwell as chief minister, however much they may appear to overlap.

A final significant distinction between Cromwell's role in the network before his fall and the Privy Council's after remains to be explored. Whilst Cromwell's removal from the network, as modelled in Chapter V, has a destructive impact, the Privy Council's removal, much like Paget's,



has a minimal effect: in fact, when the Privy Council is removed, 95.8% (1,102 of 1,150) of nodes and 89.2% (2,229 of 2,499) of the edges in the giant component before removal remain. Despite having a network profile closest to that of Cromwell, the Privy Council's removal from the network does not present as large a threat to the functioning and survival of the network as that of the former chief minister. Elton's argument around Cromwell's reforming of the Privy Council from the informal group of advisors to the formal institution was that

the difference between these two kinds of Council, however superficially unimportant, is profound in the sense that the one permitted great variations in the methods of government while the others standardized them; over-poweringly great ministers were possible under the one system but not under the other.<sup>402</sup>

Reforming the Privy Council – and indeed, the entire administrative framework and the power structure held within – not only prevented the possibility of another ‘over-poweringly great minister’ but in doing so it simultaneously created a more robust and balanced network structure, less susceptible to huge losses as it had been with the potential removal of Cromwell from the network. The concept of the Privy Council as a leading advisory node in the network also attempted to secure the stability of the graph, meaning that even its minimal impact upon removal was highly unlikely. As Carley, Lee, and Krackhardt have demonstrated, power vacuums are much less likely to appear in decentralised, distributed power networks – such as that designed by Cromwell – than in a hierarchical network with one dominant, powerful node.<sup>403</sup> Perhaps envisaging the problems that would occur at his own death, Cromwell sought to prevent further problems. Much like the king himself, the Privy Council held power by existing as a construct, rather than an individual. When members died or retired, they were replaced without any changes to the wider Council's functions or rankings in the network. The Privy Council would – in theory – hold the same influence in the network regardless of its members, as much as the monarch would be the most powerful person in the country, whoever wore the crown.

The stability of the network, resulting from Cromwell's reforms prioritising shared control with changes to the secretary and the Privy Council, inevitably supports Elton's argument that Cromwell's administrative changes sought to formalise court governance and move away from the sway of individual needs and ambition. Again, though Cromwell himself still operated under *personal* control and *personal* administration, his legacy was a structure that moved others away from this system. Even the evolution of the Principal Secretary after Cromwell meant that the office served the ‘state’ rather than just the personal monarch; that is to say, the Principal Secretary was

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<sup>402</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 319.

<sup>403</sup> Kathleen M. Carley, Ju-Sung Lee and David Krackhardt, ‘Destabilizing Networks’, *Connections* 24, no. 3, (2002): 88.

no longer specifically – or only – serving as Henry’s secretary but had by this stage, with its integral links with the Privy Council, come to truly embody the term ‘Secretary of State’. Though Henry would ultimately still determine who held favour in the Council and court, and as seen in the last chapter, dictate events that influenced network rankings, there was enough division of responsibilities and influence within the structure to prevent a single node taking over the entire network again as with Cromwell. Of course, there were still powerful ministers in the Council or at court, and an element of personality still held sway. Historians such as Wernham and Bernard countering Elton’s argument have taken such umbrage with the term ‘revolution’ that any sign of personal influence after Cromwell’s fall is an indicator that Elton was incorrect in his assertion of a bureaucratised government. Rather, as Elton argues, clear steps had been made by Cromwell to create more formalised systems, and Henry’s government was much closer to this at the minister’s death than it had been at any other stage in his reign. The absence of a chief minister post-1540 was not merely because Henry had evidently chosen to take back more personal control, but also because Cromwell left behind a legacy that separated and shared the work. The problem remains, of course, that Cromwell was removed from power far swifter than he had anticipated. Though Elton suggests that Cromwell’s own personal ascendancy meant that he “saw nothing incongruous in leaving [the Privy Council’s] formal organization incomplete,” it should be argued that this was more a result of his sudden fall than poor administrative planning. It is likely that had Cromwell’s departure from power been more gradual or amicable (a rare honour in Henry’s reign), there may have been a more complete legacy plan, closer to the now infamous ‘revolution’. As it is, Cromwell was the architect of a system he never got to build, his sudden fall resulting in a slightly unfinished blueprint that speaks to unfulfilled administrative promise. It is ironic that though he would not live long enough to fully establish a successful legacy plan, it was the believed betrayal bound up in Cromwell’s death that would ensure Henry would never allow another dominant minister to rise again.

Assessing the network as a whole in the wake of Cromwell’s fall speaks to many of the debates surrounding the minister and his legacy. The strengthened communication between nodes evidenced in Chapter VII and the successful following of administrative protocols established in the 1530s existed *because* of Cromwell, not in spite of him. Though Chapter V criticised the model network for not producing one node that could single-handedly replicate Cromwell, even on the paths to and from Henry that would survive the minister’s removal, the model predicts the shared responsibilities of the post-1540 network. And it is this, in essence, that was Elton’s argument, so often misunderstood and misconstrued by those attempting to engage with his thesis. Cromwell created these administrative structures and processes, and ignored them whilst he was in power, as he was proficient enough to not need them; however, he was abundantly aware that this would not

be feasible by anyone else taking over after him. The structures and processes, then, were Cromwell's true successors and legacies, not the personalities that filled them. Though Cromwell himself defied Burt's argument that individuality has no impact on the functioning of a network, the institutions and roles he created revolved around the idea that individual personalities should serve no purpose in a functioning administrative framework. Much like the Principal Secretary role, the Privy Council was designed to create a sustainable advisory and administrative structure irrelevant of personal identities. Whilst the Principal Secretary was no longer the dominant node in the network, this is not to say that Cromwell had no lasting impact on the structure. Rather, his legacy lasted on after his death in the Privy Council and the functioning of the robust epistolary network.

## Conclusion

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1547 at the age of 55, Henry VIII died at Whitehall Palace, attended in his last moments by Archbishop Cranmer. He left his crown to his only surviving son, Edward VI, who, as a minor at the age of nine, was to rule with a regent. Though custom dictated only one person held this regent role, Henry used his final weeks to establish sixteen Protectors to act as a Regency Council for his heir.<sup>404</sup> Seven years after the death of his last chief minister, Henry was still conscious of the issues caused by having just one leading advisor. Cromwell's legacy – the impact of his fall and the governing structures he established – outlived the king he had served and extended into the reigns beyond. In exploring epistolary networks during and after Cromwell's time as chief minister to Henry, this thesis has offered a fresh means to consider varied elements of Cromwell's power: his rise, his fall, and the lasting impact of his administration.

### *The Fall of Thomas Cromwell*

Though this thesis has broadly moved away from a more traditional events-based analysis of Cromwell's career, the question of his fall from power still sits at its heart. In adapting the framework by which this critical turning point in Tudor politics is approached, this thesis has effectively reframed the ways Cromwell's fall can be considered to re-evaluate historical narratives. Whilst, as shown in the introduction, traditional historiography has tended to focus on the role of factions, Cromwell's religion, or Henry's failing marriage to Anne of Cleves as the tipping point for Cromwell's power, the networks in this thesis do not explicitly support any of these common narratives. In part, as shown in Section III, this stems from Henry's refusal to continue fuelling factional disputes after Cromwell's fall. More significantly, however, network analysis offers a distant reading of events, both in terms of the sources (considering not just Cromwell and his connections, but the wider network and its impact) and the timeframe normally studied as well, placing a greater emphasis on broader structural changes in influencing Cromwell's power. As Chapter II demonstrates by taking this longer view of the network, Cromwell's influence was waning from as early as 1539: not only had Cromwell's degree and weighted degree dropped from 1538 – from 510 to 407 and 1,235 to 852 respectively – Henry's eigenvector score rose to its highest since 1533. Whilst Loades and Schofield consider the turn of events to be a quick affair, the latter suggesting that the afternoon of Cromwell's arrest was “sudden and hastily planned,” the network presents a long-building sense of foreboding or even preparation for the removal of Cromwell.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Wooding, *Henry VIII*, 273.

<sup>405</sup> Schofield, *Thomas Cromwell*, 389; Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 202-203.

As shown in Chapter VI however, it was structural changes in the network in the first half of 1540 that were ultimately responsible for Cromwell's downfall. Whilst the minister was still able to manage most of the king's business in these final months, Cromwell's historical antagonism towards and inability to provide a link with the French king in the epistolary network in this period left a critical chink in his armour, one which the Duke of Norfolk was only too keen to exploit. Though historians have looked to Norfolk providing his niece Katherine Howard as a solution to Henry's marriage woes as the reason for the duke's renewed favour at court and influence with the king, the network demonstrates that it was Norfolk's links to – and promises of an alliance with – the French court that would ultimately prove Cromwell's undoing.

Finally, network analysis offers new ways to consider 'silences' in the archives with which historiographical explanations of Cromwell's fall have often contended. Whilst epistolary networks cannot prove the existence of links or power shifts without the relevant evidence, distant reading frameworks can identify and explore these 'silences' in ways that humanist, close reading approaches cannot, offering fresh insight. Whilst Norfolk is notable by his connection to Francis in 1540, Gardiner is equally conspicuous by his absence from the network. Comparing the absences from the network with qualitative historical readings of the sources can often offer just as much indication of the forces at play as the distinct presences do. Interestingly, whilst Gardiner and Norfolk are commonly considered as working together in orchestrating Cromwell's downfall, the network demonstrates that – even if they were partners – they operated in vastly different ways, perhaps suggesting they were not co-operating as closely as traditionally suggested.

Network analysis throughout this thesis highlights the ways Cromwell's power stemmed from the structural advantages he could offer Henry; and that, in turn, his inability to offer links or indeed mediate between his enemies and his king would ultimately be his downfall. Though the historiographical accounts of Cromwell's fall outlined in the introduction point to several of the puzzle pieces in Cromwell's fall, they are unable to build these into a full picture without the distant reading offered by network analysis. Rather than just repeat pre-existing arguments then, this thesis makes an explicit distinction between what the sources can offer and *how* they do this, using network analysis to scaffold historiographical insights with new kinds of evidence. This thesis not only uses the network to reify some pre-existing arguments using alternative methodologies, but also seeks to offer a reassessment of what it means to consider Cromwell's fall, expanding the question to view the extended aftermath as well. In doing so, it contends with assertions that Cromwell's fall was not his alone, demonstrating the impact it had not only for those considered allies, but his opponents at court as well.<sup>406</sup> Furthermore it suggests that when studying Cromwell, death should not be considered the end. Rather his legacy, and its continuation after his death,

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<sup>406</sup> Loades, *Thomas Cromwell*, 213; MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell*, 534.

should be framed as part and parcel of his fall from power. The questions at the heart of this thesis seek not to explore Cromwell's fall as isolated from any other events at Henry's court, but to examine its consequences in a longer context. Much like network analysis, it is by adopting this distant reading framework that the most fruitful insights into his life and legacy can be gleaned.

### *The Chief Minister*

As this thesis has demonstrated then, minimising Cromwell's influence and legacy not only misunderstands the impact of Cromwell's work in his own lifetime but beyond it as well. In doing so, it has illustrated not just that Cromwell was the most dominant player at the Tudor court, but how he held this dominance as well. In adopting a source- and methodology-focused approach to Cromwell's career, built on letters and epistolary networks rather than events at court, this thesis has challenged both traditional narratives and the frameworks they are built on. As such it demonstrates the possibilities of alternate research practices to elucidate or emphasise elements of Cromwell's power, and the structures he knowingly and effectively utilised.

Viewing the network for the whole of Cromwell's time in the archives – including the ten years before his appointment to Principal Secretary – as in Chapter II demonstrates that the minister was easily the most dominant advisor of the mid-Henrician reign, unparalleled by any other actor. Despite the well-chronicled absence of much of his outgoing correspondence, Cromwell still held the largest collection of letters, the largest number of contacts, and was structurally placed in the most influential, central, and knowledgeable position. Taking this distant reading approach to the sources also critically examines and even quantifies the State Papers for this period, 'mapping' the archives in a new way.

Doing so considers both contemporary and later archival processes and how they contribute to the make-up of the State Papers, both as a whole collection and as individual letters and records. This has demonstrated that rather than appearing as one cohesive selection, the State Papers are instead a set of overlapping personal collections and ego networks. Not only does this provide an interesting framework through which to explore the archives – and presents potential opportunities for future research into these 'overlaps' highlighted in Chapter II – more importantly, it allows research to move away from assertions that Cromwell only appears dominant in the archives because the State Papers were the product of the Principal Secretary office alone. Instead, it presents Cromwell as simply the largest collection amongst many and contextualises Cromwell amongst his peers at court and in governance.

Furthermore, by taking this 'long-view' approach to Cromwell's career and contributions to the archives, this analysis in some ways contests contemporary narratives that Cromwell's rise in favour was the result of one single moment or letter. Rather it demonstrates an extended and

consistent application of the letter form from the start of the 1520s onwards. Cromwell's progression in his career was neither "unintended" and "more by chance than by any deliberate effort" as Everett argues, nor the result of "twenty years of plotting and scheming his way to the top" as MacCulloch and Mark D'Arcy imply.<sup>407</sup> Though it would be naïve to suggest that anyone involved in politics in this period would not have desired promotion, this is not to say that Cromwell required a devious twenty-year scheme to achieve this. Though Cromwell's letters clearly demonstrate ambition, they also evidence a capacity for business and a huge volume of hard work which Cromwell used to progress, as Elton has argued.<sup>408</sup> Throughout his career, Cromwell's consistent use of letters in the same way does not reflect a Machiavellian route to power, but a stable, pragmatic, and continuous use of an effective tool.

As seen throughout Section II, more specifically designed quantitative experiments allow for an alternate means to address ongoing historiographical debates embedded in narratives about the Tudor court. In many ways, debates around Cromwell's relationships at court, and particularly that with the king, are regularly placed at the core of 1530s politics and events, but have only been considered in traditional ways. As in Chapter IV, this has meant that much historiography descends into repetitive battleground over the same material and the same methodology. In reconsidering these relationships through a different framework, this thesis has demonstrated that Cromwell was not just dominant and in useful positions in the network, but actively utilised and played on his structural roles to both emphasise and bolster the relationship between him and his king.

Importantly then, the network allows for additional means to not only measure power through quantitative proxies such as centralities, but to more critically conceive of power in and of itself. Chapter IV demonstrated the ways power – and the balance therein between king and minister – was often less competitive than it was co-operative. In primarily acknowledging that the king and minister held very different kinds of power (an obvious distinction that is often still forgotten), it can be seen that their influence and control at court did not occur in a one-or-the-other paradigm, but operated in a mutual dependency, in which both king and minister relied on one another to build their own power in the network. Rather than just acknowledging this fact, the rest of Section II explores this dynamic further, delving into the construction of this relationship in the network to consider what repercussions this held for the wider network and understandings of power at court. In doing so, it not only engages with historical narratives focused explicitly on the 'king versus minister' construct (or, as suggested in this thesis, 'king *and* minister'), it also prompts a consideration of the ways this dynamic has bled into and dominated the formation and functioning

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<sup>407</sup> Everett, *Thomas Cromwell*, 66; Diarmaid MacCulloch and Mark D'Arcy, 'Thomas Cromwell – a very modern politician?', *BBC History Online*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/0/22450966>

<sup>408</sup> Elton, *Tudor Revolution*, 97.

of wider political structures. Furthermore, though these experiments were designed specifically with Cromwell and Henry in mind, they can be re-applied beyond this. Indeed, they offer a means of reconceiving and even quantifying the accepted model of monarch-advisor relationships with qualitative sources.

Comparisons between Cromwell and later advisors rely on this distinction, recognising that influence in the network relied not merely on dominance but the power afforded by this relationship with Henry. It is important to note that this power dynamic not only shaped Cromwell's 'rule' but Henry's as well, even – and especially – after the chief minister's death in 1540. Whilst historians regularly consider the 'king versus minister' debate in the context of the key events of the 1530s – such as the Break with Rome and the fall of Anne Boleyn – they often forget to consider it on a day-to-day scale in the functioning of the court, and as has been here demonstrated, in the network. Measuring the network in these terms offers another means by which to consider changing political structures and attitudes after Cromwell's death as well. In acknowledging that Cromwell's influence at court centred not only on his dominance of the network but also on the way he used this to both serve and manage his relationship with the king – as intermediary and gatekeeper – it can be seen that no-one held comparative power after 1540, as they held neither dominance nor this special relationship with Henry, something that became increasingly cyclical.

### *Cromwell's Legacy*

In many ways, these modes of comparison do not merely consider changes to Henry's court after the death of his final chief minister, but establish a means of assessing Cromwell's legacy, as seen in the final section of this thesis. Though Cromwell's fall from power was dramatic and sudden, he still managed to leave behind an efficient and functioning administrative system that would aid in governance for the final years in Henry's reign. In many ways, studying the networks in such a way as this thesis has done demonstrates that investigating the years post-Cromwell are just as important as studying Cromwell in his lifetime to understand his power and dominance at court.

This thesis also does much to establish Henry's reign not as three distinct periods (Wolsey – Cromwell – alone), but instead a continuous flow of changing models heavily influenced by the ones before. As much as recent literature has pointed to Cromwell's administration being not merely post-Wolsey but distinctly growing out of it, so too are the final years of Henry's reign not merely post-Cromwell but directly influenced by the minister and an element of his legacy. This has undoubtedly been made clearer by using these comparable – and in many ways fluid – models and graphs. By reframing the study of Cromwell in this way, it also impacts the ways changes and policies in periods with which he has not been traditionally associated or are not often explored in



tandem outside of explicitly Henrician biographies can be conceived. In all of these, 1540-47 is considered as coming *after* Cromwell, not continuing on from him. Instead, as this thesis has demonstrated, the final years of Henry's reign should not be forgotten in considerations of Cromwell's power, but explicitly explored as a direct implementation of Cromwell's legacy.

More than this, by comparing networks before and after the minister's death, it is clear that Cromwell *was* singular in his position and the power he held across Henry's reign. Although it is once more necessary to acknowledge the caveat that this thesis compares peacetime and wartime networks (itself an interesting research output), Section III offers a tangible means of comparing actors across time that has not existed before, demonstrating concepts which have heretofore only been historical hypotheses. Cromwell was not just unique in his power and influence because he was doing significantly more work (even though this is also true), but because the structures he created and implemented prevented others from reaching his level of ascendancy, both in his own time and after. Whilst power was also capped by what Henry allowed – as in Section II – the king's refusal to let another advisor hold Cromwell's influence could only work because of the systems the minister had put in place to support this switch. Henry's rejection of the single-minister-model was in large part in reaction to believed manipulations, both Cromwell's and those attempting to orchestrate the minister's fall. But in many ways, this new arrangement – focused on wider dispersal of power and reliance on the Privy Council – was exactly what Cromwell had been trying to achieve anyway. One last accidental and final manipulation was achieved with Cromwell's dramatic fall from favour.

Altering this approach to Cromwell's career, considering not just his lifetime but beyond it as well, re-writes understandings of Cromwell's history. In many ways, this readjustment of how Cromwell's narrative is conceived is just as important as the re-exploring of long held debates. Adapting frameworks is at the core of this thesis then: not just utilising quantitative methodologies in historical research but using this to adjust qualitative analyses themselves.

### *Network Analysis in the Humanities*

Exploring Cromwell through this quantitative, network analysis lens is not just an examination of Cromwell and Tudor history, but the methodological framework itself, and what this approach can offer to Cromwell and Tudor studies, as well as the wider humanities. Again, it is important to emphasise this focus on 'framework' as a core element of this thesis. Using quantitative methodologies in this way has not produced any shocking revelations; but neither was it designed to. As seen in discussing the fall of Cromwell above, had there been some irrefutably conclusive link or piece of evidence to settle this debate, this would have already been found by the pre-existing centuries of qualitative studies; as Elton has argued, "how and why it all happened

are questions that have often been considered, but may never find a completely satisfactory answer because the principal actors in the drama did not commit themselves on paper.”<sup>409</sup> Instead, these frameworks consider connections between sources in new and exciting ways, exploring their place in a longer view of history and prompting new investigations into them and the concepts they enable.

In some ways, these quantitative methodologies simply demonstrate what is already known: that Cromwell was administratively dominant; that Henry disliked writing in his own hand; and that social customs and status hierarchies dictated epistolary practices. But in doing so, it also demonstrates that this analysis is ‘working’. Whilst remaining cautious in offering a sense of ‘truth’ or ‘fact’ in any form of historical research, where the network supports long-held qualitative statements, it suggests that if the network presents something ‘new’ or – more often – supports one side of a debate over another, this can be trusted as much as any other expected result. In this, we can be confident in the other, less commonly propounded findings asserted by the network throughout this thesis: the prevalence of Cromwell’s gatekeeping throughout his career; the unique link between Norfolk and Francis in 1540; the lack of a chief minister or any anti-Cromwell ‘factions’ in power after his death; and the rise of the Privy Council only *after* Cromwell’s fall.

Not only this, but taking the longer, broader view of Cromwell’s career allows for an exploration of other connected topics that may not always be noticed in a narrower view of the sources, such as differences between peacetime and wartime structures; constructions of individual and institutional identities; and the quantitative potential of other sources, such as the Privy Council registers (Chapter VII). Though this thesis has not had the space to fully explore these concepts beyond their relevance to Cromwell and his legacy, the use of quantitative methods points to other avenues for future research and highlights the ways they interact with and impact other typically separate areas of interest.

This quantitative, distant reading approach also offers a means of critically engaging with far more material than would be possible with traditional methodologies. Though some elements of traditional qualitative research may resist the idea that history can be quantified, it is undeniable that these methods offer modes of measurement and, more importantly, *comparison*, that have not so easily been achieved before. Whilst it is important to recognise, as Drucker and Lattmann do, the malleability and even *fallibility* of data and the constructs or results they produce, by acknowledging and *incorporating* this awareness into our approach, quantitative methodologies can offer exciting and thought-provoking outcomes. This thesis strikes a balance between heralding digital and quantitative frameworks as being able to achieve and answer anything and the

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<sup>409</sup> Elton, ‘Decline and Fall’, 150.

immediate rejection of them as unsuitable for historical research. Furthermore, in doing so it reflects on how qualitative approaches can themselves be similarly evaluated and improved.

The act itself of adjusting or ‘abstracting’ qualitative sources into quantitative data (or, once more, ‘capta’) prompts questions about how the sources being employed are used or fundamentally *understood*, as in Section II. In this way, it encourages critical engagement with and an evaluation of the research processes – both quantitative and qualitative – and the ways they must be considered. As with the development of experiments for this thesis, this is not just applicable for studies of Cromwell, but all humanistic inquiry, and how long-held concepts and ‘ground truths’ are understood. Furthermore, just because the process of adaptation has been used to fit qualitative sources in to quantitative methodologies, does not mean that this changed framework need only apply in quantitative approaches. Rather, the changed perspectives on the core concepts reconsidered in this thesis – power, authorship, legacy – can be re-incorporated into traditional literary and historical studies as well.

As with the refiguring of the ‘king versus minister’ debate in Chapter IV, the relationship between the two approaches should not be seen as qualitative *versus* quantitative, but qualitative *and* quantitative, as demonstrated repeatedly by marrying close and distant reading approaches together. Experiments throughout this thesis have been specifically tailored to the contemporary realities of Cromwell’s career. As such, just as historical sources have been adjusted to fit network frameworks, so must the results of these experiments be read within the context of early modern realities. It is not enough to merely acknowledge that Cromwell was dominant in the epistolary structures during his time in power: instead, by marrying these measurements with extensive close reading of Cromwell’s correspondence and wider knowledge of interactions at court, the minister’s network metrics can be seen as evidence of deliberate – and successful – manoeuvres. This balance between qualitative and quantitative measures is nowhere more important than in the consideration of power at court. Whilst centrality measurements offer a formal means of quantifying power in the network, rankings of ‘influential’ individuals is not enough. Rather, this requires further investigation, to understand how and why historical actors hold certain metrics in the network. Furthermore, these actors also hold importance outside the epistolary structure that must be refigured in amongst the quantifiable data. Such can be seen especially with Henry, and the influence even a monarch resistant to letter communication must necessarily hold in an early modern network of power. This is also the case with his relationships: as established in Chapter VI, whilst the network holds the value of an intermediary on one path to be the same as that on another, there is a dramatic difference in being an intermediary to a petitioner and being an intermediary to the French king. Sometimes nodes and relationships hold a ‘weight’ that cannot be quantitatively intuited. It is because of this that digital humanities scholars must look to develop

quantitative methodologies and experiments – as this thesis has done – that sit explicitly within the customs and practicalities of the historical period in question. Whilst ‘toy’ model networks may hold value in experimenting with theoretical interactions, and are used to great success in the sciences, they hold limited value in a study that relies on understanding the individuals and the social and political contexts of an age.

This approach returns once more then to Burt’s assertion that structural positions hold greater value in determining power and influence than individual character. Whilst the last chapter demonstrated that the final years of Henry’s reign enforced more heavily the role structural constraints held in power suggested by Burt in comparison to the personality driven power hierarchies of Cromwell’s time, even this relied on a structure created by an *individual* and embedded by one *individual*’s fall and another *individual*’s reaction to it. Personality and historical context cannot be separated from their network; rather, quantitative analysis can be bolstered by their inclusion.

The interaction between quantitative and qualitative mentalities is therefore an iterative, heuristic one. This occurs not just within this project – qualitative knowledge influencing quantitative experiments and quantitative results pointing to areas of qualitative interest – but on a broader scope as well, where one discipline informs and improves the other, over and over again. Quantitative measurements can teach qualitative assessments something about exploring and measuring sources and interactions, and more effectively evaluating wider, distant-read structures. In turn, qualitative methods can introduce nuance and the impact of human individuality to quantitative measurements. Used together, they offer more developed research processes and enriched historical narratives.

### *Cromwell Re-Written*

In adapting how this period of history is viewed – both qualitatively and quantitatively – this thesis reframes Cromwell’s career in a way that shifts understandings of administrative processes and power developments throughout Henry’s reign. Primarily, forming these ‘networks of power’ on epistolary connections from the State Papers allows this thesis to validate the arguments made in Chapter I that letters were the base of Cromwell’s supremacy: not just their linguistics and administrative materiality, but the structures they allowed him to build and manage. It is impossible to ignore the realities of the early modern era, in which there were exceptionally limited means by which politicians could communicate and conduct business. As such, Cromwell using letters cannot be considered revolutionary for his time; it was in many ways a necessity. Yet it is significant to note that Cromwell adopted correspondence as a medium when he did not need to, recognising the usefulness of letters, and employing them by *choice* over other, more formal

means of governance. It was Cromwell's choice of how and when to use letters that allowed them to become such a pivotal tool in his rise in power. The networks created throughout this thesis not only demonstrate his dominance over epistolary communications in this period – both his own and those of others – but also quantify the means by which he held some of the most influential positions of the Tudor court: information gatherer, gatekeeper, organiser, patron, and leader. Whilst historians have repeatedly qualitatively detailed Cromwell's role in these positions, quantitative network analysis offers a means by which this thesis has explicitly examined these roles and the influence they offered the minister in the wider epistolary structure. Demonstrably, Cromwell used his correspondence to wield not only his own power, but Henry's as well. Ironically, these letters, and the extent to which he wielded them as a form of influence would be both his rise and his downfall, perhaps evidencing claims in his attainder that he had "at many other tymes by his letteres expressly wrytten to dyers worshipfull persones [...] falsely suggesting therby [the king's] greate pleasure."<sup>410</sup>

More so, building a network profile using quantitative network measurements and specifically designed experiments as in Section II 'proves' that Cromwell was truly one of a kind, an administrative powerhouse and 'revolutionist' not just in his generation, but in the rest of the Tudor reign and even beyond. Comparing his network metrics to chief ministers and Principal Secretaries both before and after him demonstrates that Cromwell's volume of work was not merely a symptom of his role at court, but the marker of an extraordinary administrator, distinctive because of his own systems and approach to court control.

As such, this thesis unequivocally supports arguments made by Elton, outlined in the introduction and throughout this thesis, that while Cromwell opted for personal means of control whilst he held power, he was responsible for some of the greatest administrative changes of the Tudor age, that relied on formal processes, institutional bodies, and regulated means of documentation. Presenting the 'long-view' and comparable network structures as this thesis has done demonstrates perhaps not an administrative 'revolution' but certainly a significant and long-standing shift orchestrated by Cromwell.

Though digital humanities methodologies are still developing and responding to the needs of historical inquiries, this thesis has demonstrated the possibilities these approaches hold. In doing so, it expands not only on what the sources can tell us, but how they can do so as well. Letters clearly have far more value as a historical source than the basis for fragile character recreations in biographies. For Cromwell, his correspondence laid the groundwork for one of the most powerful and substantial political careers of the Tudor age. Relying on and employing the letter customs and implications of his time, Cromwell built and managed a large network of correspondences that

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<sup>410</sup> Act of Attainder.

allowed him to not only regulate his own power, but that of others around him as well, from his early days as a lawyer to his peak influence as chief minister. Using a system that both displayed and upheld his position at the very centre of court, Cromwell relied on a medium he consistently used to become one of the most efficient political minds of early modern Europe, and to transform the structures of Tudor governance for generations to come. A master administrator and a master statesman, Thomas Cromwell was, above all, a master of letters.

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All custom-written code for the experiments in this thesis can be found at [https://gitfront.io/r/user-8399541/n4i24HEJKbN2/Thomas\\_Cromwell\\_Networks\\_of\\_Power/](https://gitfront.io/r/user-8399541/n4i24HEJKbN2/Thomas_Cromwell_Networks_of_Power/)

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